Meeting the self and the "Other": Intercultural learning during a faculty-led service-learning course to Belize

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By Carmen Elana Boggs-Parker

ACADEMIC ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural knowledge and intercultural competence are highly valued qualities for 21st-century American college and university graduates, as these institutions endeavor to prepare students to live and work in an increasingly multicultural society. This task offers both a challenge and an opportunity for educators to design mechanisms to increase the global awareness and intercultural development of their student participants. The challenge is to create intentional learning experiences that avoid the pitfalls of perpetuating stereotypes and reproducing inequitable social relations. Faculty-led international travel courses provide an opportunity for program leaders to develop intercultural development curricula that are ethical, engaging, economically and environmentally sustainable, and pedagogically sound.

This study examined how participants in a faculty-led short-term global service-learning course to Belize experienced and perceived cultural difference and how that professor attended to and sought to address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege during that program. This study followed a convergent parallel mixed method design in which I collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. This combination of methods yielded a more complete understanding of the learning process and intercultural learning outcomes of the student participants, as well as the pedagogical and programmatic features that encouraged the growth of intercultural competencies in each.

The quantitative findings of this study indicated little change in the competency levels of the program's participants, whereas the qualitative data suggested that the Belize travel course students had experienced notable gains in cultural self-awareness and were better able to identify relevant cultural differences. Participants singled-out the immersive quality of the experience, the variety and multiple points of intercultural contact the program offered, relationships with the faculty leader, peers, and host community members, and the compassionate leadership of the faculty leader as critical factors in their intercultural growth. I found that emotions, cognitive dissonance, and critical reflection play key roles in the intercultural learning process.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

American society is becoming more diverse and ever more integrated with nations across the world. College graduates need to have the knowledge and skills to live and work with people from different backgrounds. Universities can prepare students better for this reality by helping them learn how to communicate and behave appropriately with people who are culturally different. One way to encourage this capacity, called intercultural competence, is for students to participate in courses that occur outside of the United States. To secure the possibility for personal and intellectual growth, it is important that professors who take students abroad carefully plan their courses.

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether a group of students who went to Belize with a professor for a short service-oriented course returned with more knowledge about that country’s culture and improved intercultural competence. I tested program participants before they left and after they returned to see if their intercultural competence improved. I also interviewed the students about what their experience was like and how their professor had prepared them and helped them to learn. I also talked with the program’s faculty leader to determine why she had designed the course in the way that she did and whether she perceived that participating students had improved their intercultural competence.

I learned several things from this research. First, the tests that students completed showed that there was not much difference in their before and after intercultural competence scores. Second, however, when I talked with participants, they did seem to have changed from going on this travel course even if the test did not show that they had experienced much growth. The students indicated they had learned a lot about themselves and about the people of the town in Belize they visited. Participants suggested that they spent a lot of time with local residents and that doing so had helped them to understand them better. Third, those experiences helped them to think about their own culture and what it means to be an American. Fourth, students bonded with each other and with their professor. As individuals and as a group, they reported experiencing a variety of emotions in reaction to the things they observed and experienced. All of these, difficult or not, helped participants to grow personally and to develop a more robust awareness of how residents of another culture view and navigate their everyday lives.

Dedication

For Mina

Dream big, work hard, and persist. Persist, persist, persist.

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Table of Contents

Dedication v

Acknowledgments vi

List of Figures xiii

List of Tables xiii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of the Problem and Origins of the Study 1

Background 2

  Education Abroad: A Brief History 2

  Education Abroad: Growth and Current Trends 3

  Education Abroad: High Impact Practice for Intercultural Competence 4

Education Abroad: Focus on Outcomes 5

Education Abroad: Groundbreaking Research on Outcomes 6

Education Abroad and the Faculty-led Travel Course 7

Education Abroad and the Short-term Trend 8

Purpose and Overview of Methods 9

Research Questions 10

Significance of the Study 10

Organization of the Dissertation 11

CHAPTER 2: RELATED LITERATURE 13

Study Context: The Intersection of Education Abroad and Service-Learning 13

Education Abroad Programs/GSL Experiences in the Global South 16

  Who Benefits from Programs in Non-Traditional Locations? 17

The "Culture" of Inter-cultural Learning 20

Defining Intercultural Learning Outcomes 23

  Intercultural Learning 24

  Intercultural Sensitivity 24

  Intercultural Competence: Contested Terrain 25

Modeling Intercultural Outcomes 26

  Compositional Models 26

  Adaptational Models 26

  Co-Orientational Models 27

Developmental Models 27
Causal Path Models 28
Frameworks Relevant to this Research 28
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) 30
Denial. 31
Defense. 32
Minimization. 32
Acceptance. 33
Adaptation. 33
Integration. 33
The DMIS, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) 34
Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006, 2009) 36
Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model 37
The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process 40
Summary 44

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS 46
Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Assumptions 46
Pragmatic Paradigm Worldview 48
Critical Constructivism 50
Summary 51

CHAPTER 4: METHODS 52
Research Questions 52
Research Design: Pragmatism and Mixed Methods Research 52
Timing 53
Phase One: Predeparture 54
Phase Two: Return 54
Weighting 55
Setting 55
Institutional Choice 55
May Term Intensive Learning Travel Courses 56

Belize Travel Course Description.......... 56
Peacework.......... 57
Site.......... 58
San Ignacio, Belize.......... 58
Bishop Martin Roman Catholic Primary School.......... 58
Participant group selection and profile.......... 58
Student Selection.......... 58
Student Characteristics.......... 60
Recruitment.......... 61
Instruments and Data Collection.......... 62
Data Sources.......... 62
Quantitative Instrument: IDI Administration/Score Reports.......... 63
Intercultural Development Inventory.......... 63
IDI Predeparture Administration.......... 65
IDI Posttest Administration.......... 65
Qualitative Data: Course Documents.......... 66
Document Analysis.......... 66
Qualitative Data: Recorded Interviews.......... 67
Semi-structured Student Participant Interviews: Prior to Departure.......... 67
Semi-structured Student Participant Interviews: After Return.......... 68
Key Informant Interview: Pre-Departure.......... 69
Key Informant Interview-Faculty Leader: Return.......... 71
Coding.......... 72
Protection of Human Subjects.......... 75
Informed Consent.......... 75
Confidentiality.......... 75
Record Keeping.......... 76
Ethical Issues.......... 76
My Status and Role as a Researcher.......... 76
Quality, Trustworthiness, and Rigor.......... 78
Limitations.......... 79
Summary.......... 80

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: Student Perceptions and Experiences with Cultural Difference 81
Findings: Research Question 1 81
Theme 1: Encountering the Other: Conceptualizing Cultural Difference 81
Perceived Barriers 82
Physical Discomfort. 82
Interaction with Community Members. 82
Coping Emotionally. 83
Motivations 84
Vocational Motives 84
Self-Betterment Motives 84
Philanthropic Motives 85
Personal Satisfaction Motives 86
Status. 86
Experiencing Culture. 87
Adventure. 88
IDI Pre-Test Scores 89
Polarization. 90
Minimization 92
Encountering the Other: Expectations and Learning In Situ 93
Binary Logics 93
Poverty vs. Privilege. 94
Those who provide help versus those who need help. 95
Traditional vs. Modern. 97
Relationships 100
Feeling Connected. 102
Reciprocity. 105
Mitigating Characteristics 106
Openness 106
Adaptability 107
Universalism as Empathy 108
Theme 2: Interaction Style in the Face of Cultural Difference 109
Contrastors 109

Connectors 110
Collaborators 111
Relevance of Interaction Style to Intercultural Growth 112
Contrastors 112
Connectors 112
Collaborators 113
Feeling Ambivalent 113
Theme 3: Encountering the Self: Growth in Cultural Self-Awareness 114
Perceptions of Self 114
Privilege. 114
Impact of the Experience on Understanding of Self 117
American-ness 119
IDI Post-Test Results in Context 123

CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS: The Impact of Pedagogy and Program Design on Intercultural Learning 129
Findings: Program Design and Pedagogy 129
Factors that Encouraged Intercultural Learning 129
Personal Characteristics of Faculty Leader. 130
Setting the Tone. 131
Balancing Challenge and Support. 131
Emphasis on Building Relationships. 134
Facilitating Critical Reflection on Positionality 137
Focus on reflection—DEAL model 141
Factors that Constrained Intercultural Learning 146
The Structure of May Term Courses 146
Curriculum for Addressing Power and Privilege 146
Timing for Preparation 147
Timing of IDI Post-test Assessment 148
Summary 149

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS 151
Review of Research Questions 152

Summary of Results....................152
Question One:....................152
Question Two....................156
Question Three....................161
Question Four....................164
Implications of Study Findings....................174
Emerging Questions and Further Study....................177
Final Thoughts....................179
A Way Forward? Developing a Pedagogy of Encounter....................179

References....................182

List of Figures

Figure 1 …...…………………………………………………………………………. 31

Figure 2 ………………………………………………………………………… 35

Figure 3 ………………………………………………………………………… 37

Figure 4 …...…………………………………………………………………… 40

Figure 5 ………………………………………………………………………… 44

Figure 6 ………………………………………………………………………… 90

Figure 7 …...……………………………………………………………...… 142

Figure 8 ……………………………………………………………………...… 166

List of Tables

Table 1 ………………………………………………………………………… 29

Table 2 ………………………………………………………………………… 59

Table 3 ………………………………………………………………………… 61

Table 4 ………………………………………………………………………… 63

Table 5 ………………………………………………………………………… 71

Table 6 ………………………………………………………………………… 73

Table 7 ………………………………………………………………………… 74

Table 8 ……………………………………………………………..……… 127

Table 9 …………………………………………………………………...… 137

Table 10 ……………………………………………………………………… 139

Table 11 ……………………………………………………………………… 142

Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem and Origins of the Study

For the past five years, I have served as the Assistant Director of International Education at Lorelai College. As a former study abroad participant and current international education professional, I believe that cross-cultural experiences can be a mechanism for developing intercultural learning and competence, and I want to encourage such growth for the students with whom I interact. However, I have discovered in my professional role that some programs result in entrenching cultural stereotypes instead of challenging them. This potential outcome is particularly common among participants in our short-term faculty-led programs to emerging nations. Very few of these courses self-consciously engage cultural differences, the "tourist gaze," build intercultural learning outcomes into the course design or provide opportunities for students to reflect on power and privilege in the societies they visit or as those appear in their personal position vis-á-vis the cultures they are visiting.

Prompted by my professional experience with this unfortunate possibility and inspired by postcolonial theory and community-based global learning, I began to reconsider whether the College (or indeed my profession) should offer such programs. Indeed, I came to believe that such efforts must include a detailed examination of participant positionality through a pedagogy of encounter that avoids the replication of imperialistic relationships and practices with local communities within these "developing" countries. I chose the short-term, faculty-led service-learning travel course to Belize that I examined in this dissertation as the object of my study because I wanted to explore whether a program intentionally designed to "build global understanding and peace through international development, education and service" (Belize

Program Promotional Poster, 2017) could promote intercultural growth in its student participants and overcome the pitfalls I had too often previously encountered in such efforts.

Background

Education Abroad: A Brief History

Education, or "study" abroad, is a credit-bearing experience that occurs outside of a student's native country and contributes toward a degree at the student's home institution (Forum on Education Abroad, 2009). Education abroad has its existential roots in the Grand Tour once practiced by European elites during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries (Haupt and Ogden, 2019; Hoffa, 2007). This practice also became a popular tradition in the United States, whereby young American men of the elite classes traveled to Europe to be immersed in art and culture while making connections with the continent's storied families. This rite of passage lent an air of credibility to those individuals and helped solidify their status back home (Haupt and Ogden, 2019).

Studying abroad became a formalized educational experience in colleges and universities in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century (Haupt and Ogden, 2019; Hoffa, 2007). White, wealthier men were the typical students pursuing degrees in higher education, and as such, these were also the individuals who participated in education abroad experiences. The focus of those programs included mission trips, graduate education, and cultural finishing tours (Haupt and Ogden, 2019; Hoffa, 2007). During this time, too, the 1919 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute of International Education (IIE), and the institutionalization of the Junior Year Abroad (JYA) program endorsed overseas study (Haupt and Ogden, 2019).

College enrollments and interest in overseas study surged after World War II. Congress passed a series of acts, including the G.I. Bill, the Fulbright Act of 1946, and the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which promoted higher education enrollment. These laws increased access and provided government funding for returning veterans and others to pursue post-secondary education. The GI Bill and NDEA particularly addressed barriers to access. U.S. entry into the "space race" linked education to national security concerns (Haupt and Ogden, 2019). Social science research concerning the nature of prejudice and intergroup conflict provided the analytical underpinnings for efforts to increase participation in cross-cultural educational experiences.

Perhaps partially in response to the nationalism that led to a bloody Second World War and the racial tensions between White and Black Americans, Allport (1954) developed his Intergroup Contact Theory. Allport's formulation, now referred to as Contact theory, was published in *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954 and posited that close contact between members of different groups, under certain conditions, could reduce prejudice and conflict among them. The requirements necessary for this potential reduction in hostility included equal status and cooperation among members, members working toward common goals, and receiving the support of social institution authorities (Pachmayer and Andereck, 2019). Even though these prerequisites set a high standard, the promise of Contact theory has attracted scholars and practitioners and has spawned research for decades in various fields, including international education (Pachmayer and Andereck, 2019).

Education Abroad: Growth and Current Trends

Student participation in education abroad began to rise in the 1960s. White male students were still the principal participants in such programs, and during those years, they most often

selected semester and year-long exchange and faculty-led programs (Haupt and Ogden, 2019). By the 1990s, student participation in study abroad was in full gear. During the previous 30 years, the growth of education in other nations had led to the diversification of program models and locations available for students (Haupt and Ogden, 2019). The options for the sites of study (beyond the traditional European destinations) and the types of programs available (reciprocal exchange, faculty-led, third-party provider) expanded during this time (Haupt and Ogden, 2019). Also, the demographics of participation for such programs began to change. White women emerged as the most frequent participants in study abroad programs. Although college student populations became more diverse in the three decades between the 1960s and 1990s, people of color did not participate in such efforts in numbers commensurate with their enrollment rates (Haupt and Ogden, 2019).

Education abroad has continued to grow steadily. More than 340,000 U.S. American students participated in credit-bearing study abroad programs during the 2017-18 academic year (Martel, 2019). White (70%) female (67%) participation still outpaces the involvement of other demographic groups and American students have continued to choose most frequently to study in other Western societies (the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, and Germany make up the top five).

Education Abroad: High Impact Practice for Intercultural Competence

The potential outcomes for student participation in international experiences often align with credentialization and internationalization priorities for colleges and universities. Cross-cultural knowledge and intercultural competence are highly valued qualities for 21st-century college and university graduates. Every student who graduates from a higher education institution must be prepared to thrive in our global (and globalized) society (Deardorff, 2006;

Olson, Green, and Hill, 2006). Colleges and universities strive to prepare students for this reality by providing disciplinary knowledge, improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills, fostering social capabilities, and encouraging perspective-taking and intercultural competence (Ogden and Brewer, 2019; Grunzweig & Rinehart, 2013). Education abroad remains a widespread "high impact practice" that higher education institutions adopt to work toward these goals (Haupt and Ogden, 2019).

Practitioners, theorists, and participants frequently claim that study in other countries offers unique value to undergraduate education (Deardorff, 2006; Olson, Green, and Hill, 2006). Proponents contend that such programs can add an "important international, intercultural, or global perspective to undergraduate education" (Ogden and Brewer, 2019 p. 1). As Engle noted in her plenary speech to the Forum on Education Abroad Ninth Annual Conference in 2013, "Well beyond the fundamental goal of academic learning, we ostensibly send students abroad for more. Indeed, we prime our student-audience with promises of 'transformational learning' and accounts of 'life-changing experience'" (Engle, 2013, cited in Wong, 2015: p. 121). Informal, anecdotal evidence shared by past student participants has convinced many program administrators that study abroad experiences are often life-changing in the ways Engle suggested (Hoffa, 2010; Wong, 2015).

Education Abroad: Focus on Outcomes

As study abroad enrollments have grown and calls for outcomes assessment in higher education have simultaneously intensified, colleges and universities are now actively striving to gauge the individual learning that occurs in these programs (Ogden and Brewer, 2019; Savicki, 2008). In recent decades, an ever-growing academic literature has sought to examine intercultural learning outcomes (intercultural sensitivity, global learning, intercultural

competence, global citizenship, global mindset, and cross-cultural competence) developed during study abroad programs. To date, these studies have reported mixed results concerning the identification of the key factors that contribute to intercultural growth during study abroad experiences.

Historically, education theorists and professionals have argued that studying abroad naturally produces intercultural competence. In other words, in this view, when a student goes to another nation to study, he or she is likely to return from that experience with several enhanced capacities, including increased intercultural competence. However, recent research has not borne out this contention (Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou, 2012). Increasing numbers of theorists and practitioners have sought to re-examine this traditional argument concerning the impact of student experiences abroad. As they have done so, these analysts have also revisited how to define and assess the intercultural learning students may obtain via such programs (Deardorff, 2006).

Education Abroad: Groundbreaking Research on Outcomes

The Georgetown University Consortium Project (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige, 2009), for example, was an ambitious, large-scale, multi-year effort designed to examine study abroad participant learning outcomes. That analysis drew on the experiences of 1,300 students enrolled in 61 programs abroad and three U.S. campus control groups during 2003 - 2005. The Project's scholars concluded that the field needed to construct specific, targeted interventions to encourage student learning when abroad (Lou and Bosley, 2012; Paige and Vande Berg, 2012). The Consortium analysts found that participants who had cultural "mentors," compared to those who had not enjoyed such support, achieved significant gains in intercultural competence as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Although the Consortium's

researchers did not outline the key characteristics of what might constitute an effective cultural mentoring relationship, they highlighted several interventions including, guided reflection and structured experiential activities designed to expose visiting students to the host culture.

Education Abroad and the Faculty-led Travel Course

Faculty-led travel courses constitute one type of study abroad program model. In such efforts, a professor leads an off-campus course for students from their home college or university (Spencer & Tuma, 2007). Ideally, such offerings can offer quality, discipline-specific education led by vetted faculty in a compressed timeframe that does not pose an undue interruption in the curricular and co-curricular programs in which engaged students may also be participating at their home institutions. Ideally, too, these courses lend themselves to cultural mentoring that pushes students to recognize their power and privilege and to reflect on their intercultural experiences.

Current scholarship has suggested that professionals reconsider the design of education abroad programs and, more precisely, how they prepare students for those experiences. The composition of courses is paramount if they are to realize intercultural goals. Suppose, for example, that the responsible faculty leader does not build opportunities for students to engage in critical reflection concerning the cross-cultural aspects of their experience. In such cases, those goals are unlikely to be met. Faculty leaders must include intercultural contact and cultural mentoring in their course design to realize such growth among engaged students. At Lorelai, we currently have two faculty-led semesters and the Intensive Learning (May Term) travel program that offers between 12 and 16 courses each year. The May Term includes on-campus and travel experiences during which students study a topic in-depth for several hours a day for

approximately three weeks. (For more detail about May Term travel courses, please see Chapter Four).

Education Abroad and the Short-term Trend

Short-term education abroad programs last up to eight weeks (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2009; Ogden and Brewer, 2019). These experiences now constitute the most common such type—comprising 65% of U.S. participants in 2019 (Martel, 2019). I have found in my interactions with students that short-term study is attractive to students for various reasons. Individuals who have more than one major and those enrolled in highly structured curricula often find that the only "free" time they have available to study abroad is during May Term or the summer. Other students doubt their ability to cope emotionally with the uncertainty of being away from family and friends for an extended time. I have also found that some individuals who select short-term programs are not as motivated by the goals of cultural immersion or intercultural competency as those who choose longer experiences. Their interest lies in "where they want to go, likening it more to international travel than as an investment in their education" (Ogden and Brewer, 2019). In those instances, students may view short-term experiences as a "vacation" or an opportunity to play the tourist. However, recent research has dispelled the long-held view among many in the field that intercultural growth could only occur in semester or year-long programs. Fortunately, studies have found that students who study abroad for short periods can achieve gains in intercultural competence (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, and Hubbard, 2006; Pagano and Roselle, 2009).

Short-term programs may also offer students an opportunity to become involved in community-based learning, such as "international internships, global service-learning, and undergraduate research" (Ogden and Brewer, 2019). During the 2017-2018 academic year, for

example, more than 38,000 students participated in non-credit bearing work, internships, or volunteer activities abroad. Thirty percent of that number engaged in a service experience and more than a third (35.1%) of those experiential activities occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean (Martel, 2019). This research examines a faculty-led Lorelai College service-learning travel course to Belize that occurred during May Term 2017.

Purpose and Overview of Methods

The goal of this mixed-methods study was to examine the experiences of students enrolled in a short-term international service-learning course administered by a faculty member of a small, private liberal arts college to analyze how that program affected student attitudes toward cultural difference. More specifically, this inquiry explored participant intercultural experiences and whether and how the course increased intercultural competence among those enrolled in it. This study measured student intercultural capability by employing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). I also explored participant perceptions of intercultural growth via semi-structured interviews.

Before departure, I interviewed the faculty program leader to determine if and how the course design incorporated intercultural learning goals. That exchange helped me to understand the types of critical reflection interventions the leader had included to support student learners. I assessed student cultural self-awareness and response to cultural difference by administering the IDI v. 3, a psychometrically tested, 50-item online questionnaire that measures individual responses to a series of statements concerning cultural difference.

After students completed their international learning experience, I administered the IDI once more to determine their intercultural competence level following that program. When compared to their baseline score, this result indicated whether growth in the level of intercultural

competence had occurred. I then interviewed the students about their program-related experiences and their personal perceptions of their intercultural competence. I asked each to share the incidents and activities they perceived as most influential in promoting intercultural learning while abroad. I interviewed the faculty leader to obtain her perspective concerning the course's relative success in increasing student intercultural competence and which learning interventions appeared to her to be most useful for supporting such an outcome among participants.

Research Questions

I addressed the following research questions using the IDI, course documents, and semi-structured interviews with student participants and the faculty leader:

1) How do student program participants experience cultural difference and articulate their intercultural learning?
2) How do student experiences with cultural difference and perceptions concerning their intercultural growth compare with IDI measures of their intercultural competence?
3) What programmatic and pedagogical factors encouraged and constrained the intercultural learning of the students?
4) How did the faculty leader address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with her program participants?

Significance of the Study

This dissertation examined how a sample of students experienced and perceived cultural difference and how a faculty member attended to and sought to address that concern as well as issues of power, positionality, and privilege in an overseas short-term service-learning context.

This chapter introduced relevant literature and ideas about the development of intercultural outcomes during study abroad programs. Overall, although some analyses have examined student learning in domestic contexts, there is limited research on such learning in global service-learning programs, particularly in regard to intercultural development (Kiely, 2004). In addition, few studies have employed the IDI in the global service-learning context (Westrick, 2004; Fitch, 2004; Jones et al., 2016 cited in Jones et al., 2016).

Although the critical service-learning literature calls for the interrogation of power and privilege in such programs (Camacho, 2004; Green, 2014; Hartman and Kiely, 2014; Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005; Yoder Clark, 2009; Yoder Clark and Nugent, 2011), there is no literature to date of which I am aware that has investigated the relationship between designed opportunities for participants to reflect on their relative power and privilege and their growth (or not) in intercultural competence during a short-term faculty-led global service-learning course. This study sought to begin to address these gaps.

Organization of the Dissertation

I am indebted to Jorgenson (2009) and McCloskey (2019) because the structure of their dissertations helped me to think through the organization of my own. This inquiry consists of seven chapters. Chapter One presents an overview of the effort, including the study's origins, background, and rationale. I also highlight the research questions and discuss the context of the study in the broader study abroad literature. Chapter Two summarizes the relevant scholarly literature and profiles the assessment tool used to measure intercultural competence, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Chapter Three outlines my epistemological stance, how I addressed salient ethical issues, and the study's theoretical framework. Chapter Four details this effort's research design and methodology. Chapter Five addresses the primary

research question by analyzing the data collected from the IDI pre-and post-tests, course documents, and pre-departure and post-return student interviews. Chapter Six describes the design and pedagogical goals of the travel course to identify those factors that promoted or impeded intercultural learning. Chapter Seven summarizes the study's principal findings and conclusions. That chapter also includes a discussion of the implications of this study for scholarship and study abroad program design and planning. The appendices contain visual representations of the frameworks used in this study and relevant IRB documents.

Chapter 2

Related Literature

This research focused on intercultural learning during a cross-cultural service-learning travel course. This chapter provides an overview of the relevant scholarly literature to place the research design, methodology, findings, and conclusions in context. The review assesses critical concepts, intercultural learning definitions and outcomes, and the conceptual frameworks for understanding intercultural learning processes that I employed to address this study's aims. Those included Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1986, 1993, 2004, 2013), Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model (2005), Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006, 2009), and the Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process by Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, and Davi (2007).

Study Context: The Intersection of Education Abroad and Service-Learning

The introductory chapter provided a brief overview of the history and current trends in the education abroad field. Since this research was located at the intersection of education abroad and service-learning, this section focuses on service-learning. As noted, this inquiry examined a short-term, faculty-led *service-learning* education abroad course. Bringle and Hatcher (2009) have defined service-learning as

> A course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (p.38).

This course certainly met these criteria. However, the foreign context in which this service-learning course occurred called for an additional layer of specificity. Theorists and practitioners have located *international service-learning* at the intersection of service-learning,

study abroad, global citizenship, and international education (Brewer and Cunningham, 2009; Bringle and Hatcher, 2011; Lewin, 2009; Tonkin, 2011; cited by Ong Day and Green, 2014). These fields have their roots in experiential education (Bringle, Hatcher, and Jones, 2011). Bringle and Hatcher have defined International Service-Learning (ISL) as

> a structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally (2011, p. 19).

Again, this course met these additional criteria. However, since the site of the program was located in the Global South, there were issues particular to that context to consider.

Hartman and Kiely (2014) have offered additional detail addressing the "global and intercultural issues" and types of analysis required for service work on the basis of their research in the Global South. This focus led to the reformulation of International Service-Learning as Global Service-Learning (GSL) (Hartman and Kiely, 2014). Their use of the term global instead of international was intended to indicate that "values of this global orientation express universalistic aspirations, such as acceptance of human dignity or respect and concern for others regardless of citizenship status" (Hartman et al., 2018, p. 18). While interviewing the faculty leader for this program, it became clear that this focus was also reflected in both her relationship with Peacework, the NGO that laid the groundwork for a program centered in community input and reciprocity, as well as the pedagogical strategies she employed, and reflection prompts she provided to participating students during the program.

Hartman and Kiely's conceptualization of global service-learning was developed on the basis of the critical service-learning paradigm. The authors identified five aspects of Global Service Learning that set it apart from much domestic service-learning:

> (a) GSL is committed to student intercultural competence development; (b) GSL focuses on structural analysis tied to consideration of power, privilege, and hegemonic assumptions, (c) GSL takes place within a global marketization of volunteerism; (d) GSL is typically immersive; and (e) GSL engages the critical civic and moral imagination (2014, p. 56).

GSL specifically embraces intercultural competence development and participant critical reflection on positionality as goals. GSL also explicitly recognizes that service-learning today occurs in the context of globalization and advanced capitalism.

Hartman et al. (2018) further refined the concepts, vision, and scope of his previous work with Kiely in *Community-based global learning: The theory and practice of ethical engagement at home and abroad*. This volume examined empirical examples of community-based global learning. They employed the term Community-Based Global Learning (CBGL) in lieu of global service-learning. The authors constructed CBGL on concepts drawn from various theoretical frames, including critical pedagogy, community development, global citizenship, and development theory (Filomeno, 2019). CBGL retained the characteristics of GSL listed above while also highlighting the needs of the community to be served. As they stated,

> By increasing emphasis on community voice, critical reflection, and attention to power and privilege … CBGL is a community-driven learning and/or service experience that employs structured, critically reflective practice to better understand global citizenship, positionality, power, structure, and social responsibility in global context. It is a learning methodology *and* a community-driven development philosophy that cultivates a critically reflective disposition among all participants (Hartman et al., 2018, p. 21).

The evolution of these terms mirrors the evolution of related theory and the implications for practice of service experiences that occur in international contexts (Day Ong and Green,

2014). The conceptualizations of ethical community engagement profiled here were designed to serve as a road map of sorts for practitioners as they developed service-learning experiences. I used the GSL frame in this study as a yardstick to consider the Belize travel course design.

Education Abroad Programs/GSL Experiences in the Global South

As noted above, historically, Europe has been the destination of choice for study abroad students (Hoffa, 2010; Wells, 2006), with a third of all such American students doing so in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain (Martel, 2019). Anecdotal evidence from my own students leads me to speculate that they choose Europe because of the perceived similarity in traditions and cultural norms, the pervasiveness of the English language, the prevalence of program choices and courses, the ease of travel to multiple countries on the continent, as well as recommendations of past program participants.

Nonetheless, the number of U. S. students choosing to complete such programs in "nontraditional" locations is on the rise (Martel, 2019; Shubert, 2007; Wells, 2006; Woolf, 2006). One can define "non-traditional" in various ways. A location could be non-traditional simply because it is non-European; because few U.S. American students go there; or because English is not the destination's official language. Non-traditional could also indicate peripheral or "developing" countries of the Global South (Wells, 2006; Woolf, 2006). For the purposes of this research, I use this designation to refer to education abroad that occurs in the Global South. Global South refers to nations located in "Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceana. It is one of a family of terms, including 'Third World' and 'Periphery,' that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized" (Dados and Connell, 2012).

The rise in the number of American students choosing to enroll in education abroad programs in non-traditional locations may have received a boost from U.S. political rhetoric and objectives in the aftermath of the 9/11/01 attacks (Salisbury et al., 2009). In 2002, the American Council on Education produced *Beyond September 11: A comprehensive national policy on international education*, which called on the U.S. government to harness international education to address the nation's "dangerous shortfall of individuals with global competence" (ACE, 2002, p. 1). ACE urged federal officials to define national policy objectives for international education and to develop an infrastructure to support them. Congressional commissions, including the 9/11 Commission (2002) and the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship (2005), and the National Security Language Initiative (2006) in the years following bolstered support for increasing the numbers of American students participating in education abroad in non-traditional locations (Gathogo, 2015).

Who Benefits from Programs in Non-Traditional Locations?

Who benefits from education abroad programs/GSL experiences in the Global South? Stakeholders include professional institutions in the field of international education or development, students who enroll in the programs, as well as the higher education institutions that sponsor the initiatives. Major stakeholders in the field of international education have advocated for a sharp increase in education abroad enrollments. One such effort was IIE's "Generation Study Abroad" (GSA). Launched in 2014, the GSA initiative aimed to double the number of United States students who study in other countries each year. To meet that ambitious goal, IIE advised colleges to offer multiple short-term (8-week or less) programs to a variety of destinations, including those in the Global South (IIE, 2020). The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs/Association of International Educators (NAFSA), the premier

professional organization for international education administrators, promotes study abroad programs in the Global South and provides resources to professionals offering them.

Experiential programs in the Global South offer particular benefits to students who enroll in them. The oft-cited benefits that students receive from study abroad experiences, in general, include personal growth, global awareness, language proficiency, career skills, and intercultural competence (Bennett, J., 2009; Deardorff, 2006; Grunzweig & Rinehart, 2013; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Wells, 2006). In a program in the Global South, these advantages may be enhanced because participants who are pushed farther out of their comfort zones often experience a deeper level of personal and intercultural growth. Although empirical research on this question is extremely limited, it appears likely that such challenging environments do often encourage greater personal growth and intercultural learning than more typical program venues (Vande Berg et al., 2012; Wells, 2006):

- Living in the Global South often involves a big change from the way that U.S. students typically live, since the consumerist culture and material comforts ubiquitous in the United States are not likely to be as available or omnipresent. This fact could encourage students to deepen their understanding of American culture and its influence abroad (Breen, 2012). It may also promote the development of individual flexibility and critical problem-solving skills (Wells, 2006).
- Students in these locations can gain "inside" knowledge that relatively few others would obtain concerning the local and national host culture that could aid them in their careers (Wells, 2006).

- Students could gain knowledge of their host cultures that could benefit U.S. national security goals (Shubert, 2007; Wells, 2006; Woolf, 2006).
- Participants in such programs also enjoy more opportunities to develop fluency in a second language, as there will likely be fewer community members that speak English in such locations (Vande Berg et al., 2012; Wells, 2006).
- Students studying abroad in the Global South are not as likely to be in the "American bubble" that is so characteristic of programs designed specifically for U.S. students (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Deeper interpersonal relationships with local people may develop as a result of this increased potential for immersive intercultural contact.
- Education abroad options are attractive to higher education institutions because students can obtain knowledge and capacities from such experiences that materially differ from and augment the learning that they obtain on campus (Grunzweig & Rinehart, 2013; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Colleges and universities can use a variety of locales for their study abroad options as a marketing tool in recruitment efforts. In this way, universities could be known for the breadth of their options. Alternatively, they could focus on one particular region and create a niche market (Wells, 2006). Higher education institutions can also benefit from programs in the Global South if relationships develop abroad that lead to a pool of potential international students or to shared faculty research opportunities.

Although international education's professional organizations have long promoted experiential programming in the Global South, such efforts should not continue without thoughtful questioning by theorists and practitioners in the field (Krabill, 2012; Shubert, 2007;

Woolf, 2006). Martin and Griffiths (2012) have called for careful consideration of programs in the Global South,

> Indeed, a review of the literature on intercultural experiences suggests that issues of power and representation underlie many programmes, despite their seemingly well-intentioned aims of enabling participants to become 'global citizens' who have the skills to be successful in a diverse world or preparing trainee and qualified teachers for teaching diverse student cohorts (Brock et al., 2006; Fiedler, 2007; cited in Martin and Griffiths, 2012).

Without clear ethical objectives and thoughtful pre-departure preparation, there is a real danger in reifying the very stereotypes that these programs aim to address. Students must be taught how to be sensitive to power relations and examine their own privilege (Camacho, 2004). As Green (2001) has cautioned,

> Well-intentioned white people, both students and faculty, must learn racial awareness, and middle-class people of all races must think about how class affects the service situation. It is absolutely important to talk about the intersections of race, class, and service in order to prevent service-learning from replicating the power imbalances and economic injustices that create the need for service-learning in the first place (2001, p.18, cited by Camacho, 2004).

Simply put, just because we can send American students abroad to non-traditional locations does not by itself mean that we should do so. I believe that the growth opportunities and potential benefits these experiences can offer makes these programs highly desirable for students and institutions of higher education. Still, those designing these initiatives should be mindful of their ethical implications and their impacts on host communities. Such programs must avoid replicating existing exploitative relationships and instead challenge taken-for-granted social hierarchies.

The "Culture" of Inter-cultural Learning

As a critical constructivist with phenomenological leanings, I must acknowledge my intellectual connection to Berger's and Luckmann's (1967) seminal work, *The Social*

Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. That analysis described the fundamental ideas and processes by which knowledge is socially constructed. To describe the world as socially constructed is to contend that "what we know about the world always involves a knower and that which is to be known. How the knower constructs the known constitutes what we think of as reality" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 2). This perspective informs this research.

Before one can begin to talk about "cross-*cultural*" or "inter-*cultural*" competencies, one must first have a working definition of culture. At its most basic level, culture is context. Culture is socially constructed in that it does not exist outside of human interaction. Culture does not alone determine individual behavior, but it forms the underlying framework from which individual and group perceptions and actions emerge (Bennett, 2009; Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Bennett (2009) presented Berger and Luckmann's basic tenets concerning objective and subjective culture in, *State of the art research on intercultural learning in study abroad, a* supplement to the journal, *Intercultural Education.* For Bennett, objective culture is "the set of institutional, political, and historical circumstances that have emerged from and are maintained by a group of interacting people" (Bennett, 2009 p. 2). Bennett called objective culture the "Big C" culture. Often, Big C culture lures students to study abroad; students want to learn about the Culture of England, or the Culture of Argentina, for instance. Study abroad programs focused on Big C culture typically include investigations of the art, literature, history, etc., of a nation (Bennett, 2009). Johnson (2000) referred to Big C culture when he defined culture as the "accumulated store of symbols, ideas, and material products associated with a social system, whether it be an entire society or a family" (Johnson, 2000: p.73).

On the other hand, subjective culture is "Little 'c'" culture (Bennett, 2009). Little c culture plays an active role in the interaction among individuals and is comprised of the "worldview(s) of people who interact in a particular context" (Bennett, 2009 p. 3). It is how they uniquely perceive and define "phenomena in the world," how they communicate with others, and how they determine moral values about what is right and what is wrong (Bennett, 2009 p. 3). In this way, subjective culture encompasses how people define their roles and responsibilities and make meaning of their realities. Little c culture also includes the groups to which individuals belong as defined by national or ethnic and racial categories and other salient characteristics, including age, gender identity, and sexual orientation (Martin, 1994).

Postcolonial theory has reminded scholars that perceiving culture as "boundaried, fixed and stable" leads to reification and essentialism (Martin and Griffiths, 2014, p. 6). Culture is instead "hybrid, dynamic, productive" (Andreotti, 2011, p. 29). Clarifying Bhabha's conceptualization of culture, Souza (2004) has suggested that Culture is

> a verb, a strategy of survival that is both transnational (carrying marks of diverse experiences and memories of dislocations) and translational (as it demands a re-signification of traditional cultural symbols that were associated with cultural references of a homogeneous and holistic culture) (Souza, 2004, p. 125-126 cited by Andreotti, 2011, p. 29).

Hence, culture is a multidimensional concept with both enduring and dynamic qualities. Swidler (1986) has cleverly described the vitality of culture as a "tool-kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in various configurations to solve different kinds of problems" (1986: p. 273). This reservoir is what individuals with high levels of intercultural competency draw from to negotiate effective communication and strategize appropriate behavior in interactions with cultural others.

Defining Intercultural Learning Outcomes

As outlined in the previous chapter, education abroad has grown and changed in recent decades. Political, economic, social, and academic drivers and institutional rationales for investing in such initiatives have evolved as well (Ogden, 2017; Ogden and Brewer, 2019). Ogden and Brewer (2019) have argued that four broad rationales currently drive study abroad programming: "language acquisition and cultural knowledge, intercultural competency development, discipline-specific learning, and community-based learning" (p. 25). Clearly defining and assessing intercultural competence is challenging (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2006, 2011; Spitzberg and Chagnon, 2009). Despite this challenge, these rationales suggest that globally-focused experiential activities can be highly desirable.

Higher education institutions employ these arguments partially to satisfy the ubiquitous push to link undergraduate education to career development and readiness (Ogden and Brewer, 2019). This hyper-career focus can lead to the commodification of the educational experience. In such cases, there is a danger of viewing cultural others as a means to provide a "learning experience" for students. This objectification is antithetical to the deeper learning required to achieve cross-cultural competence. This tension between objectification and understanding is one to which I return again below.

Although most colleges and universities list internationalization and intercultural awareness/learning/sensitivity/competence goals in their strategic plans, they face a challenge to define, implement, and/or describe explicitly how they assess specific desired intercultural competencies (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2006; Bennett, J., 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg and Chagnon, 2009). As Gregersen-Hermans (2017) has noted,

> the challenge is to understand that intercultural competence is a complex construct that encapsulates various related concepts and behaviors rather than a single tangible entity.

> Because of its complexity, however, intercultural competence development as a learning outcome seems to have become a catch-all phrase (p. 70).

The following section presents definitions of several intercultural competencies. Thereafter, I address the modeling and assessment of those terms.

Intercultural Learning

Bennett (2009) has defined intercultural learning as "Acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange" (p. 2). Although Bennett's relativistic focus in this definition certainly does not negate a constructivist approach towards intercultural learning, neither does it highlight that stance.

In contrast, Hartman, Kiely, Boettcher, and Friedrichs (2018) state explicitly that their definition of intercultural learning embraces a critical constructivist paradigm, in which the emphasis on meaning-making and the "co-creation of perceived reality to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and communication, becomes … the deconstruction and reconstruction of that reality toward more just relationships" (p. 85). The authors' conceptualization of intercultural learning focused on the growth of three capacities: "the capacity to understand oneself as a cultural being, the capacity to develop an orientation of cultural humility, and the capacity to communicate and behave appropriately in varied cultural contexts" (Hartman et al., 2018, p. 85).

Intercultural Sensitivity

Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman have defined intercultural sensitivity as the "ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences" (2003, p. 422). Theorists generally view intercultural sensitivity as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition (Chen, 1997) for the

development of intercultural competence. This sensitivity suggests a capacity to identify variations resulting from differences in culture. I detail how Bennett has categorized the various stages of intercultural sensitivity in the section on the DMIS below.

Intercultural Competence: Contested Terrain

Much research on education abroad outcomes has focused on participant changes in perspective and the development of intercultural competence (Kiely, 2011). Intercultural competence/competency is a multi-disciplinary concept with a long and contested history (Bennett, J., 2009; Bennett, M., 1993; Deardorff, 2006; Paige, 1993; Pusch, 2009; Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009; Vande Berg, Paige, and Lou, 2012). In a watershed study, Deardorff (2006) surveyed intercultural competence theorists and practitioners in an effort to discern common ground among them concerning the conceptualization and assessment of the concept. Expert responses differed widely. As a group, they tended to prefer general rather than specific definitions of intercultural competence. This conclusion ran contrary to Deardorff's expectation, as she was hoping to discover the characteristics that together comprise intercultural competence. Deardorff obtained 100% agreement from the experts she consulted on only one component of intercultural competence, understanding others' world views.

Although responses from the panel members differed widely, Deardorff was able to construct a definition of such competence that most experts in the field of international education accepted thereafter (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, intercultural competence today is widely understood by scholars and practitioners of international education as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006: pp. 247-248). I outline Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence in the section below.

Modeling Intercultural Outcomes

This section briefly identifies the five model types of intercultural development while highlighting the specific conceptualizations that influenced this research. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) and Gregersen-Hermans, (2017) completed a comprehensive synthesis of the intercultural competence literature and categorized models of the construct into the following five types: compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal path.

Compositional Models

Compositional models ask the question, what elements constitute intercultural competence? (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). These frameworks identify a list of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that denote competence. While these models are useful in outlining the characteristics central to such capability, they do not always define those clearly, nor explain the interaction among them (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). These critical flaws make empirical use of these models difficult. These conceptions are mostly helpful as typologies of characteristics that appear to encourage the growth of intercultural competence.

Adaptational Models

Adaptational models ask, “which cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral changes take shape to successfully engage in an intercultural encounter?” (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017, p. 73) These models highlight the importance of adaptability to the process of gaining intercultural competence (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). In fact, these constructs identify social and intellectual flexibility as the key component of intercultural development (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). The weakness of this approach is that “adaptability” has not been clearly defined or assessed (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009).

Co-Orientational Models

True to their roots in communication studies, co-orientational models focus on linguistic capability as a foundational requirement and indication of intercultural competence. Co-orientational models ask, “What happens in the intercultural encounter and how is success defined?” (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017, p. 72). These approaches are useful in part because they acknowledge that there must be some common linguistic understanding between individuals before growth in intercultural competence can take place. However, these models pay little attention to the importance of managing ambiguity, uncertainty, or indirectness (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Because of their emphasis on language competency, these frameworks cannot be used for conceptualizing or assessing intercultural competence in contexts where language difference is not a variable.

Developmental Models

Developmental models ask, “How does intercultural competence develop, and what are the levels of intercultural competence?” (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017, p. 72). These attempt to identify the stages of evolution that lead from a lower level of capability to more advanced stages. The major strength of these theories centers on their shared recognition that such capacity can grow over time (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). These theories are weak, however, in identifying the specific characteristics that foster such growth (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is an example of a developmental model. I describe this concept in greater detail below.

Causal Path Models

Causal path models ask, what factors contribute to the development of intercultural competence? (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Causal path models specify relationships among components. Their relative precision is a strength of these theories as they lend themselves to hypothesis making and statistical testing. The weakness of these approaches lies in the fact that they may identify too many causal paths to permit theory testing (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, which I describe in the next section, is an example of a causal path model (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Despite the fact that the literature offers multiple models of intercultural competence, profound theoretical issues remain. A key one of those concerns, mentioned above, is that the concept of adaptability, central to all of these approaches, has not been clearly defined nor validly measured (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Ironically, too, these conceptions may not be applicable in all cultural settings. Each of these models was developed in the West (where competency is seen principally as an individual trait), and hence may not take into consideration different cultural norms (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). Also, each framework posits the individual as a cognitive, rational being. Although a few conceptions mention anxiety, it is described as a cognitive state when they do. They do not address the emotional aspects of the intercultural encounter (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009).

Frameworks Relevant to this Research

While designing this research, I found that no single framework "fit" the aims and questions of the study. I examined the literatures related to intercultural competencies gained through study abroad and service-learning. I searched for literature on the relationship between

intercultural competencies and the power and positionality awareness process. Through these efforts, four conceptual frameworks helped me to ask relevant questions and came to influence my research design, data collection, and data analysis. These frameworks provide a more robust understanding of the phenomenon of intercultural competence as well as the varied and complex elements of the intercultural learning process. Please see Table X Frameworks Employed in this Study. I will clarify how these models relate to my findings in my conclusions chapter.

Table 1: Analytic Frameworks Employed in this Study

Framework	Concepts	Data Analysis
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity	The premise as a developmental model: "as one's *experience of cultural difference* becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's potential competence in intercultural relations increases	-IDI, education version, V. 3 -Semi-structured student interviews -Predeparture questions: 1-3, 6-7, 9-11 -Return questions: 2-7, 9, 11 -Key informant Return question: 4 -Document analysis -Participant application essays -Facebook posts -Journal prompts
	Concepts of Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism	
	Intercultural Sensitivity definition	
Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model	Service-learning context	-Semi-structured student interviews -Predeparture questions: All (1-11) -Return questions: All (1-11) -Key informant interviews -Predeparture questions: All (1-14) -Return questions: All (1-6) -Document Analysis -Participant application essays -Facebook posts -Journal prompts
	Focus on individual, contextual, and programmatic features in the change process	
	Importance of Dissonance	
	Inclusion on examination of power and privilege	
	Focus on critical reflection	
	Steps of process	
Deardorff's Process Model	Intercultural Competence definition	-Semi-structured student interviews -Predeparture: 1-3, 6-7, 9-11 -Return: 2-7, 9, 11

of Intercultural Competence	The requirement of Individual attitudes as a precursor to competence	-Key informant Return question: 4 -Document analysis -Participant application essays -Facebook posts -Journal prompts
	Steps in Process Model	
Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process	Service-learning context	-Semi-structured student interviews -Predeparture questions: All (1-11) -Return questions: All (1-11) -Key informant interviews -Predeparture questions: All (1-14) -Return questions: All (1-6) -Document Analysis -Participant application essays -Facebook posts -Journal prompts
	Trigger event/cognitive disequilibrium	
	Focus on positionality	
	Steps of process	

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

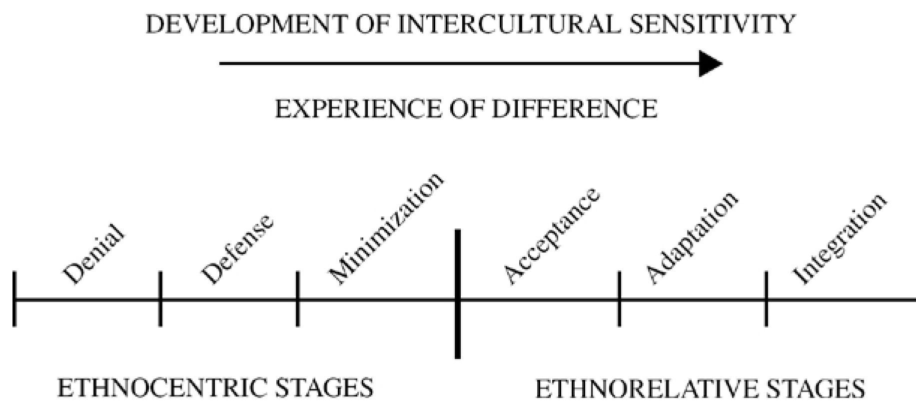
The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1986, 1993, 2004, 2013) is a highly influential framework in international education employed to describe how individuals experience and accommodate cultural difference. The DMIS is frequently used in training and is widely studied for its role in spawning the research that led to the development of the IDI assessment (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). I have included this model in this review because I used the IDI to gauge the intercultural competence of the students who participated in the program I investigated.

This conception (Figure 1 below) charts a continuum of ethnocentric to ethnorelative responses to cultural difference. Ethnocentrism describes a state in which individuals assume that their culture is central to all reality (Bennett, 1993) and consequently evaluate other cultures according to its standards and customs (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Ethnorelativism suggests, “cultures can only be understood relative to one another, and that particular behavior can only be comprehended within a cultural context” (Bennett, 1993: p. 46). According to

Bennett, the more ethnorelative the stage, the greater the depth of intercultural sensitivity an individual possesses. The fundamental premise of the "model is that as one's *experience of cultural difference* becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's potential competence in intercultural relations increases" [emphasis in original] (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003 p. 423).

Although there may be nuances in how a person responds to cultural difference, depending on the particular experience, one position is typically dominant for individuals. Bennett has posited that people respond to cultural difference in one of six ways: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, or integration.

Figure 1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Source: (Bennett, 1993).

I derived the following stage descriptions from Bennett (1993).

Denial. Individuals in the denial stage may have quite limited experience with, and understanding of, cultural difference. Persons evidencing this behavior experience "denial" and do not see cultural difference, except in very conspicuous situations. When asked about their culture, people in this stage may not know how to respond, as they simply do not see the role that

culture plays in their lives. They may ask naïve questions about other cultures and are generally disinterested in learning about them in any case. Individuals at this stage may avoid interaction with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. For instance, those individuals evidencing attributes characteristic of this stage may say, “There is no American culture” when asked about their American heritage.

Defense. Cultural differences can be threatening to individuals in the defense stage. They view variations in polarizing, stereotypical, and dichotomous categories. Individuals evidencing this stance tend to have an “us vs. them” mentality. They valorize their own culture while demonizing the cultures of others. A common variant of the defense stage occurs in the sub-stage of reversal. Individuals in a reversal state exhibit a dualistic view of cultural differences, but they level their criticism at their own culture instead of those of others. These individuals view other cultures in simplistic, highly romanticized ways. At this stage, these people in Defense may say, “Why don’t they just speak English?” or those in Reversal may say, “The French are just so much more sophisticated than we are.”

Minimization. Minimization is a transitional mindset between the ethnocentric stages of denial and defense and the ethnorelative stages of acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Individuals evidencing this stance acknowledge that cultural differences exist, but they minimize such incongruences. Instead, they may view aspects of their own culture as universal. They believe that “deep down, we are all alike” or “We are all God’s children.” Individuals in this stage often have a false sense of cultural awareness and sensitivity. By focusing on the similarities among cultures, those exhibiting this bent may unconsciously reinforce dominant social norms and may deny the experiences of those who do not share their cultural position or beliefs.

Acceptance. Acceptance is the first ethnorelative stage in intercultural sensitivity. Individuals in this phase understand that all behavior is culturally constructed. They are aware that norms vary from culture to culture, and they are interested in learning about those differences. People in this stage do not manifest an "anything goes" attitude towards cultural norms and behavior and may offer critical judgments of particular practices. The difference for these individuals is that such views do not arise from a place of ethnocentrism. Individuals in acceptance might say, "Diversity is beautiful; it would be boring if everyone were the same." Individuals in the acceptance state are curious about other cultures, but they do not yet possess the knowledge and skills to adapt their behavior easily to various cultural contexts.

Adaptation. Adaptation is the practice of behaviorally applying the mindset of acceptance. Individuals in the adaptation stage have developed effective communication skills. These people consciously modify their behavior to act in culturally respectful and appropriate ways. These empathetic individuals act as cultural "bridges" across diverse groups of people.

Integration. Individuals in the integration stage see their own culture within the context of other cultures. These individuals have internalized multicultural perspectives and tend not to be defined by one culture. As such, they may have lived abroad for several years or are bi-cultural and can "code shift" in and out of more than one culture.

As a developmental model, the DMIS recognizes that cultural competence may grow with time. That is, intercultural sensitivity is a mindset that changes with experience. In this way, individuals may progress from an ethnocentric level of intercultural sensitivity to a more nuanced, ethnorelative level, leading to more competent cross-cultural interactions.

The DMIS, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC)

More than two decades ago, Hammer (1999) designed a psychometric instrument, the IDI, to measure the orientations to cultural difference outlined by Bennett's DMIS. The IDI has been the basis for measuring intercultural competence in numerous studies in various industries and in many higher education institutions (Hammer, 2012). The IDI has been a popular instrument in quantitative and mixed-methods research in the international education field. However, there are some notable differences in key measures and stage conceptualization. Whereas the DMIS gauges intercultural sensitivity, Hammer's IDI assesses intercultural competence. Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) distinguished the terms intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence in this way:

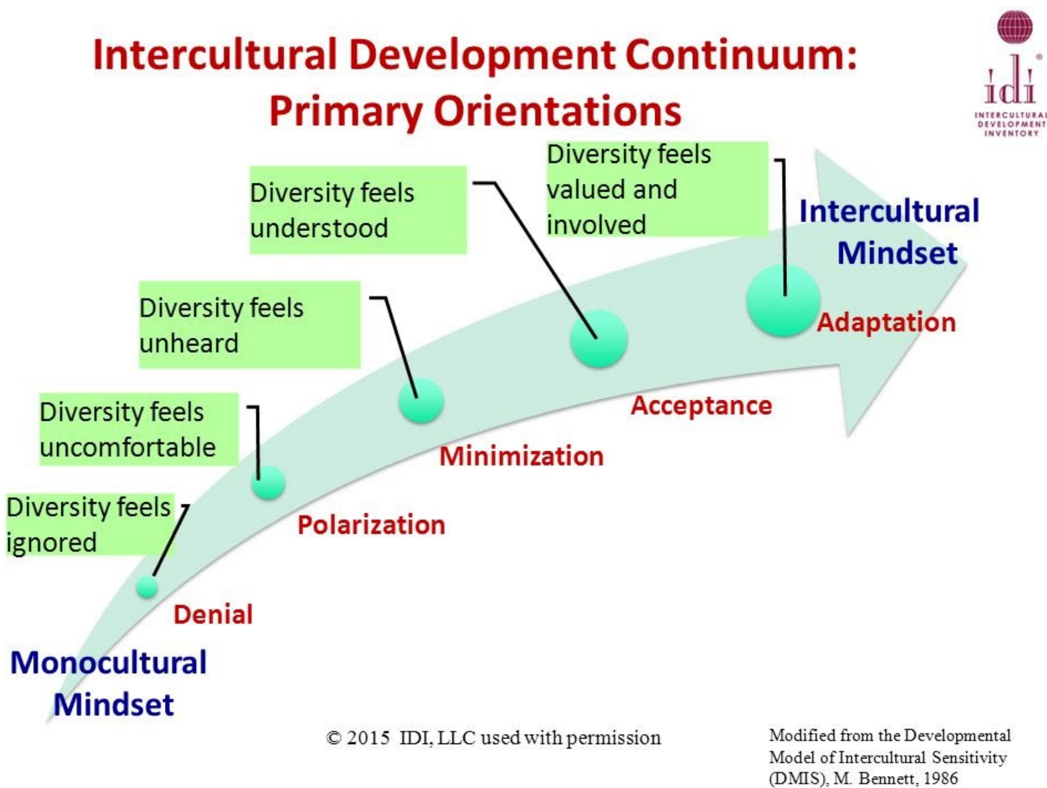
> We will use the term 'intercultural sensitivity' to refer to the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and we will use the term 'intercultural competence' to mean the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways. We argue that greater intercultural sensitivity is associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural competence (p. 422).

In addition to modifying the definitions of these terms, Hammer also altered two of the DMIS stages. Hammer changed the name of the Defense phase to Polarization to emphasize the dualistic orientation of this stage. He also incorporated two sub-stages within the Polarization orientation. Hammer kept the same conceptual understanding of the Defense stage as Bennett had offered in the DMIS but also added Reversal as a variant of the Polarization orientation. In Reversal, the individual views the host culture (that which they are visiting) as superior to their own. Although the host culture is no longer vilified in this stage, the student's orientation still maintains a dualistic character. The difference is that these individuals do not see that society as a threat (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). Hammer's revised categories were true to the

DMIS, but the various sub-stages he demarcated provided greater conceptual clarity than the general model had offered.

Hammer's IDC framework terminates at the Adaptation stage instead of the Integration stage, as in the DMIS. Hammer (2012) argued that these changes were necessary because the IDI could not accurately measure Integration. Integration, as described in the DMIS, "is concerned with the construction of an intercultural identity rather than the development of intercultural competence" (Hammer, 2012: p. 119). I provide more information on the IDI in Chapter 4. The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) provides a visual display of the stages assessed by the IDI. Please see Figure 2 below for Hammer's IDC.

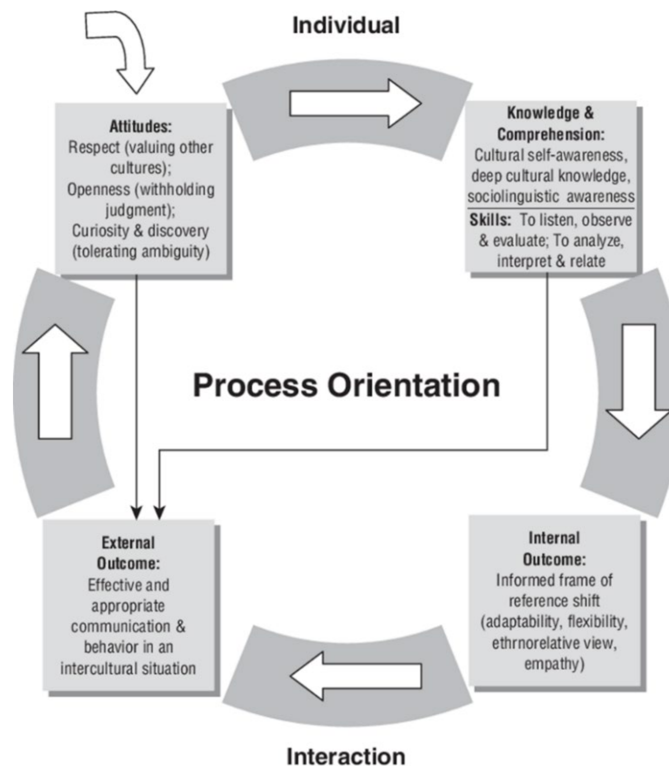
Figure 2: The Intercultural Development Continuum



Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006, 2009)

I have highlighted Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence in this review because her model provides a helpful overview of the intercultural learning process. Deardorff acknowledges the individual characteristics and attitudes learners bring to the experience. She recognizes that an internal shift in perspective must occur prior to the potential for an outward, behavioral shift. As noted previously in this chapter, her definition of and framework for intercultural competence were the first to be developed from research aimed at consensus-building among scholars and practitioners of intercultural competence (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Her Process approach is a causal path model. Deardorff developed her construct from grounded theory research that identified attitudes that foster the growth of intercultural competence. Those included respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery. Those attitudes are the necessary precursors to the development of new knowledge and skills. The potential knowledge gained includes cultural and sociolinguistic self-awareness and deep cultural knowledge. Listening, observing, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating are all potential skill growth areas. When an individual internalizes such attitudes, skills, and knowledge; they may shift their frame of reference. That internal change may lead to more appropriate communicative and behavioral responses in intercultural situations. Please see Figure 3 below for Deardorff's Process Model.

Figure 3: The Process Model of Intercultural Competence



Source: Deardorff, 2006.

Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model

I have included Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process model (see Figure 4 below) in this research because it is a model geared for service-learning experiences in an international context and because it helped clarify the mechanisms that may move an individual toward intercultural competence. Indeed, two aspects of this process framework were crucial for this study: the cognitive and other forms of dissonance that students experience during such study abroad programs and the curricular reflective interventions that address issues of power and privilege. Kiely's model appreciates that a student's personal experiences and characteristics affect each point of the learning cycle. His model also recognizes the key functions that emotions and relationships play in the processing of an experience. I do not focus on these issues here but

will return to the themes in his model and how they related to the research findings in the conclusions chapter.

This approach emerged from and in response to, Transformational Learning theories (Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 1998), which depict learning as an iterative, communicative process to make meaning of experience (Kiely, 2005; Martin and Griffiths, 2014). Learning occurs from the reflection on experience in dialogue with others (Martin and Griffiths, 2014). The goal of transformational learning is perspectival change, significant shifts in the way individuals "understand their identity, culture, and behavior" Kiely, 2005, p. 7). To attain this possibility, learners must undergo a process of conscientization (Freire, 1972) in which they gain awareness of their "habits of mind and the sociocultural and historical contexts in which they were formed" (Martin and Griffiths, 2014).

Kiely was interested in why some global service-learning participants return home, believing themselves "transformed" by their experience, while others do not (Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005). He, therefore, examined the individual, contextual, and programmatic features of global service-learning programs to comprehend the dynamic process of individual change that can result from them. Kiely has suggested that "dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape [as in the present study] the service-learning experience" (2005: p.8). As he observed, "Dissonance occurs frequently because much of what students see, feel, touch, hear, and participate in is new and incongruent with their frame of reference or world-view" (Kiely, 2005: p. 10). Kiely (2005) notes dissonance may assume historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative, or technological guises. Students studying abroad experience dissonance quite often, but not always at the same level of intensity.

Indeed, Kiely was the first study abroad scholar to argue that dissonance may be of different types and manifest distinct intensities. Low-intensity dissonance concerns communication challenges, physical adjustment to a new climate, housing, food, and other issues associated with living in a different culture. These experiences are stress-inducing, but most people can adjust to them in a relatively short time frame (Kiely, 2005). However, high-intensity dissonance is much more disorienting and complicated. It can be ambiguous or even quite shocking and may bring into question taken-for-granted values and assumptions (epistemic ad ontologic) about the world. Examples of high-intensity dissonance include witnessing absolute poverty, hunger, or disease (Kiely, 2005). High-intensity dissonance can indelibly affect students for years after their study abroad experience (Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005).

Kiely urged faculty leaders to design reflective interventions that prod students to examine their experiences critically and, relatedly, to secure emotional release (Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005). Accordingly, for Kiely, reflection was a crucial component of learning. Leaders should construct multiple opportunities and types of contemplative activities in their courses, including journals, seminars, presentations, and group discussions (Kiely, 2005). Global service-learning programs can serve as platforms for transformational learning when they include "preparatory learning, intentional program elements, challenge and support, mutual interest in engagement, and carefully facilitated reflection" (Hartman et al., 2018, p. 85) while addressing structural issues of power and privilege. (Clark and Nugent, 2011; Kiely, 2005; Yoder Clark, 2009).

Figure 4: Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model

Source: Kiely, 2005.

Theme	Meaning & Characteristics
Contextual border crossing	There are personal (i.e., biography, personality, learning style, expectations, prior travel experience, and sense of efficacy), structural (i.e., race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability), historical (i.e., the socioeconomic and political history of Nicaragua and US-Nicaragua relations within larger socioeconomic and political systems), and programmatic factors (i.e., intercultural immersion, direct service-work and opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue with diverse perspectives, and curriculum that focuses on social justice issues such as poverty, economic disparities, unequal relations of power) which intersect to influence and frame the way students experience the process of transformational learning in service-learning.
Dissonance	Dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience. There is a relationship between dissonance type, intensity, and duration and the nature of learning processes that result. Low to high intensity dissonance acts as triggers for learning. High-intensity dissonance catalyzes ongoing learning. Dissonance types are historical, environmental, social physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and technological.
Personalizing	Personalizing represents how participants individually respond to and learn from different types of dissonance. It is visceral and emotional, and compels students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Emotions and feelings include anger, happiness, sadness, helplessness, fear, anxiety, confusion, joy, nervousness, romanticizing, cynicism, sarcasm, selfishness, and embarrassment.
Processing	Processing is both an individual reflective learning process and a social, dialogic learning process. Processing is problematizing, questioning, analyzing, and searching for causes and solutions to problems and issues. It occurs through various reflective and discursive processes such as journaling, reflection groups, community dialogues, walking, research, and observation.
Connecting	Connecting is learning to affectively understand and empathize through relationships with community members, peers, and faculty. It is learning through nonreflective modes such as sensing, sharing, feeling, caring, participating, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting, and doing. Examples include performing skits, singing, dancing, swimming, attending church, completing chores, playing games, home stays, sharing food, treating wounds, and sharing stories.

The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process

I chose to include the Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process model in this analysis because Dunlap et al. (2007) (Figure 5 below) designed this model for use in service-learning contexts where race and class are salient factors. One central question to this research concerns how socioeconomic and racial awareness relates to the development of intercultural competence. Race and economic class can influence our choices and shape our actions. No other model in this study truly addresses how privilege relates to the learning process. I also chose to include this model because I expected that the majority of the participants in this study would be white since study abroad participants at Lorelai typically come from this population.

Lorelai College's enrollment is approximately 2,000 students, 17% of whom are students of color (Steehler, 2020). The costs for May Term travel courses typically range from $3,500 to $5,500. Although some scholarships are available, these are limited and usually only provide up to half of a course's program fee. Given the relatively low enrollment of people of color in the college and the cost of the travel courses, student participation in them has traditionally disproportionately been comprised of white, relatively socioeconomically privileged families.

All of the students who participated in this study were white. Each participant claimed membership in the "middle class" with its wide range of wealth indicators. Every participant came from a more affluent position than the community the program's students served. The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process model describes the process that white students undergo when grappling with the dissonance that encounters with cultural difference may engender. I expected to see students struggle with racial difference and economic disparities. This frame addresses how students become more aware of their White privilege.

A paramount goal of critical service-learning is to avoid perpetuating stereotypes of the "Other" or a "blame the victim" mentality. In this view, for participants to experience intercultural growth, they must have a basic understanding of their privilege. Some students may be aware of their relative advantage. Still, it is my personal experience that many young people at this stage in their lives (aged 19-20 years old) typically have not personally grappled with power and privilege issues. Indeed, one of the faculty program leader's goals for the students who participated in this study abroad effort was to encourage them to look inward to their experiences and become more aware of their racial and socioeconomic privilege.

I adopted the definition of "economically privileged" offered by Dunlap et al. (2007): "defined as having been reared in socioeconomic conditions that are markedly more financially

stable and secure than the socioeconomic conditions of the community with which the students engage in their service-learning sites" (p. 19). "White privilege" in this research refers to "a system of unearned benefits that whites can take for granted" (Dunlap, 2007, p. 22). While interrogating White privilege, it is useful to recognize the topic of "Whiteness," which refers to the "silent and normative dimension of racial relations" whereby those individuals born with "white" skin are bestowed an unspoken status "against which all other races are constructed" (Camacho, 2004, p. 36). To be clear, in no way do I mean to encourage the notion that it was the responsibility of the host Belize community to provide a particular experience or benefit for participating students in this way. Nonetheless, one of the key questions of this research concerned how their experience influenced the cultural self-awareness and understanding of privilege of this study abroad program's participants.

The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process model (Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, and Davi, 2007) provides insight into the principal characteristics of the awareness-building process in the service-learning program context. The awareness-raising process begins with a "trigger event(s)," a situation in which the learner is confronted with another person's life circumstances that highlight the student's advantages. That event leads to cognitive disequilibrium or "discomfort or confusion brought about by new information that must either be assimilated or accommodated into one's cognitive structure" (Dunlap et al., 2007, p. 20). The learner must wrestle with this new information and the associated emotions that arise from challenging one's way of knowing. This "grappling" stage is the point at which learners start to make meaning of their experiences.

In the personalization stage, individuals dive deeper into a community to understand its members and themselves better. During this phase, students discover more from local residents

about what they think and how they live and make personal connections with what they are experiencing. In the next stage, the “divided self,” learners experience a conflict between previous knowledge and experience and a new understanding of how the world operates. This can be a very emotional phase. Feelings of “white guilt” may emerge during this stage if students experience a non-white population and culture.

The final phase occurs when learners act to resolve their emotional and cognitive disequilibrium. Students will either accommodate or assimilate their new knowledge and experience. Students who adapt what they have learned question their previously unexamined stereotypes and prejudices. Those individuals ideally complete their service experience with a better understanding of themselves, their privilege, and their power positions in society. Nonetheless, learners who assimilate their program experiences dismiss challenges to their previous beliefs and deny their privilege. For these individuals, service experiences may serve to reinforce their existing prejudices and stereotypes (Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007).

Figure 5: The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process Model

Source: Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007.

The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process

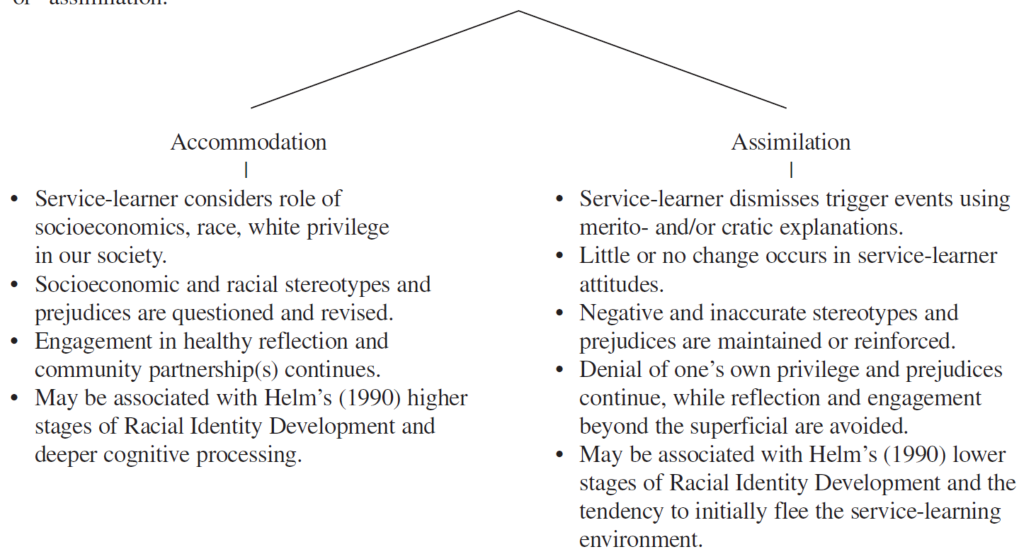
Stage 1–*Trigger Event(s)*: Trigger event(s) stimulates service-learner awareness of their own socioeconomic status and/or white privilege in contrast to community partners', resulting in "cognitive disequilibrium."

Stage 2–*Grappling*: Service-learner grapples with socioeconomic, white privilege, racial issues, and/or emotions. The meaning-making process begins.

Stage 3–*Personalization*: Service-learner listens to and communicates more intimately with community partners, and attempts to make greater meaning of what they are learning. The "self" continues to be challenged.

Stage 4–*The "Divided Self"*: Service-learner experiences a conflict between the intellectual and experiential self, and emotions such as "white guilt" as they continue their work in their service-learning environment, and further grapple to make meaning of the situation(s).

Stage 5–*Disequilibrium Resolution*: Service-learner reconciles/resolves the emotional confusion by cognitive "accommodation" or "assimilation."



Summary

This chapter has outlined essential concepts, critical context, and frameworks relevant to this dissertation. The frameworks used in this study may help to shed light on why some students return from abroad perceiving that they have been "transformed," while others remain relatively unchanged. There are many possible explanations for why particular learners accommodate and

others assimilate study abroad experiences. Much of the difference among participants can be linked to individual personalities and proclivities (emotional regulation, stress coping strategies, capacity for self-awareness and empathetic imagination, racial identity development, resilience factors, such as self-efficacy, curiosity, and flexibility, etc.). However, contextual and programmatic factors play a role in this process, as well.

While substantial literature exists concerning the development of intercultural sensitivity or competence in study abroad programs, few scholars have investigated the growth of intercultural learning competencies in the context of short-term global service-learning experiences (Brett, 2015). In a recent review of the literature, Brett (2015) enumerated the international service-learning studies that highlighted the growth of global perspectives and learning outcomes in nursing (Curtin et al., Green et al., 2011; Larson et al., 2010; Main, 2013; cited by Brett, 2015), engineering (Borg & Zitomer, 2008; Budny and Gradoville, 2011; Plumblee et al., 2012; cited by Brett, 2015), social work (Acquaye and Crewe, 2012; cited by Brett, 2015), and business (Pless, Maak, and Stahl, 2012; Metcalf, 2010, cited by Brett, 2015). This study adds to the still small literature on the development of intercultural learning competencies in global service-learning programs while filling a gap concerning analyses of the role that power and privilege may play in the development of intercultural learning.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

I investigated students' intercultural learning experiences during a global service-learning course to Belize while also examining the character and perceived effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies used to facilitate their learning during that program. This chapter outlines the paradigm worldview and ethical considerations that guided this effort. I describe the philosophical orientations and foundations upon which I build the methodology.

Crotty has posited that research studies require clarity concerning four distinct foundations or levels: "paradigm worldview, theoretical lens, methodological approach, and methods of data collection" (Crotty, 1998 cited by Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, P. 39). The paradigm worldview reflects the fundamental set of values, beliefs, and philosophical assumptions that guided the researcher in their inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 2005). This worldview reflects a philosophical orientation and dictates choices throughout the research process, including design and methods (Lincoln and Guba, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The paradigm worldview includes epistemology, ontology, and axiology (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited by Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The next section briefly outlines these philosophical aspects as they related to this study.

Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Assumptions

Ontology refers to beliefs about the nature of reality, epistemology examines the relationship between the researcher and that which is studied, and axiology relates to the role values play in research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). These philosophical premises are "crucial to understanding how you make meaning of the data you gather. These assumptions, concepts or propositions help to orientate your thinking about the research problem, its

significance, and how you might approach it so as to contribute to its solution" (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p. 27).

Ontologically, I believe that there is a singular reality as well as multiple realities. This "existential reality" references

> an experiential world with different elements or layers, some objective, some subjective, and some a mixture of the two. These layers of "completeness, order, recurrences which make possible prediction and control, and singularities, ambiguities, uncertain possibilities, processes going on to consequences as yet indeterminate" (Dewey, 1925, p. 47, cited by Feilzer, 2010, p. 8).

By singular reality, I mean that a physical reality exists outside of the human mind that is made up of the natural world, of which we are a small but significant part. The interpretations of reality (including assumptions about the natural world) are negotiated within the human mind and through collaboration with other human beings. Multiple realities exist because individuals come from varied backgrounds and have different ways of viewing the world.

Humans are social animals, and our experiences and the interpretation of our existence are formed through interaction with others. Individuals have the agency to create meaning, but their experiences may be constrained by social institutions connected to structures of power and privilege. In short, it is essential to recognize that although reality is socially constructed, social structures result in different experiences and unequal consequences for diverse groups of people.

In epistemological terms, I affirm that there is not an entirely "objective" reality in any situation involving humans. The same experience may be interpreted in multiple ways by individuals, and that fact can qualitatively affect the lived reality of specific experiences. As the Thomas Theorem states, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572). Through personal characteristics, including empathy and reflexivity, we can adopt a detached stance that allows us to view our roles in the construction

and interpretation of reality. Still, I do not believe that we can entirely separate ourselves from those interpretations. Moreover, “all knowledge is knowledge from some point of view” (Fishman, 1978, p. 531, cited in Feilzer, 2010).

The impossibility of total objectivity does not mean that researchers do not have an ethical responsibility to be reflexive. “Any inquiry begs the question of ‘what is it for’ and ‘who is it for’ and ‘how do the researchers’ values influence the research” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). The recognition that purely objective research is a myth places an even more significant burden on the investigator to acknowledge her assumptions, values, bias, and positionality while examining their influence on the inquiry. Hence, my axiological beliefs require an ethnorelative perspective, critical self-examination, and disclosure of known preferences, values, and potential biases.

Pragmatic Paradigm Worldview

The previous section outlined the philosophical underpinnings that formed the basis of this study. My epistemological, ontological, and axiological commitments align with those of the pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism as a research strategy arose from a number of thinkers from the nineteenth century onward, including Pierce, James, Mead, Dewey, Murphy, Patton, and Rorty (Creswell, 2014). John Dewey, perhaps one of the most popularly known pragmatists, argued that both positivist and subjectivist research seeks to find “the truth,” whether that truth be “an objective truth or the relative truth of multiple realities” (Dewey, 1925, cited by Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). In this sense, truth depends on context. Truth is neither something that exists “out there” waiting for someone to discover it nor solely ascertained within an individual’s mind. The pragmatic approach allows researchers to use varied data collection methods to search for multiple, socially contextual “truths” (Creswell, 2014).

Pragmatists challenge the dichotomy between positivism and constructivism. Some pragmatists have called for "a convergence of quantitative and qualitative methods, reiterating that they are not different at an epistemological or ontological level" (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). Additionally, pragmatists have an "antirepresentational view of knowledge" (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8), which contends that investigators should not aim to pursue research so that it can "provide an accurate account of how things are in themselves, but to be useful, to aim at utility for us" (Rorty, 1999, p. xxvi, cited by Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). This utilitarian view and the pragmatic paradigm's problem-centered approach encourages analysts to use "whatever works" (Creswell, 2014) to explore the multiple layers of phenomena involved in a research study.

Creswell and Plano Clark have described pragmatism as "focus[ing] on the consequences of research, on the primary importance of the question asked rather than on the methods, and on the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform the problems under study" (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 415). I have formulated my understanding of the pragmatic model from Creswell (2014) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), and here delineate the key assumptions and features of the pragmatic approach that prompted me to adopt it for this study:

- Pragmatism is pluralistic. Such researchers are not committed to any single worldview, whether post-positivism, constructivism, or transformational research. Adopting a pragmatist orientation allowed me to draw from critical theory's focus on power and privilege and the constructivist idea that we create our understanding of reality while crafting my research design.
- Mixed quantitative and qualitative data approaches allow investigators to collect varied sources of data to examine the same phenomenon or concept. As a result, analysts can "triangulate" the information they collect across different forms of information. Analysts

using these robust data collection methods may, therefore, gain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon or concern they study (Creswell, 2014).

- Pragmatist researchers address social questions or problems. Although theory development can occur in a pragmatist study, the main impetus for such investigations is typically application. Pragmatist analysts use such inquiries to discern ways and means by which to address a specific human concern more effectively.
- Pragmatist research design starts with an end goal in mind, i.e., what do you plan to do with a study's findings? I am very interested in the practical application of the results of this study and its implications for designing ethical education abroad experiences that promote intercultural growth and learning.

Critical Constructivism

The philosophical beliefs outlined above crystalize with the epistemology and ontology of critical constructivism, a theory of learning "directly connected to the inseparable acts of teaching and knowledge production" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 2). Critical constructivism is an appropriate layer to add here since this research focused on the intercultural learning and meaning-making process of students and the pedagogy employed to encourage such change. Beyond the philosophical underpinnings I have already elaborated, Kincheloe's (2005) primary tenets of critical constructivism applied to this research:

- The world is situated in a particular historical, economic, and social context that always shapes our understandings of it at any given time.
- All individuals (knowers) are both products and co-creators of particular historical and social milieus.

- A vital goal of critical constructivists is to understand how power affects both the validation of some specific information and the rejection of other data as knowledge. They are keenly “interested in the ways these processes help privilege some people and marginalize others” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 3).
- The purpose of education for critical constructivists is to engage students in the process of knowledge aimed at equipping them “to analy[ze], interpret and construct a wide variety of knowledges emerging from diverse locations” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 3).
- A key goal of teaching involves connecting the personal experiences of students to academic knowledge. Skilled educators “reveal how the social values, ideologies, and information they encounter shape” worldviews and encourage students to investigate and valorize knowledge produced by marginalized communities (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 4).

Summary

This chapter outlined my ontological understandings, epistemological stance, axiological perspective, and relevant ethical considerations for this dissertation. The pragmatic paradigm operationalizes my philosophical commitments outlined previously. Critical constructivism served as the basis for the interpretation of the study's data. The next chapter charts the methods and data analysis procedures used in this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

This inquiry explored the impact of a short-term faculty-led global service-learning course on its participants' intercultural learning. I employed a widely used assessment of intercultural competence and critically examined student responses to cultural difference to investigate the tensions and ethical implications of a short-term student-driven service program in a formerly colonized nation. The previous chapter discussed the philosophical and ethical assumptions that underpinned this study. This chapter details the data collection and analysis techniques I used to conduct it as well as the standards of quality I employed.

Research Questions

1) How do student program participants experience cultural difference and articulate their intercultural learning?
2) How do student experiences with cultural difference and perceptions about their intercultural growth compare with IDI measurements of their intercultural competence?
3) What programmatic and pedagogical factors appear to encourage and/or to constrain student intercultural learning?
4) How did the faculty leader address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with program participants?

Research Design: Pragmatism and Mixed Methods Research

Greene has defined mixed methods as a way of looking at the world "that actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished" (Greene, 2007: p. 20, cited by Creswell, 2014: p. 4). Pragmatism encourages scholars

to use various strategies to address multiple viewpoints. As such, that perspective was pertinent for this study's research questions. Qualitative research allowed an emic (from the perspective of the participant) approach, and quantitative research allowed an etic (from the perspective of the evaluative instrument) approach in addressing my research questions. This combination of emic and etic approaches provided a more nuanced picture because it encouraged a deeper exploration of the questions that guided this inquiry. The scores from the inventory indicate an etic/"outsider's" assessment of participants' intercultural competence while the semi-structured interviews provided the emic/students' perspective about the intercultural learning they experienced while abroad and what they perceived the origins of any growth in that competence to be.

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods research design. Researchers employing this approach collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and then combine the results into an overarching analysis (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This design is used across disciplines and is the most often employed approach to mixed-methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The primary assumption of convergent analysis is that quantitative and qualitative data produce "different but complementary" (Morse, 1991, p. 122, cited by Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 77) types of information that, once combined, "yield results that should be the same" (Creswell, 2014, p. 219). Hence, this design was originally conceived as a way to triangulate data (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

Timing

When designing a mixed-methods inquiry, the researcher must choose how to prioritize the timing and importance of the qualitative and quantitative data. Timing implies the overall relationship between the qualitative and quantitative domains of a study, including the times at

which each data strand is collected and analyzed (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This analysis employed concurrent timing, which meant that I addressed the quantitative and qualitative information at the same time (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). I collected and analyzed both forms of data during two phases: pre-departure (before students went to Belize for their program) and return (following participants' study abroad experience).

Phase One: Predeparture

During phase I, participants completed the quantitative assessment, and I also conducted pre-departure semi-structured interviews with each and with their faculty leader. Students completed the IDI (Educational Version, Volume 3) online edition before departing, which took each person approximately 20 minutes to complete. I collected the IDI data to determine a baseline stage of intercultural competence for each participant. My analysis of the interview data concerning student motivations, expectations, and prior service and intercultural experiences contextualized the pretest IDI results. Pre-departure participant interviews averaged 12 minutes. The pre-departure program leader interview lasted 30 minutes.

Phase Two: Return

During the second phase of the study, students again completed the same version of the IDI online immediately upon return from their travel course (as was College policy). Time elapsed between the IDI post-test collection and the return interviews because students did not return to campus until the fall semester, which did not start for three months following their program completion. Once students were back on campus, I invited them to engage in a second semi-structured interview with me. Those conversations averaged approximately 27 minutes each. I also interviewed the faculty program leader again to ascertain her perceptions of the experience. That interview lasted 50 minutes. Although these interviews were not particularly

lengthy, the post-return interviews lasted twice as long on average as the pre-departure interviews. Since I used the same questions during the second interview as during the first, it seems clear that students and the faculty leader had much more to say after their experiences abroad than prior to their departure.

Weighting

Weighting refers to how the researcher prioritizes the two strands of data within their research design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Although both the quantitative and qualitative data were useful in addressing the research questions for this study, I prioritized the qualitative strand, as more in line with my philosophical stance described in the previous chapter, as well as my analytic emphasis on the perspectives and meaning-making of student participants.

Setting

Institutional Choice

Lorelai College is a pseudonym for the institution whose students participated in this inquiry. Lorelai is a private, four-year undergraduate liberal arts institution located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States that enrolls approximately 2,000 domestic and international undergraduates. I currently serve as the Associate Director of International Education at the college. In this role, I work with our international student population and U.S. students who study abroad. Approximately 10 percent of the College's student population participates in an international educational experience during their course of study. Relevant College offerings include week-long Alternative Fall/Spring break programs, three-week-long faculty-led May Term travel courses, summer internships, and one semester or full-year study abroad. The majority of Lorelai College students who study abroad participate in short-term opportunities to do so. Student participation in faculty-led May Term courses has averaged 190 students per year for each of the past five years.

May Term Intensive Learning Travel Courses

Lorelai College offers first-year students through seniors the opportunity to participate in a course during the month of May after the regular semester has finished. “The Intensive Learning Term, also known as May Term, provides students with the opportunity to learn in an immersive environment” (“Intensive Learning Term (May Term),” (n.d.) These courses may be held on campus, or they may involve travel. Travel immersives may take place domestically or abroad. Students are required to take either an on-campus or travel May Term course during their tenure at Lorelai, with a few exceptions granted for students participating in a specialized internship or intensive learning independent study. Lorelai typically hosts about twelve travel courses each year. For 2017, Lorelai offered thirteen travel courses to a variety of destinations, including Belize, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Peru, Rome, Sweden, Thailand, and three to various locations within the United Kingdom.

Belize Travel Course Description. Elizabeth [pseudonym] served as the faculty leader for the travel course to Belize during the 2017 May Term, which ran from May 7 to May 27, 2017. Although a faculty leader from Lorelai College designed the pedagogy and curriculum and administered the May Term course, Peacework (more information to follow) organized the logistics and facilitated the community service dimensions of the experience. Peacework is a non-profit organization dedicated to sustainable development. Elizabeth has collaborated with Peacework for approximately six years to host an international travel/study opportunity that combined service with reflection and dialogue. This three-week May Term service course took place in San Ignacio, Belize, in 2017. Twelve Lorelai students worked alongside community members in a local primary school. As a point of reference, individual faculty leaders develop

the May Term course descriptions used for student recruitment. The description of the Belize course follows:

> Service Learning and Peacework in Belize
> How can we build global understanding and peace through international development, education, and service? This question will serve as a framework for our experiences with Peacework in Belize. Students will travel to San Ignacio, where they will be immersed into the local community and culture through service-learning experiences. With a primary school as our service base, we will work side-by-side with local teachers, school leaders, and laborers in a developing community. Students will also explore the local Belizean culture, history, and natural beauty through music, food, and day excursions beyond the school site. To be effective in our service, students will study the culture and history of Belize as well as the current governmental and social support systems. These varied experiences offer students much to think about as they consider the differences between their own lives and life in a developing country. The entire trip will be contextualized with readings, shared writings, and many conversations (Lorelai College Belize Program Promotional Poster, 2017).

Peacework. Peacework connects academic institutions and corporations with local communities in diverse locations around the world to develop sustainable, relevant, and innovative projects. These efforts span seven disciplines related to development: agriculture, business, education, engineering, health, public service, and technology ("About Peacework," 2014). Each site has a project management team that assess the social, environmental, economic, and community impacts of project efforts.

Peacework's leaders and staff seek to cooperate closely with local community leaders and institutions. Each Peacework team completes thorough site assessments to design "customized, collaborative, culturally-sensitive, and creative" programs ("Accelerating Collective Impact," 2014). Peacework suggests that its staff works to increase participants' individual awareness of the people and cultures of the world while expanding "personal, social, and economic opportunity" for citizens in the local community ("Cross-Sector Solutions," 2014). Peacework has offered educational programs in San Ignacio for several years and has worked closely with

that community's leaders to ensure that the service component of the course reflects residents' needs.

Site

San Ignacio, Belize

This May Term travel course occurred in San Ignacio, Belize. San Ignacio is located 114 kilometers (approximately 71 miles) from Belize City, the nation's capital on the coast, and is 13 kilometers (about 8 miles) from the Guatemalan border. Participating students occupied rooms at a local inn, Martha's Guesthouse, in the center of town and walked to their service site during their stay.

Bishop Martin Roman Catholic Primary School

Students completed the service portion of the course at Bishop Martin Catholic Primary School. Bishop Martin is a parochial elementary school that serves more than 400 students aged five through eleven. Students worked in pairs and were assigned to a teacher and a classroom. Each morning, participants offered lessons to the primary school children focused on art, mindfulness, and movement. During the afternoons, students worked alongside local community members to construct an outdoor stage for the school and to improve the school's playground.

Participant group selection and profile

Student Selection

Twenty students applied for the twelve openings for the course, making it competitive. The application process required a one-page essay describing why they were interested in the class, any previous experience with the topic or location, and anything else they believed germane for the faculty leader to consider during the selection process. The office of the Dean of Academic Affairs collected the applications and checked applicants' educational records to

confirm compliance with academic integrity, student conduct history, and minimum grade point average requirements. Once students passed this eligibility check, the Dean's office sent the list of eligible applicants to the course faculty leader. That professor then met with each student for an informal one-on-one interview. The goal of the meetings was to address student questions, gauge their relative maturity and flexibility, and obtain a sense of their commitment to the course (Elizabeth, Pre-departure Personal Interview, 5/1/2017). Ultimately, the lead professor selected twelve individuals to participate, and all of those students enrolled in the course. Nine of the 12 participated in both phases of this research. One individual participated in only the second stage of the study. Each student completed informed consent forms prior to their involvement in this inquiry.

Table 2: Student Participant Characteristics

Name (Pseudonym)	Level	Age	Major	Permanent Residence	Previous Travel out of the US
Cora	Junior	22	Education	Local	Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico Cruises
Eva	Sophomore	19	Art History	Within State	Yes, some travel
Georgia	Sophomore	19	Business Administration	Within State	Yes, some travel
Hazel	Sophomore	20	Psychology	Local	None
Louise	Junior	21	History	Within 50 miles	None
Miranda	Sophomore	21	Health & Exercise Science	Within State	None
Nora	Junior	20	Education	Local	Canada
Rachel	Sophomore	19	Education	Local	None

Sadie	Sophomore		Business Administration	Neighboring State	Caribbean cruise
Violet	Sophomore	20	Education	Within State	None

Student Characteristics

This study explores the experiences of 10 students in a short-term Lorelai College service-learning travel course. I obtained demographic information for each student participant from two sources: their May term travel course application and the demographic question section of the IDI. Lorelai is an undergraduate institution, so all participants were traditional residential undergraduates between 19 and 22 years of age. All of the program's students were either rising juniors or rising seniors at the time of the course. No male students signed up for the course. Although the offering was open to all students, each participant identified as a female. All students were U.S. citizens. All program participants identified as White. The home or permanent residences of nine of the ten students were located in the same state in which the college is located, and several were born and raised within driving distance of Lorelai. The tenth student hailed from a neighboring state. Students were pursuing a variety of courses of study, including education, business, history, psychology, art history, and health and exercise science. Participants brought varying levels of experience with service. All but one student had participated in volunteer activities in high school, at Lorelai on-campus, or through their churches. However, no participant reported having engaged previously in a service-learning experience. Half of the students had never before traveled outside of the United States. Three individuals had undertaken limited travel outside of the U.S., and two had traveled more frequently to locations elsewhere in North America and Europe.

Recruitment

I approached the faculty leader of the Belize global service-learning course in October of 2016 and asked if she would allow me to use her travel program as the focus of this study, and she agreed I could do so. She also agreed to participate in the pre-departure and post-program key informant interviews, to which I referred above. I submitted IRB proposals to both Lorelai College as well as Virginia Tech, both of which were approved.

I used purposive homogeneous total population sampling for the student group, meaning that I included all students participating in the Belize service-learning May 2017 Term course in my research. Each Lorelai international offering is required to provide at least one pre-departure meeting to talk with students about program requirements, goals, expectations, and logistics. I attended the three pre-departure sessions for the course, observed, and took notes. I spoke briefly to the group about my research at the first pre-departure meeting and answered questions concerning my study.

After that first meeting, I emailed each student to describe my study in more detail and to solicit their participation formally. I met with interested students to review the consent form and to address any questions about the inquiry. The course enrolled 12 students. I received permission to use the IDI scores from each and obtained consent from 9 students to complete both pre-departure and return interviews. A tenth student participated in the return interview but did not complete a pre-departure interview.

Table 3: Sampling Considerations

Research Process	Sampling Procedures Quantitative Data	Sampling Procedures Qualitative Data
Sampling Procedure	Purposive sample of all students enrolled in the Belize May Term	Purposive convenience sample derived from original sample

Sample Size	12 Students	10 Students, 1 Key Informant (Professor)
Permissions Needed	– Consent from participants to use IDI data in the research – IRB Approval Process	All student participants were asked to sign an informed consent document indicating that they had agreed to participate in the pre-departure and return interviews -Consent from Key Informant -IRB Approval Process

Instruments and Data Collection

The data collection methods employed for this study included administering a pre-and post-test trip IDI assessment, conducting pre-departure and return interviews, and gathering documents related to the May Term course. I collected interviews and IDI scores in two phases; the first occurred prior to departure, while the second took place following travel course completion. I analyzed course documents during the first and second phases as well. I organized the data by category and set up recording sheets in MS Word and Excel to catalog information. In the interviews, I gathered data concerning each students' goals and expectations for their IL experience, critical cultural incidents that provided insights into their evolving self-understanding and cultural awareness, the meaning they assigned to those incidents, and what the students perceived the lasting effects of their experience(s) to be.

Data Sources

As I have noted, I used quantitative and qualitative data sources to address the research questions. Table 4 provides an overview of the data collection.

Table 4: Overview of Data Collection

Research Process	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Data to be collected	– Individual educational version of IDI, V. 3 on all student participants – Demographic questions attached to the IDI – Context-related questions included in the IDI	– Open-ended, semi-structured interviews (students) – Open-ended, semi-structured key informant interview – Course promotional materials – Accepted student application essays – Journal prompts – Course syllabus – Course Facebook page
Data recording quality standards	– Confidentiality – Instrument and score reports managed through IDI site and software – Group IDI report	– Pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality – Interview Protocol – Recorded and transcribed interviews

Quantitative Instrument: IDI Administration/Score Reports

Intercultural Development Inventory. Any Lorelai College student who studies abroad for a semester or who participates in an international May Term travel course must take the Intercultural Development Inventory v.3 before leaving for their experience and upon their return. I administered the IDI to the Belize program student participants before they departed and again after they returned. I provided usernames and passwords to each student through email to access the instrument. Students could complete the IDI online at their convenience as long as they did so within the time frame outlined below prior to their departure and no longer than three months after their return. Students also could come to the Office of International Education and complete the assessment at one of our computers. The IDI consists of 50 questions, 19 demographic questions, and four qualitative questions that require respondents approximately 20

minutes to complete. All of the program participants completed the IDI pre-test by May 1, 2017, and the post-test by September 15, 2017.

The IDI claims to measure intercultural competence, which reflects the “ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways” (Hammer et al. 2003: 422). Hammer developed the IDI to test and refine Bennett’s comprehensive Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), discussed in chapter two. Since its first use in 1999, researchers have employed the IDI in several fields (Hammer, 2011), including teacher preparation (Cushner and Mahon, 2009; Yuen and Grossman, 2009), nursing (Kruse, Didion, and Perzynski, 2014), languages and intercultural communication (Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, and Bown, 2014); Martinsen, Alvord, and Tanner 2014), business and leadership (Hammer, 2010; Lokkesmoe, Kuchinke, and Ardichvili, 2016; Stuart, 2009), and international education (Anderson et al., 2006; Anderson, 2016; Engle and Engle, 2004; Goode, 2007; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Pederson, 2010; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige, 2009; Vande Berg and Paige, 2009).

Hammer has revised the instrument twice since 1999 in response to psychometric and empirical testing. Scholars have used the current third version of the Inventory in numerous studies and found it to be a valid and reliable assessment instrument to measure intercultural sensitivity (Hammer, 2011; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003; Paige et al. 2003). Researchers have also found the IDI to be generalizable across cultures (Hammer, 2012). The Inventory has been translated into 17 languages to date, and respondents can choose to complete the assessment in any of those translations simply by clicking on a button (“IDI General Information, 2020). The IDI can only be administered by a licensed IDI Qualified Administrator. I completed the three-day training to obtain a license in February of 2016.

IDI Predeparture Administration. I administered the IDI to the entire student sample before their study abroad experience. Participants completed the instrument online at a time convenient for each, as outlined above. Once the student submitted her responses, the program automatically produced a score that corresponded with a developmental stage on the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC). As indicated in Figure 1 in the previous chapter, the IDC includes five stages: Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation. The Inventory generates a report containing the following:

- the developmental orientation score (where the respondent score falls on the intercultural continuum),
- the perceived orientation score (where the respondent believes her score will fall on the IDC),
- the orientation gap score (the difference between the perceived and developmental scores),
- trailing orientations (unresolved tendencies to revert to an earlier stage at particular times of stress or in specific contexts), and
- the cultural disengagement score (sense of connection/disengagement from one's own cultural group) (Hammer, 2011).

I employed the results from this first IDI administration to obtain a baseline intercultural sensitivity score for each student.

IDI Posttest Administration. After the students returned from their experience abroad, they again completed the IDI. The instrument generated fresh scores and categorized each student on the intercultural competence continuum. I then compared participants' original scores with those following their study experience to determine what change, if any, had occurred in

their position on the IDC continuum after their experience abroad. I also checked for shifts in their orientation gap results. The orientation gap is an indicator of a respondent's level of self-awareness of how she typically responds to cultural difference. In my previous experience as an IDI administrator, if a student changes his/her/their location on the IDC, there generally is a change in the orientation gap score too as the person develops a better understanding of how s/he/they responds and adapts to cultural difference.

Qualitative Data: Course Documents

Course documents included promotional materials, application materials, reflective journal protocol, and student posts in the Belize 2017 Facebook group. I had access to the students' application essays and Facebook posts. I obtained the assignment prompts, but I did not have access to the student essay responses to them. My goal in examining the prompts was to understand how the faculty leader integrated reflective activities into the course. I chose to rely on student interviews as the sole means for assessing student perceptions of the experience because I wanted to hear unfiltered responses that would not be affected by performance (grade/evaluation) related pressures.

Document Analysis. As noted above, I attended pre-departure meetings for the travel course. I examined class documents, including marketing materials, syllabus, critical reflection assignments, Facebook Posts, and any other relevant content that could provide insight into how the faculty leader sought to prepare the students for their intercultural experience. I paid particular attention to any references to readings and assignments related to cultural difference and issues of power and privilege.

Qualitative Data: Recorded Interviews

I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews to gain a better understanding of student perceptions of their experience. I interviewed participants before departure and upon their return. The interview protocol addressed their motivations for enrolling in the course, prior travel experience, previous service experience, how they understood the idea of service, their expectations of service, their knowledge of other cultures, how they understood the idea of privilege, critical incidents, and epiphanies, their overall evaluation of their learning experience, and its perceived impact.

Semi-structured Student Participant Interviews: Prior to Departure. At our first or pre-departure, interview I asked students the following questions:

1. Please tell me how and why you decided to participate in the Belize Intensive Learning (May Term)?
2. Have you traveled outside of the U.S. before? If so, where?
3. What was the travel for? (vacation, study abroad, volunteering, and/or mission work)
4. Have you participated in service-learning previously, either domestically or internationally? If so, please tell me about that (those) experience(s).
5. What does "service" mean to you?
6. How would you describe your level of knowledge/awareness about cultures other than your own?
7. Please share your thoughts about Belizean culture. What is your perception of the Belizean people? How would you describe differences/similarities between your own culture and Belizean culture?
8. What expectations (if any) do you have about the service part of the course?

9. What do you think you have to contribute to the community you will be working to assist?

10. What challenges do you think you will face in interacting with residents in Belize?

11. What knowledge, skills, and experience do you hope to gain from this course?

Semi-structured Student Participant Interviews: After Return. I interviewed each student participant after their return. At that second interview, I asked the following questions:

1. What does service mean to you now?
2. Can you tell me about a memorable learning experience that you had while visiting your host community? What was it about that event that made it significant for you?
3. Please tell me about any particular moments or incidents in which you felt particularly uncomfortable or out of your element while in Belize.
4. Tell me about any epiphanies or "a-ha" moments you had whereby you felt like you were starting to understand San Ignacio more fully.
5. Has your IL experience has changed your perceptions of the Belizean culture? Of the Belizean people? If so, how?
6. Has this experience changed how you think about other cultures in any way? Please explain.
7. How has this experience influenced how you think about your own culture?
8. Before you left, I asked you what the word "privilege" meant to you. What is your understanding of privilege now? Has there been a change in the way you think about this?
9. Do you think that this opportunity has changed how you regard other peoples or cultures in any way? Please explain.

10. What stands out to you about how your faculty leader prepared and guided students for this experience? Were there particular readings, activities, reflections, or discussions that helped you prepare for and process the experience? Why do those stand out to you now?
11. Is there anything else about your experience that you would like to share?

Key Informant Interview: Pre-Departure. Green has outlined Ten Principles of Good Practice for International Service Learning (ISL) Pedagogy to encourage the transformative potential of global service-learning experiences (2014, pp. 243-247). In my interviews with the lead faculty member and students, I paid particular attention to learning goals related to the following concepts (Green 2014: 244): power, privilege, otherness, culture, critical consciousness, intercultural sensitivity, and cultural self-awareness. I designed interview questions that focused on the intercultural learning aspects of Green's principles of good practice (2014, pp. 243-247), namely principles one, five, six, eight, nine, and ten:

> Principle 1: Establish learning goals for the ISL program or experience.
> Principle 5: Intentionally design learning activities connecting international service work to course content as related to learning objectives.
> Principle 6: Intentionally design reflection activities connecting international service work to course content as related to learning objectives.
> Principle 8: Integrate classroom learning and international community learning.
> Principle 9: Let the international experience guide the learning.
> Principle 10: Plan for students' reentry.

I gathered data concerning faculty leader expectations and desired goals and outcomes for the experience, and how course design addressed each of the above aims. For the first interview with the faculty leader, I asked the following questions:

1. Please tell me how and why you became involved in international service-learning.

2. Why are you interested in the particular location you selected for your trip? Did you have a relationship with the host culture or local community prior to this experience?
3. You have been working with Peacework to develop this course. Can you provide an overview of this process and the relationship you have with that NGO?
4. How do you define "power" within the context of the service-learning experience?
5. How have you encountered imbalances of power in service work? Please elaborate.
6. How did you address these imbalances of power?
7. What are your teaching, learning, and service goals for this experience?
8. What does "service" mean in the context of this travel course?
9. How are your learning goals enhanced by the international context of the program?
10. What are your goals (if any) for interaction between local residents and your student group? What would you like your students to learn from community members?
11. Reflection is a key element of service-learning. What are the themes for the readings and critical reflection activities?
12. Are the activities designed to promote reflection at the individual level of self-awareness? Do they address larger structural issues? If so, can you provide some examples?
13. Do any of these critical reflection activities concern cultural difference, issues of power, privilege, and/or social justice? If so, can you provide some examples?
14. How do you plan to address issues of power and privilege with your students? Do you have specific assignments that address those concerns? If so, could you provide one or more examples for me?

Key Informant Interview-Faculty Leader: Return. I met with the faculty leader after she returned to campus from the experience abroad. I wanted to gain her perspective concerning how the trip ultimately fulfilled or did not meet her expectations and goals. I asked the following questions:

1. Please tell me about your course. Describe a typical day for the students.
2. What key challenges did you face? How did you address them?
3. Did you meet your teaching, learning, and service goals for this experience? In what ways did you reach your goals? In what ways were your aims not accomplished?
4. Either in your reflection sessions or your graded work, what did the students report being particularly challenging about this experience? What did the students recount to be particularly rewarding?
5. Can you share any particular events that highlighted imbalances in power and privilege?
6. How well do you think students navigated issues of power and privilege in the context they encountered in your course? What anecdotal or coursework evidence do you have to support your examples/observations?

Table 5: Interview Schedule

Name	Pre-departure Interview Date	Return Interview Date
Cora	4/24/2017	10/26/2017
Eva	4/25/2017	8/31/2017
Georgia	4/21/2017	1/9/2018
Hazel	4/26/2017	10/30/2017
Louise	No Pre-departure interview	11/2/2017

Miranda	4/21/2017	10/23/2017
Nora	4/25/2017	10/30/2017
Rachel	4/20/2017	10/30/2017
Sadie	4/27/2017	10/27/2017
Violet	4/19/2017	10/9/2017
Elizabeth (Faculty)	5/1/2017	11/15/2017

Data Analysis Procedures

I utilized a constructivist perspective to analyze the qualitative data I obtained via interviews. I employed coding techniques from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) for the qualitative strand of the study. I analyzed the interviews first and then the course documents through the procedures outlined below. After signing a confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement, a third-party service transcribed the interviews. I listened carefully to each interview while reading the draft transcripts and made corrections as needed. I then began re-reading the transcriptions for content. These first passes through the transcripts helped me to gain a basic understanding of how the students made sense of their experience. I began writing analytic memos at this point to note phrases that "jumped out" and to track early interpretations.

Coding

Saldaña has argued that "a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (2013:4). I coded in two phases, an initial coding stage followed by focused coding. In the initial open coding stage, I read each document or transcript closely to examine it for essential terms, emotions, events, actions, or themes. I applied a preliminary label to those factors to begin the process of

categorization (Neuman, 2006). To determine which labels to use, I often used in-vivo coding, or "words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes" (Saldaña, 2013: p. 264). I organized these codes in tables in Microsoft Word and Excel.

During the focused coding phase, I created categories from the most frequent or significant initial codes related to each other conceptually (Saldaña, 2013). I used values coding at this stage to "reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2013: p. 264). At this point, I imported the transcripts into Quirkos, a CAQDAS software that provides a graphic interface to create and group codes. When I faced roadblocks during the process, I went back and performed line-by-line coding, which typically resulted in a new perspective on the data. I then used axial coding to look for connections among the codes. In axial coding, I focused more on the codes created during the initial phase than on the original data. This was the analytic step during which I began to make linkages among the codes and during which nascent themes emerged (Neuman, 2006).

Table 6: Data Analysis Overview

Quantitative Data	**Qualitative Data**	**Data Analysis**
IDI, v. 3 Pre-Test (Phase I)		-IDC continuum -IDI Orientation Gap score -Descriptive statistics
IDI, v. 3 Post- Test (Phase II)		-IDI continuum -IDI Orientation Gap score -Comparison on Pre-and-Post- test scores/stage -Descriptive statistics
	Key Informant Semi-Structured Interview (Phase I): Faculty Leader	-Open, axial, selective, In-vivo coding -Coding for themes
	Semi-structured interview (Phase I): Student Participants	-Open, axial, values, selective, In-Vivo coding -Coding for themes

	Key Informant Semi-structured interview (Phase II): Faculty Leader	-Open, axial, selective, In-Vivo coding -Coding for themes
	Semi-structured interview (Phase II): Student Participants	-Open, axial, values, selective, In-Vivo coding -Coding for themes
	Document Analysis (Phase I): – Marketing Materials for IL Recruitment – Syllabus – Handouts from Pre-Departure Sessions – Accepted student application essays	-Open, axial, selective, values, In-Vivo coding -Coding for themes
	Document Analysis (Phase II): – Facebook posts to Belize group page from students – Journal Prompts	-Open, axial, selective, values, In-Vivo coding -Coding for themes

Table 7: Analysis/Findings Overview

Chapter	Theme	Process	Data Collection Method
Chapter 5: Student Perceptions and Experiences with Cultural Difference	Encountering the Other: Conceptualizing cultural difference Interacting with the Other: Interaction style in the face of cultural difference Encountering the Self: Growth in cultural self-awareness	Analyzing the ways through which participants perceive, make meaning, and engage in intercultural encounters	Semi-structured interviews (All questions from Student Pre-departure interviews; Questions 1-7 from Student Return interviews) Document Analysis
Chapter 6: The Impact of Pedagogy and Program Design on Intercultural Learning	Factors that encouraged intercultural learning Factors that constrained intercultural learning	Examining the relationship between the course's pedagogical aims and programmatic features with the participants' intercultural learning	Semi-structured interviews (Question 8 from Student Return interviews; All questions from Key Information Predeparture and Return interviews) Document Analysis
Chapter 7: Conclusion	Connections among intercultural learning outcomes, pedagogical design, and the	Drawing from the findings of chapter 5 and 6 of this study, this chapter explores the connections between	Analysis of chapter 5 and 6 findings

	intercultural learning process	participant experiences with intercultural learning and the pedagogical and programmatic design of the travel course studied in this research.	

Protection of Human Subjects

Informed Consent

Starting with the May Term courses for 2016, Lorelai College began using the IDI to assess participants' growth in intercultural sensitivity in its faculty-led IL travel courses. Since the College requires students to complete the Intercultural Development Inventory multiple-choice assessment before departure for a study abroad program, and again upon their return, I did not need to obtain consent for this aspect of my data collection. However, to use that data for this research, it was appropriate that I attain student consent. I asked each participant to complete a Qualtrics survey that indicated whether I could use their scores in my research. Every student agreed to allow me to collect and analyze their IDI data.

In my role at Lorelai, I am permitted to attend the pre-departure sessions for each course. However, as a courtesy and sign of respect, I obtained permission from the faculty leader to attend those gatherings for the Belize course. I also obtained consent from each participant in the manner outlined previously. I advised all participants of their rights as research participants, and I received written consent from all students for their interviews.

Confidentiality

I promised confidentiality to participants. As a general proposition, it is the researcher's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of the identities of study participants when possible. Although participation in this inquiry entailed very low-risks, there was the possibility of discomfort if a student were to compare his or her scores with those of another student or if she

were to learn of her stage score on the Intercultural Development Continuum without the benefit of a full contextualizing discussion. In consequence, I offered to meet individually with participants who wanted to learn more about their scores. I shared IDI profile reports with individual students confidentially in one-on-one meetings in my College office. I emphasized that the IDC is just a "snapshot" in time that measures a current capacity level and that the measure does not represent a judgment of an individual's worth.

Apart from sharing such results with individual interested students, I have kept the interview and IDI data confidential. I have not released that or any personally identifying information or results to anyone beyond myself and my Committee Chair. Should the IRB randomly audit this study, I may need to share such information with representatives of that office. I have employed pseudonyms for all interviewees.

Record Keeping

I have maintained interview transcripts in a locked file cabinet in my office to which only I have access. I labeled digital recordings with pseudonyms as well. I have kept the digital recordings password protected in a file on my personal computer. The only document containing identifying information about participants is a key that matches pseudonyms with the individual's personal information, which I have maintained separately from the transcripts in a password-protected digital file on my computer. I will destroy the digital recordings following the successful defense of the dissertation and publication of any findings, or not longer than four years from the time of participants' individual interviews with me.

Ethical Issues

My Status and Role as a Researcher

The epistemological stance I have adopted values multiple voices. I also have proceeded on the view that the most successful research results from a collaboration between the

investigator and his or her research participants. I do not believe that the analyst is THE "expert." As noted previously, I also do not claim that investigators can be objective. We all have interests and biases that influence every aspect of the research process—from our selection of the topic to the methods we use to the way that we interpret the data we obtain. I think that we must be explicit with our viewpoints, upfront about the biases we know about, and aware that we may be unintentionally influencing our research through any unexamined predispositions. As a result, I valued reflexivity in this research. I strove to be open to the information I gathered and sought continually to be vigilant about how I brought myself into each stage of the research process. I have kept notes on my reactions or issues that arose in a memory log.

I also think it is vital to be aware of issues of power relationships. Although I had no direct authority over the students involved in this study, I was nevertheless in an administrative position, which some may have perceived as obligating them to participate in this research. It is also possible that individuals were hesitant to be critical about their study abroad experience, believing that I would only want to hear positive stories because of my post. I am also an educated, white, straight cis-gendered woman. There may have been individuals in this research who were not comfortable sharing information with me because of those characteristics.

Although there is no "magical" solution to these potential problems, I sought to mitigate these possibilities. First, I was honest and straightforward with the students about these concerns. I reminded each, both verbally and in writing, that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to participate at any point and for any reason. Secondly, I have training and experience in counseling, which has helped me become skilled in building rapport with others, including the students who were engaged in this study. Third, I stressed that I wanted to hear about their experiences, good or bad. I did not want them to perceive that they had to filter their

responses for me. Lastly, I stressed that their stories would help me advise future faculty and study abroad students concerning how they could take fuller advantage of the opportunity that such experiences can potentially provide. This appeal particularly seemed to prompt students to share their perspectives in what I perceived to be an open and honest manner.

Quality, Trustworthiness, and Rigor

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have discussed standards for validity and have emphasized the importance of ethics in research. One of the strategies that they have stressed is ensuring that an analyst's investigation is polyvocal, meaning that the diverse voices of research subjects are present in their text. I addressed this goal by using thick description to describe the students' experiences and by applying "in-vivo" coding (Saldaña, 2014) to respect the words that the students' expressed. I have employed those "in-vivo" comments made directly by participants throughout the findings chapters to highlight the issues and themes that arose during this research.

Generalizability is a central concept in quantitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In a quantitative study, the researcher seeks to take the results from a sample population and transfer the findings to a broader relevant population. To achieve this, investigators tend to rely on non-probabilistic sampling techniques to ensure that their sample mirrors the broader group in which they are interested. I did not use those techniques and instead relied on purposive sampling to investigate the experiences of a specific group of students involved in a particular travel course. Although this analysis was a mixed-methods study, the weighting of the study falls on the qualitative strand.

In studies where qualitative analytic strategies are used (or are prioritized as in this mixed methods study), the goal of the research is not the transferability of study results to the

population at large. Qualitative inquiry instead addresses specific phenomena or concerns in a detailed way. This form of research values the insights gained from even a small sample (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Such investigators have adopted slightly altered criteria for evaluating the quality of such analyses (Bailey, 2007; Patton, 2002).

With that in mind, although this study did not seek statistical generalizability, it did aim to secure analytic generalizability, which refers to generalizing to theory instead of a population (Bailey, 2007; Yin, 2014). This can occur when researchers compare results from their study to previously developed theory. Investigators use their data to confirm, modify, extend, or reject the theoretical framework(s) to which they seek to generalize analytically (Yin, 2014). Since this research was the first to examine the relationship between intercultural learning and student perceptions of privilege explicitly, I aimed to add student voices to empirical measures of intercultural development as well as the interplay between positionality and intercultural learning.

Limitations

This section identifies five limitations to the study: 1) lack of gender, socioeconomic, age, racial, and ethnic diversity of the participants, 2) sample did not include host community members, 3) researcher reliance on student reports, 4) the timing of the second IDI assessment, and 5) no mechanism to determine the long-term impact of the experience. Although this inquiry offers helpful insights into student experiences with cultural difference as well as yielding implications for education abroad practitioners, the size and scope of this research was limited. Transferability was further limited by the homogeneity of the student participants. Every participant identified as a white, middle-class, cis-gendered female. The sample was also drawn intentionally and entirely from the Lorelai student population. I did not interview community

members who could have given me more data to consider student learning and efficacy as well as the program's perceived impacts on the community.

Another possible limitation to consider is that the timing of the second administration of the IDI assessment may not have allowed students to process their experiences fully, which may be a reason why the results of that post-test inventory were not totally in-line with student reports or my personal assessment of student intercultural growth. The lack of a mechanism to check back in with participants at a later date also limited my understanding of the longer-term impacts of their Belize experience on their attitudes toward cultural difference.

Summary

I followed Creswell's guidelines (2014) for convergent parallel research design as I collected both quantitative and qualitative data. I analyzed that information separately and then compared those analyses to understand how the two sets of findings related. I gathered quantitative data and qualitative data at two distinct times from the faculty leader and student participants: before departure and following their return from their experience.

Chapter 5

Findings: Student Perceptions and Experiences with Cultural Difference

This chapter and that following present the results of the study by research question. I offer relevant student and faculty statements to illustrate those findings. The themes I identified related to attitudes about cultural difference, interaction styles in the face of that cultural difference, the development of cultural self-awareness, the pedagogical and programmatic factors influencing the achievement of those outcomes, and the overall intercultural learning process for participating students.

Findings: Research Question 1

This section discusses the key themes that arose from analysis of the primary research question, "How do student program participants experience cultural difference and articulate their intercultural learning?" Those included:

1. Encountering the Other: Conceptualizing cultural difference (thinking and feeling)
2. Interacting with the Other: Interaction style in the face of cultural difference (doing)
3. Encountering the Self: Growth in cultural self-awareness

Theme 1: Encountering the Other: Conceptualizing Cultural Difference

As noted above, participants completed the IDI and participated in semi-structured interviews with me prior to their departure. That IDI developmental orientation score provided a baseline indicator of each participant's intercultural competence. Students discussed their motivations, assumptions, and expectations for the travel course during their pre-departure interviews. Their IDI scores and interview responses provided insight into the perceptions students had concerning the course as well as the mental frame onto which they would hang their future observations and experiences.

Perceived Barriers

Each student expressed interest and a measure of trepidation about what the experience would bring. When asked what concerns they had or barriers they expected to encounter during the course, students voiced apprehensions about physical discomfort, language difficulties, interacting appropriately with community residents, differing cultural norms, and coping emotionally with discomfort and guilt.

Physical Discomfort. Most students expressed concern about the physical discomfort they expected to experience while on the travel course. Those included the high heat and humidity of inland Belize in May, concerns over liking and possibly becoming ill from the food, and the physically demanding construction projects they would complete in the afternoons. Most students who mentioned these apprehensions seemed prepared to take them in stride. Two students seemed to be particularly preoccupied with the course's physical demands.

Interaction with Community Members. All students shared some level of anxiety about interacting with host community members. Their concerns included language skills and awareness of cultural norms and appropriate communication styles. Students indicated that they wanted to be sensitive and respectful to their host community members, but many worried they might misstep and offend them. Even though English is an official language of Belize, students expected that those they were likely to encounter were more likely to communicate in Spanish. Although two of the participants were minoring in Spanish and looked forward to using their language skills, the remainder of the group worried about communicating correctly and properly. Cora summed up these concerns,

> I don’t know a lot about other cultures. Other than being out of the country that [one] time, I haven’t really been immersed into it, so I don’t really know a lot about them [other cultures]. There could be a culture barrier, language barrier. I know the primary language is English, but there are still probably some that speak Creole, Spanish, and all

> these other languages that I may not know. Also, a culture barrier here. What may be a culture norm is not normal over there and vice versa, just learning those norms and what's appropriate over there that may not be here (Cora, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/27/17).

Rachel worried about how her American privilege would color Belizean perceptions of her:

> They are so different from us. We are privileged here in America. They don't have many of the privileges that we do. I want to relate to them without coming across as 'I'm better than you,' I definitely don't want to portray that at all (Rachel, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/20/17).

Coping Emotionally. Students reported a variety of emotions in advance of the course, alternating amongst positive anticipatory feelings such as hope, excitement, and gratitude to less pleasurable reactions of anxiety, guilt, and worry concerning being ill-equipped to handle the experience maturely.

> I think it's going to be a little bit of a shock because she [the lead professor] talked about them living … their homes, like dirt floors, and some of them can't afford shoes or backpacks to go to school, or something. It's going to be a real shock because we have everything we need here. So, I think it's going to be a real, real shock (Violet, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/19/17).

> I try not to think about sad cultures, like people who don't have what we have in the United States. I think that will be a big challenge for me in that to be immersed in it, but not for it to make me too sad. Because I have a hard time with balancing, 'How can they live like this when I live like this?' (Nora, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/25/17).

No students reported they had previous knowledge of Belize culture and history, nor direct experience with anyone of Belizean heritage. This fact likely fueled their collective feelings of insecurity, unpreparedness, and anxiety about connecting with local community members. Indeed, eight of the ten students expressed some level of uncertainty about their readiness to engage cultural others during their travel course.

Motivations

Understanding the motivations behind involvement in the travel course provides a glimpse into how participants defined their roles. Were they learners, helpers, providers of a service, passive recipients, etc.? Would those perceived roles help or hinder them as they interacted with the host community? Motivations can also provide insight into how participants made sense of the experience. Did they think of the course as a vacation? As another class? Did they see it offering a short-term benefit or as an experience that could bestow a certain status?

Students decided to become engaged in the course for a variety of reasons. No participant reported simply one motivation for participation, and their rationales often overlapped. I have divided the motivations articulated by students in their first interviews into four categories: vocational, self-betterment, philanthropic, and personal satisfaction.

Vocational Motives

Vocational reasons included academic advancement, the delight of working with children as future teachers, professional development, the pleasure of working with a beloved expert from their department, and skills enhancement. This group of students participated in the program to reach goals related to their particular degree requirements and/or to help to realize future career plans. Four participants were education majors with plans to be classroom teachers. These students especially were excited to attain tangible experience in developing and delivering classroom lessons for a group of ethnically and socioeconomically different students. School systems value this type of experience when they are looking to hire new teachers. Several students articulated this pragmatic, career-focused motivation as a reason for their engagement in the course.

Self-Betterment Motives

Seven students indicated motives related to self-betterment including, increasing intercultural competence, gaining self-awareness, growing in maturity, and improving emotional coping skills. These students viewed the travel course as a way to learn more about themselves. They imagined that the program would be an "eye-opening" experience that would help them grow. They imagined themselves emerging from the experience with enhanced knowledge, maturity, and experience dealing with complex emotions. These motivations would play out in the cultural self-awareness theme I discuss in the sections that follow.

Philanthropic Motives

Philanthropic aims included serving as an American "ambassador" and "making a difference" through service work. A romantic vision drove these two students. They defined America as a bastion of harmonious diversity and wanted to share this open-minded, welcoming attitude towards their host community's citizens. Both participants who wanted to serve as American ambassadors indicated they had been ashamed of the Trump administration's political rhetoric and wanted to present a different face of America to the Belizean people.

Four students, who had a "heart for service," related that they felt called to participate primarily because of the service project element of the experience. This suggested that they felt a moral obligation to "help" others. Three students with this motivation had no prior involvement with service-learning, but they had volunteered before through their religious institutions. Hence, they brought a touch of missionary zeal and an attitude that service requires sacrifice to the program. They expected to experience physical as well as emotional discomfort from witnessing the poverty of the people there. They viewed the host community in Belize as people who "didn't know any different" and were in need of help from a more advanced group. The irony that a group of teenaged outsiders could serve as such experts was lost on these students. These

philanthropic motivations would surface again in the themes of binary logics and American-ness that I discuss below.

Personal Satisfaction Motives

Six students shared personal satisfaction motives. Personal satisfaction motivations included having an “adventure,” “experiencing” other cultures, and experiencing satisfaction from helping others. This perceived sense of fulfillment from helping others differed from those students participating in service for philanthropic reasons. Those students seemed to evidence a moral obligation to serve. The three students who expressed personal satisfaction motivations focused on sharing how the experience would feel for them as individuals and/or what kind of status it would bestow. When discussing the course's service aspects, these individuals underscored the emotional byproduct of “helping,” in a sense, they suggested they valued feeling the emotional prestige of service work. Attaining such sensations appeared to be of greater personal importance than the service itself. For instance, one student with this perspective referred to the “high” one receives providing such assistance. The students with a philanthropic perspective emphasized a one-way view of service as well, but one focused on the act of giving instead of receiving. While the students with a philanthropic motivation saw service as an obligation requiring sacrifice, these participants suggested they saw service as a way to experience feelings of fulfillment and be proud of themselves.

Status. Other students with personal satisfaction motivations talked about “experiencing Culture” as a commodity. Two of these individuals kept a running tally of the places they have visited and the unique experiences they have gained by visiting each. One such student talked about how they were choosing to “pay for this [uncomfortable, unsophisticated] experience”

instead of choosing one of the travel courses to Europe. In their view, participation in this travel course was another mechanism by which to develop and confirm their cultural capital.

The College and faculty leader's process to choose program participants helped to solidify the idea for these students that the travel course was a highly selective opportunity and one, therefore, in which their eventual selection equated with higher status. As I outlined above, students first had to apply for the class by submitting an essay describing why they wanted to enroll in the course, what previous knowledge they had about the topic or location, and any other information that would help the faculty member deem the student worthy of involvement. The responsible professor reviewed their essays and conducted interviews with those who made it through the first round of selection. Finally, she accepted a cadre of students following the interviews.

Experiencing Culture. I have capitalized "Experiencing Culture" here deliberately to emphasize the view of culture as something distinct that exists outside of oneself. Five students suggested they wished to experience another culture, which they perceived as a static entity that one could "experience," which is how those students discussed Belize Culture as well. They saw the travel course as a way to experience "authentic" Belizean Culture. This commodifying idea is commonly, if somewhat unconsciously, reproduced again and again in the study abroad field. Study abroad practitioners often praise immersive opportunities where one can really "experience the Culture." Study abroad marketing materials often promote this message as well (Michelson and Álvarez Valencia, 2016). Perhaps this viewpoint gets filtered down to study abroad participants regardless of whether any given program makes such claims. While it is true that Lorelai's program places students in situations where they would be in direct contact with local community members for extended periods, this idea can become problematic if students see

those individuals as symbolic proxies of Belizean culture. In these situations, a lack of cultural knowledge and simple miscommunications may reify assumptions and entrench stereotypes. The "experiencing culture" trope also furthers the idea that an authentic, static, singular, and distinct Belize culture exists and can be known and experienced by an outsider in a short period. The next section discusses how the theme of experiencing culture and having an adventure tied in with questions of authenticity and status for many program participants.

Adventure. Six students talked about the upcoming travel course as an adventure. We can understand this in a broad sense since eight of the effort's participants had little prior travel experience. Rachel's comment summarizes this orientation:

> I'm just really excited about it, I've never been out of the country before, so it's going to be a completely new experience. Never been on a plane. I'm very excited about going to such a different country and experiencing a completely new culture (Rachel, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/20/17).

Rachel's observation echoed comments about "experiencing culture" that I heard time and again from other participating students. For a third of the participants, this experience would be their first travel outside of the United States. Another third of the group had traveled with their families on brief vacations to Canada or Mexico or had experienced cruises with stops in various Caribbean nations. Only two participants claimed experience outside of North America and characterized themselves as having more moderate travel experience, i.e., visiting Europe. So, in a very practical sense, this was a new experience for most program participants that, accordingly, loomed as an adventurous undertaking.

This theme of the course as an adventure continued after departure and appeared in several student posts on the program's official Facebook page. Four of the 20 posts mentioned the word "adventure" directly. For instance, the very first post depicts smiling participants

wearing Lorelai College shirts huddled around the faculty member with the text, “We’re off on our grand adventure!” In the following example, students published photos of the sea, participants in bathing suits, and seaside “huts” along with the text,

> Hello everybody!! Today we treated ourselves to a weekend vacation! After a 2-hour van ride to Belize City and a 40-minute water taxi ride, we arrived in Caye Caulker!! We’re staying in a beautiful hotel here. I can’t believe it! This afternoon we got to spend relaxing in the ocean and by the pool—followed by a great dinner and some French fries to satisfy our American food craving frenzies. Off to bed now to get some sleep before our snorkeling adventures tomorrow morning. Goodnight from Belize ♡ (Facebook Post, 5/20/17).

While not literally using the word “adventure,” the language and photos chosen served to advance that trope in other posts. For instance, one such included posed pictures of the young women smiling in bikinis and snorkeling. That text read,

> Today we ventured out to sea to do some snorkeling! We got to see many different types of fish, including eels and barracudas! Many of us also got to experience our first-time swimming with sharks and stingrays! Our evening ended with a nice dinner by the water! (Facebook Post, 5/21/17).

Although it is surely understandable that students could conceive of their travel course as an adventure, that inclination carries a danger. It may encourage the objectification and commodification of the experience instead of seeking to obtain deeper insights from it.

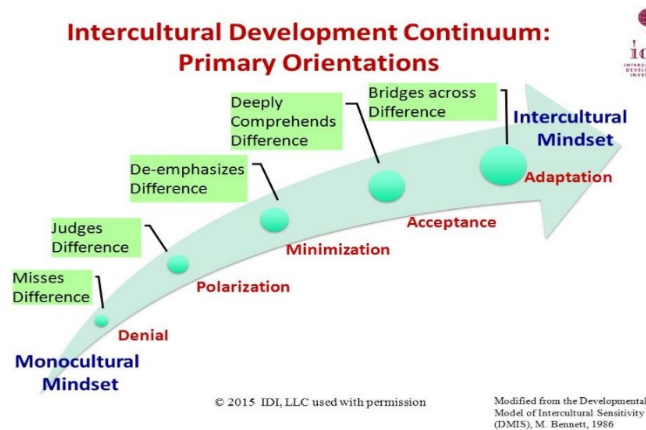
IDI Pre-Test Scores

The IDI pretest scores correlated with a stage on the intercultural development continuum. The measures provided a snapshot of each student participant's cultural mindset prior to their departure. The IDI report includes three scores: for developmental orientation, perceived orientation, and orientation gap. The Developmental Orientation (DO) result determines the respondent’s placement on the IDC. The developmental orientation stage is the outlook from which the respondent recognizes and reacts to cultural difference. The Perceived Orientation

(PO) score reflects how individuals view their effectiveness in engaging cultural difference. Since people generally tend to overestimate their abilities, this score almost always depicts a higher stage than the one into which respondents test. The Orientation Gap score is the numerical difference between the DO and PO scores. The smaller the gap between these scores, the more self-aware the respondent is of their ability to communicate across cultural differences effectively.

Participant scores for the IDI pretest fell into two developmental stages: Polarization (5 students) and Minimization (5 students). As a reminder, figure 6 depicts the primary orientations of the IDI continuum.

Figure 6: The IDC



Polarization

The Polarization group may be overly focused on differences. Those with this result may favor the host community but in a superficial way. They will tend not to look profoundly or search for commonality between themselves and the culture. The developmental opportunity for these students is to search for shared attributes or views and to develop a less negative evaluation of specific differences. The IDI report for students within the Polarization stage includes an additional score: Defense versus Reversal. Defense ("My culture is better than others") and

Reversal ("Other cultures are better than mine") are two different adaptations to the same "us versus them" mentality.

Students belonging to the Polarization group had a range of self-reported knowledge about other cultures, which may have influenced whether they leaned toward Defense or Reversal. Two of the five students (Hazel and Violet) tested right in the middle (50 and 51 respectively) between Defense and Reversal. This result seemed to make sense intuitively as they indicated in their interview responses that they had no direct experience with "other cultures" and characterized themselves as being not very knowledgeable in such terms.

Rachel, Eva, and Georgia had relatively high (57, 60, and 70) scores towards reversal. Although Rachel had little direct experience with other cultures, she articulated that she valued "diversity," especially for its importance in her role as a future elementary school educator. This value may have primed her to judge differences positively. Eva is the daughter of a German national and was "raised in two cultures." Georgia has dual citizenship in Italy and the United States. Despite their modest IDI placement, both Eva and Georgia claimed to be knowledgeable about other cultures. Perhaps their identification with two primary cultures predisposed them to privilege differences over similarity. This observation also highlights the discrepancies between one's self-assessment of intercultural sensitivity versus the score resulting from completion of the IDI.

The Administrator's Guide to the IDI indicates that any OG scores greater than seven are significant. The OG scores for participants ranged from 24-42. Interestingly, the OG scores for the Polarization group (39, 39, 40, 40, 42) were larger than for the Minimization group (24, 25, 25, 31, 32). One could then say in a general sense that for *those* participants, those who tended to score higher on their placement on the IDI continuum also tended to have a slightly better

awareness of their abilities than those who placed lower. In other words, those who "knew themselves" better were also more skilled intercultural communicators. This observation makes sense intuitively and reaffirms the link between self-awareness and intercultural awareness.

Minimization

The Minimization group may be reluctant to consider how culture contributes to differences. These individuals recognize and do not place value judgments on difference, but they may shy away from probing deeper cultural nuances to focus on commonality. They de-emphasize difference and appeal to the perceived universality of the human experience. They aspire to "treat everyone the same." The developmental opportunity for those in the minimization stage includes pushing them to explore differences and to come to understand how those shape attitudes and values. Reflection about power and privilege in their own lives is typically a crucial part of such developmental tasks.

Scores for four of the five students in the Minimization stage were very close together. Louise, Nora, and Cora (90, 90, and 93, respectively) indicated that they had no direct experience with cultural difference and were not very knowledgeable about other cultures. Sadie (94) and Miranda (100) claimed to have some knowledge of other cultures through classes. Sadie said that she had direct contact with people from different countries because she attended a prestigious boarding school for her high school education. This result is intriguing because it suggests that other factors beyond direct contact with members of another culture primed students in the Minimization group toward looking for commonalities across cultures.

The IDI pretest results and student comments provide context for how each primarily responded to cultural difference as well as the developmental task likely to be necessary if they were to progress further along the continuum, i.e., increase their intercultural sensitivity. The

sections that follow detail how the students conceptualized and reacted to cultural difference experienced during the travel course to Belize. I examine student perceptions of their experience using their own words and then circle back to the posttest IDI scores to flesh out the intercultural learning that occurred as a result of this educational activity.

Encountering the Other: Expectations and Learning In Situ

It is widely acknowledged that human beings observe and make sense of their reality by making comparisons (Kurtz, 2015; Murphy, 2002). This process of comparing and contrasting is heightened in the face of cultural difference. Each of the students in this study used comparison to inform their perceptions of the host culture, their home culture, and themselves. Some students used comparison as a starting point for more in-depth explorations of their own values and larger societal structures, whereas others remained firmly ensconced in binary logics. Those "logics" included traditional versus modern, poverty versus privilege, and those who provide help versus those who need help. I address and provide examples of each of these stances next.

Binary Logics

During the pre-departure interviews, students relayed their taken-for-granted assumptions about the U.S. and Belize. Students viewed the United States as a modern, technologically advanced superpower and saw it as the home of innovators and experts obligated to help "less-advanced" societies. Other than an article about Belize from the *CIA Factbook* and a section from a travel guide, students admitted that they had not investigated Belize through coursework, films, or literature. Nor had they interacted with anyone from that country.

Despite this lack of knowledge and experience, students consigned Belize to the "Third World." Although this phrase is neither a useful nor appropriate way to categorize nations, the term has become commonplace in the average American's lexicon. It connotes a series of

stereotypes about the people and living conditions of those residing in nations so labeled. These stereotypes create a vision of people living in extreme poverty with no job and little or no education. People are also often seen as victims of a backward and corrupt government.

Students were very focused on their host country's perceived deficits before their departure to Belize. They envisioned a rural, dirty, and impoverished community in need of a lot of help. This attitude prevented their recognition of community resources even as it actively displaced the agency of community members. In this way, students assigned what author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has called a “single story” to Belize (Adichie, 2009). A single-story presents a univalent view of a foreign country or an unfamiliar group of people. The danger of a single-story is that this one-sided perspective denies a reality that is nuanced and multilayered. I argue that this deficit-based-viewpoint formed the basis for each of the binary logics participating students evinced.

I provide interview quotations to highlight each logic in the sections that follow. Although most of these logics operated during the predeparture and early phases of the travel course, students often could not recognize their perceptions at that point. Accordingly, I took most of the following quotations from their return interviews after they had had an opportunity to reflect on their assumptions and experiences.

Poverty vs. Privilege. The theme of poverty vs. privilege reflected how entrenched Belize as a single-story of poverty was for many participants. Georgia’s comment summarizes the thoughts of many students:

> Yeah, I didn't know a lot about Belize beforehand. I think stereotypically speaking; I knew they were Central American. I was just, again, America is known as the superpower of the world, and then next you think of China or Europe as these reigning Super Powers. I thought, ‘Oh, they've probably got a lot of poverty, a lot of you know, not developed areas,’ and I when I first got there, I felt bad for them in a sense because you see these homes that are falling apart and these children running around without

> shoes on. Just, it's a very different experience, you see the cattle walking down the street, and at first, we were saying, ‘Wow, these poor people.’ That was all of our opinions at first, just that they have so little (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/19/18).

Hazel explained that she thought privilege was relative, but her explanation still relied on one vision of the Belizean experience.

> In America, I think that when we say we’re privileged, we have the best things, and there [Belize] privilege is definitely, ‘I have running water, or I have some form of electricity. I have a few pairs of nice clothes,’ the small things that we would consider not too privileged here, there [Belize] is definitely, completely different. It kind of depends maybe on the culture, but being privileged just means you have the things that you need in life, not the things that you necessarily want, or the high-end things that’s kind of the trend [in the U.S.] (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Miranda acknowledged the danger of judging cultures based on differences while still evaluating Belize against American standards:

> Me personally, I don’t think I’ll ever do this, but it would be possible for someone from the United States, someone who would look down on them [because] they don’t have ‘real’ floors or ‘real’ houses, or whatever. In any sense, look down on them differently. Not necessarily mistreat (Miranda, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/21/17).

Miranda’s statement also speaks to strains of paternalism to be found within the next theme, those who provide help versus those who need help.

Those who provide help versus those who need help. The theme of those who provide help versus those who need help sets up a dynamic whereby the United States is the nation with the expertise and resources, and Belize is an impoverished country in need of that assistance. In addition to this paternalistic view of resources, this theme recognizes that for many students, a spiritual orientation toward charity drives their motivation for “helping.” During the first interview, the students conveyed their previous experiences with service. None had any prior experience with service-learning. However, a few did have some experience with volunteer activities through service-based campus organizations or mission trips through their churches.

Since participants with volunteer experience typically gained it through mission work, these students were primed to view the service experience in Belize through a charity lens. The danger in viewing service in this way is that it is "deeply imbued with a sense of hierarchy and superiority. Philanthropic work reinscribes the privileged status of those engaged in such work by emphasizing their superior position in relation to those who become the object of their caring" (Mindry, 1999, p. 188 cited by Camacho, 2004),

During their pre-departure interviews, I asked participants to define what service meant to them. Students had different motivations for engaging in service, but each student defined the idea straightforwardly as helping others. Some interviewees seemed "called" to serve as an expectation of their spiritual or ethical obligations. No student indicated that any harm could arise from engaging in this type of work. However, during their return interviews, I asked the same question. Many participants seemed to have developed a deeper understanding of their motivations for helping and the potential consequences of aiding their host community. The following statements illustrate movement from a predeparture binary logic towards a deeper understanding gained through course materials and interaction with community members.

> Service means to me now giving my time and energy to … Well, I used to think of it as helping people, but now looking back, I realize that 'helping' kind of … it sounds pretentious. It puts us on a higher pedestal than the people that we're serving. I think now it [service] just means that you're giving your time to serve people that need someone there in that time (Sadie, Return Personal interview, 10/27/17).

> I want to say service is like helping people; I mean, in a sense, it is, but it's not like … I don't really like that word [helping]. Helping is, 'Oh I'm higher than you' sort of a thing, or 'I'm helping you because you really need it.' Now it's sort of like working *with* them from the same level and doing things with them to benefit them. Yeah, I think that before [we] went, I was, 'Yeah, we're going to help them. They need a lot done.' They did, but we did it in a way where it was working with them to do our service instead of 'fixing things' necessarily (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

In the following comment, Cora acknowledged the danger when paternalism gets wrapped up in ideas of service and demonstrated her growth in understanding this link:

> Trying to put it in words is so difficult, but I do think we can learn from other cultures. I do think it [this experience] has changed my perspective on other cultures. Even though I don't think I did this, I probably did. I probably looked down on, not just beliefs but just other cultures in general, 'Oh, we really need to help them, we are here to help them.' They may not have clean water, so we need to help them. I've learned that we are not here to help people because that makes us look down upon others, but we are here to serve them, and it's a different world! That's definitely changed my perspective on cultures because no longer do I, or if I did before, I don't look at them that way right now like, 'Oh, we need to go to Africa to help them. We need to go here to help them.' It's we are supposed to serve one another. They are here to serve us, and we are here to serve them. Like I said earlier, there's a lot we can learn from one another (Cora, Return Personal interview, 10/26/17).

These quotations highlight some growth in self-awareness and a deepening understanding of how unexamined beliefs can unintentionally cause harm.

Traditional vs. Modern. The theme traditional versus modern again echoes the single story about Belize that sets up the dichotomy of the United States as the modern, technologically advanced, more socially enlightened nation. At the same time, Belize occupies the impoverished, rural, socially backward, low-tech position. Georgia's observation highlighted such naïve assumptions:

> To them, they had the world because they A didn't know any different and B, to them, they have food on their table every day, and they have a roof over their head of some sort, whether it was a little tin roof, it was something. And so, to them, they were, 'What more could we need in life? We have families, we have love, we have food, and we have somewhere to stay.' To them, they were content (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

This idea that "they may be poor, but they are happy" is a repeated theme I heard from students,

> I did have stereotypes of what it would be like. I was just imagining like poor living conditions, and as I said before, I realized that they were just … We continued to say that they're just the happiest people we've ever met. All of them were just so happy and so grateful for our presence … (Sadie, Return Personal interview, 10/27/17).

This narrative does not allow for a nuanced understanding of how power and privilege play out in individual lives, nor for a deeper analysis of structural inequalities in which the West, and the United States, in particular, certainly play a role. Students who shared this viewpoint seemed to see these comments as compliments: “We could learn so much from the people of Belize,” etc. However, this mindset belies the responsibility and complicity that the extractive neoliberal world order has for neglecting basic human needs and a diminished quality of life in peripheral nations. These four students may have relied on this trope as a coping mechanism for handling feelings of guilt that arose during the travel course.

Other participants reflected on how their expectations that Belize lacked access to Western-style and technology contradicted the reality on the ground:

> When I pictured going to Belize, I thought it would be old-fashioned, not really super modern or anything, but that was so wrong. I was walking down the street, and we were hearing music that we hear in the U.S., what we hear all the time. And kids were wearing Nike and Jordan and Converse, and there was so much more in common with the U.S. than I thought there would be. And there was just not a lot of differences that I thought would be. It was more modern than I thought it would be. It wasn’t old-fashioned. ... But in terms of keeping up with what’s new or whatever, I feel like it was way different than I thought it would be (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

Eva also acknowledged the globalization of technology and Western culture:

> Definitely, I can say there were maybe a few ‘a-ha’ moments. The biggest one I can remember right now is just thinking how interconnected San Ignacio already is. There are so many similarities, especially in the realm of technology, and the internet, and clothing as well. That was just incredibly similar to the U.S. that I think was just kind of a ‘wow,’ like we are really moving towards a globalized world. … I mean, half of the people were wearing Nike shoes, or they had some sort of. … they were just wearing American, not ‘American’ clothes but the same clothes, and almost everyone had a cell phone (Eva, Return Personal interview, 8/31/17).

Eva was able to see beauty and value in difference:

> I think it has made me value what other cultures believe more. I got to learn a lot. We did get to learn a lot about more the ancient Mayan culture as well. I thought it was a beautiful culture and the way that these people preserved it, and some of them were still

> passing along the heritage to their children, I thought that was really beautiful. I really like that they have that culture (Eva, Return Personal interview, 8/31/17).

She went on to lament what she saw as the degradation of a "beautiful" culture:

> To a certain extent, I was almost sad that so many kids wanted more of this increased technology culture if you know what I'm saying. There is definitely a loss in culture through the generations that you could kind of see. The kids definitely didn't have as much interest in their parents' heritage. They were more concerned with technology. It made me see … I actually got to meet this other culture, and I thought it was really beautiful, and I wish that more cultures [populations] like that would want to continue to preserve what they have (Eva, Return Personal interview, 8/31/17).

Eva's patronizing comments still functioned as a binary logic because it essentializes all the diverse groups that were a part of the Mayan empire into one, discrete "culture." She romanticized *An* "ancient Mayan Culture," which froze that "culture" in time. Her comments recognized the hegemonic impacts of globalization but did not allow for hybridity. This viewpoint may be wrapped up in ideas of authenticity whereby an "authentic" culture is a static, unchanging entity instead of a dynamic that people live every day.

Students also expressed judgments concerning the perceived conflict between traditional (Belize) and modern (U.S.) cultural norms related to gender roles during their pre-departure interviews. Participants were concerned about how Belizeans would treat them because of their gender and nationality. The faculty leader tried to prepare them to respect the gender norms they would encounter in San Ignacio. Still, some students felt that this preparation somehow "excused" what they saw as aggressive and inappropriate behavior:

> So, even the fact that when we're going to the schools, we have to dress very conservatively and then even when we're doing the construction when outside she [faculty leader] is like, 'Make sure your shorts are long enough because men will still look at you and say comments to you.' But I think that's something that needs to be brought attention to in a lot of places. But it will be interesting coming down there, especially because you can tell we're tourists, and we're not part of the society, and on top of that, we're women. It's like two targets on us, so that will be extremely eye-opening and probably a little bit hard to experience because you'll know that this is not just being directed towards you, but a lot of women, and that's all that some of these

> young girls have been raised with, is that they're less than a man and that they're always gonna be under a man, or just marrying somebody and that they're not equal. So, that will be really, I think, challenging to realize that we get to go back to our country where we are viewed as more equal. These women down there, these young girls, are going to be raised in a society where they are not (Georgia, Pre-departure Personal interview, 4/21/17).

Georgia went on to detail how "backward" Belize is about gender roles as compared to the U.S.:

> So, it goes back again to that of the gender stereotype that the women teach, and then the man probably goes off in some type of hard labor job or more high paying job, but the women's job is to stay at home with the kids, or you teach the kids, or you're a nurse. The very stereotypical [vision] would be like the 1950s that we've obviously advanced dramatically [from], but they're still stuck a little bit. So, yeah, it will be interesting to see their attitude, especially if we do get the opportunity to go home with one of the kids for a meal. I have a feeling that the women will be the one that's cooking and then, serving the meal while the males are sitting there and doing something else but the woman's going to be doing most of the work (Georgia, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/21/17).

As is already evident in a few of the previous sections, student experiences on the ground in Belize led some to begin to challenge their preconceived perceptions and binary logics. Four factors spurred these individuals towards growth: cognitive dissonance leading to feelings of ambivalence, mitigating personal traits, relationships with host community members, and guided deep reflection on these experiences, feelings, and relationships. The next section suggests how the ties students developed with community members in Belize were key to their intercultural growth.

Relationships

The faculty leader structured the travel course to promote sustained contact between student participants and local community members. The program's students spent their mornings interacting with teachers and their young students at Bishop Martin, and in the afternoons, they worked alongside community members on construction projects for the school. For several

evenings during the course, participants dined with local families or attended events at the school. The time spent with local residents was vital for each to gain insights into the culture and into themselves and their place in the world. Students valued the connections they developed with the local people. Eva shared her appreciation for the intentionality of relationship development in the course design:

> I don't really know what it's going to be like, but what I see is the biggest part is building the community with those people. … We keep going back to this same school because there's like that importance of going back. And not, we're here once, and then we're going somewhere else. Building that relationship. I think a large part, like what Elizabeth has been talking about, is we're going there, and we become friends with these little kids, and we're just hanging out with them, that sort of thing. I think that's something that's important for this trip, building relationships (Eva, Predeparture Personal interview, 4/25/17).

Nora summarized observations that I heard time and time again from students about the importance of the ties they developed with community members:

> We got to see a different part of their lives. We got to really talk to them and hear about their experiences. We also got to see how sometimes people don't work well together and how they had to deal with that … I just really enjoyed experiencing … We got to see how the teachers, how they had their life set up, and we got to see how the principal had their life set up, and [the lives of] different people. Probably working with the builders was one of my favorite [things], just because they had so much life experience from building different things, and they were really great problem shooters [solvers]. They really worked well with us, and I really enjoyed working with them. I guess the manual labor wasn't necessarily my favorite, but the experience we got from working with them was one of my favorites (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

The students connected with community members. Hartman et al. define connecting as "actively listening, becoming an astute observer, developing an understanding through multiple perspectives, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with community members" (2018: p. 98). The next set of comments from interviews suggest how students developed ties with members of the local community.

Feeling Connected. Students connected with the children with whom they worked. As Rachel said, "We really bonded with the kids." Cora noticed that "the kids were drawn to us, not just me but all of us. They just loved that we were there. …" (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17). Hazel confirmed the children became attached to the students: "They weren't afraid to ask us questions, and they were really willing to get to know us and welcome us in. The kids especially that we taught, they latched on very quickly" (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17). Louise recalled a story from the last day:

> So, when it was our last day, and it was probably 120 degrees with the heat index. It was hot; everybody was sitting under the shade. My class came up to me and asked me to play soccer with them. And so, I went out to the field for probably 30 minutes, and I was out there kicking the soccer ball with them. It was so hot that I could feel the heat like on top of my feet from the grass. But these kids didn't have shoes on. Half of them have just their socks. They're taking their shoes off, and some are bare-footed. But I thought that was something special because they kind of let me experience what they do every day at recess (Louise, Return Personal interview, 11/2/17).

Some students connected one-on-one with particular children:

> He's just one of the kids that I hold a special place in my heart for. He was one of the first kids that we met and just one of the most genuine, the sweetest kids. And I kind of feel for him a little bit. I think his dad works a lot, so he's not home much. His mom is not super fluent in English and only knew a couple of words. So, it was really cool to be able to talk a little bit in Spanish with her and have him translate. It was really a great experience that I won't forget. He was a sweet kid (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

Violet genuinely connected with a young boy with special needs. She brought a picture of him to our interview. Her interactions with the youngster made her consider a career path that she had not considered previously.

> One thing that I can't stop thinking about is the kid, Miguel [pseudonym]. He was in the high standard there, and he was, well, somewhere along the autism spectrum, and nobody worked with him, and it just wasn't brought up. … In the classroom, he just kind of sat there with his head down occasionally, like looking up and [being] really shy. I never noticed anyone giving much effort with helping him out. … I've worked with special needs children before, but not a whole lot. I just saw him sitting there like looking left out and just really unsure, confused- like nervous, so I really talked to him, and I [thought],

> he needs some help. He couldn't really write or spell, but he was willing to try. When I told him I could help him spell it or write words down— if I write it, can you copy it down?' He was willing, but no one gave him the time of the day … in the classroom setting, as a future teacher, I was just shocked. I was like, just don't leave him sitting there. Then a lot of the girls on the trip noticed how well I talked to him, and it opened my eyes. Maybe I do want to work with children with special needs. Elizabeth said, 'you should really look into it. You did a great job.' So, that was one of my biggest takeaways (Violet, Return Personal interview, 10/9/17).

Cora's comment below highlights how the relationships she developed with community members gave her a different perspective on current American political rhetoric:

> It's kind of been a little rough, with current politics going on. I'm not going to go into politics because I don't care what anybody's beliefs are. With Trump saying he wants to build a wall. Yeah, I used to disagree with it, I still do, but I used to disagree with it because you can't shut people out. Now, I really don't want you to build a wall because I have friends there. I have people that I would consider family there. I know these people, and that's something that is so huge. It's no longer, 'Oh yeah, that's another country, and there are people,' but it's, 'those are my people now, too.' That's definitely … I feel that as Americans, we should strive to do that and make that a top priority instead of just shutting people out. The Belizeans were so welcoming. We should be that way, too (Cora, Return Personal interview, 10/26/17).

Hazel shared how extraordinary she found the experience in our interview,

> The third week we were, 'Wow, we only have a week left here. How special it is to be here right now, and we're leaving in a week, that's just so sad.' During that last week, we all really appreciated the fact that we were actually there and being able to get to know all these people. We just made new connections that we wouldn't have been able to make if we weren't there. Especially now, those connections do stick. I still have a lot of them. The kids that I taught found me on Facebook, and they message me, [asking me] 'How are you doing?' (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Students met individuals from San Ignacio that challenged their previously held assumptions about female gender norms in Belize. There was one resident in particular that several students identified as someone from whom they learned much. Linda [pseudonym] was a single mother of three whose perspective and lifestyle made an impression on several students. Linda supported herself and her children by working several jobs, one of which included construction. Linda was the sole female of the group of volunteers who assisted the students with the building projects at the school. It was out of the community's norm for Linda to do this kind

of work, but she did it anyway. Her work ethic and practical and defiant nature inspired the young women in the course. Violet referred to her as a “really good role model,” and several students shared stories about her. Georgia articulated her admiration:

> She worked three or four jobs, and mostly other moms from the school and even in the community kind of looked down on her for doing construction because that was a man’s job. They’re like, ‘Why are you doing this? Why aren’t you doing other woman’s jobs?’ she said, ‘Because I’m good at it. I can do it, and it pays the bills. I can make money from it.’ … And here is a woman who is breaking these norms, and she was right in front of us, and so it was just really empowering to see her say, ‘You know what, heck with men, heck with the stereotypes and what’s supposed to happen in this culture. I’m going to do it because I need to do it.’ She’s from that culture, right? It wasn’t even an outside perspective looking in. That was something that I thought, ‘Wow,’ that is really cool that she was just, ‘I’m beating my own drumbeat, and if people aren’t going to like it, then so be it.’ I thought, ‘Wow, that’s a cool woman right there’ (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Linda made a lasting impression on Violet as well:

> She just told us how her kids maybe had not complained but talked about not having electricity in their house. She said she just loves when the moon and stars can light up her house. …When I'm at home looking up at the moon, I now think, ‘That moon’s lighting up Linda’s house right now,’ and it just really makes me think about it. She's there for her kids. She works really, really hard. The other women would degrade her or look down on her because she did a man's job when she was helping us with the stage and all. That really set a fire in all of us; we were like, ‘No, *everybody* can do that!’ She's doing that to help us in the community and the school. So, we had money left over that we had a few choices to divvy up, and we actually paid her debt to the school with some money we had leftover, and that was one of my favorite things (Violet, Return Personal interview, 10/9/17).

Students also bonded with each other during this experience. The faculty leader intentionally mixed roommates up every week to avoid students forming cliques and so participants would get to know each other better. The group gathered every night to discuss their assigned journal prompt and to process the day’s happenings:

> I think it was nice at the end of the day to talk about what other people were feeling and get your feelings about stuff you saw, or stuff that you heard, or just different things throughout the day. It was really nice to talk in a small setting just to know people in our group as well because I think if we didn’t talk every night in that group, we wouldn’t have gotten as close as we did (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Rachel also valued the closeness that developed within the group.

> We did a lot together. I mean, we were together all the time, basically. We really got to know each other, and I got to know all the girls on the trip. We became so close and so tight-knit, and I was very surprised by that. I didn't think a group of girls would get along as well as we did, but it was wonderful (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Nora echoed this appreciation of the group's cohesion:

> Sometimes we had yarn, and we were sitting in a circle, and we'd have yarn, and we'd throw it to the person across from us and say one thing that we enjoyed about them. At the end, we were all connected by a web. We would say, 'Although we have differences, we're still all connected by where we go to school or what we like about one another, stuff like that,' … Although we're all different, we can all be together and work together and work in harmony (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Reciprocity. Many students commented on how there was a give and take to the relationships with community members. Rachel noted that "when we were in the schools, we were teaching *and* learning from the students" (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17). And as Georgia said,

> You're not only benefitting those people … but those people are benefitting you in the long run … Elizabeth's really good at seeing how these kids are affecting you and how we're going to come back also changed by them … We reflected a lot about that at the nightly reflections we did. It was, 'We're learning a lot from this people, more than we're probably helping them in any sense. They're helping us as people,' and these are very genuine people and a culture that still values who you are (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Miranda was thankful for the appreciation of the host community.

> But I feel being in Belize brought it to a whole new level because of how much they show that they truly appreciate what we're doing. We got so much love, so many hugs, so many things. And when I do it here [service], I do not necessarily feel that. You do it because it's something that's special to you, and you know it's important, but you do not necessarily realize how much it actually affects people
> (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

The following section addresses personal capacities that seemed to moderate ethnocentric convictions and help encourage intercultural growth in students. These mitigating characteristics include openness, adaptability, and empathy.

Mitigating Characteristics

Openness

Openness is a quality of the mind in which a person is accommodating to new ideas and experiences. Openness helped students on this travel course because it signaled a willingness to allow the experience to unfold. It let individuals step outside of their everyday routines towards the possibility of living in different ways. Openness also permitted students to suspend judgments in the face of cultural differences. Rachel evidenced this characteristic in both of her interviews. As she observed, "go with an open mind and an open heart, and you're ready to accept and learn" (Rachel Predeparture Personal Interview, 4/20/17). This attitude led to gains in her self-awareness, which I address in the following section. Louise also talked about how being friendly and approachable can enrich one's potential to learn,

> I also realized that the littlest things can help people, or you know, influence or have an impact on them. Even if it's just, you know, speaking of someone or saying hi. That's definitely changed my aspect. If I see somebody, I'll probably go, 'Hey, how are you?' and just a simple conversation can help make someone's day (Louise, Return Personal interview, 11/2/17).

Hazel highlighted the faculty leader's role in reminding students about the importance of being open and non-judgmental,

> Then on the plane ride on the way to Belize, she gave us a reflection paper about service, and it explained that service is not helping or fixing things; it is working with others. That opened my mind a little bit and gave me a different perspective about going into the trip. I was a little bit more aware about not looking down on them to fix anything (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Adaptability

Adaptability is the "quality of being able to adjust to new conditions" and "the capacity to be modified for a new use or purpose" ("Adaptability," 2020). Students demonstrating adaptability possessed tolerance for ambiguity, were able to cope emotionally with changing situations, and adjust their behavior to the requirements of the situations they confronted. As Rachel said, "You're ready to accept challenges as they arise" (Rachel Return Personal Interview, 10/30/17). Violet added, "Skills … how to make changes to myself, how I deal with it, how to talk to them, be able to change … adapt!" (Violet Predeparture Personal Interview, 4/19/17). Adaptability helped to ease physical and emotional feelings of discomfort,

> I guess there was a time like when we were walking to dinner. My friend and I, we were saying, 'This is so weird.' We didn't even feel like we were on a trip anymore. It just kind of felt like we knew what we were doing like you just did things without thinking anymore. We just started to feel like we were in the norm (Sadie, Return Personal interview, 10/27/17).

Miranda pointed out that although she was able to adapt to the situation in Belize, she may not yet developed have a deeper understanding of the people or their culture.

> I think the longer that we were there, though, it seemed like home, almost. I started to forget that I was out of the country, and I guess I just get comfortable in my surroundings. I didn't necessarily understand them in a deeper way or anything. But I started feeling less confused. I started to know my way around the town; I got to know some of the people in the town. We would pass the same people every now and again. So not necessarily knowing them on a deeper level or understanding them but being more comfortable in that setting (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

Georgia noted that for her, adaptability was essential to her intercultural growth,

> Yeah, you have to be very flexible with it, and I think that's part of like the magical work and power that service has. It's that just realizing that adaptation is key and that a lot of times these people have the great ideas themselves, and it's not that they need your help; it's just that they need support (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Adaptability appeared to help students to "roll with the punches." The next section explores how a less ethnocentric mindset seemed to aid students in bridging cultural differences.

Universalism as Empathy

Empathy is a fundamental characteristic in developing a more inclusive view of others. Hazel acknowledged the value of empathy this way:

> I've known different cultures have different stereotypes, and I think before I kind of judged, … not judged, but I did place different cultures into stereotypes and categorized them. I think now that you should not be judging cultures without knowing and first-hand experiencing them, what goes on there, how they live their lives (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Students offered many empathetic statements about their cultural observations, but it was difficult to tell if those statements reflected growth in that capacity on their part. What seems clear is that the route to the empathetic statements typically came by way of an appeal to the universality of the human experience. In this view, humans are seen as possessing inalienable worth:

> I think that no matter where we come from, at the end of the day, we're all humans, and we're not that much different from each other. We might come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and we might not be able to understand what it's like to live in extreme poverty, but we understand the basic needs of being a human. I think it's interesting that now I have this real sense that my identity in the world is the same as someone's identity in Europe. We're all very similar in a way. It just kind of reaffirms this belief that I have now after going to Belize. No matter where we are in the world, we all are humans. We all have the same characteristics, and we also look out for each other (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Nora suggested that everyone should have the right to live in peace:

> I think we should all be equal, regardless of what's going on and just work together to make the world *our* place, instead of trying to cut others down so that you can be higher—just being equal. I think we are all born to work together. I think some people believe that they've obtained it. I think that everyone is born with the same privilege to be able to live in harmony with others (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Violet empathized with the difficult position in which children are placed when groups of American students come in and out of the community.

> We made really strong connections with the kids in [Belize], and it just made me think that a lot of groups from the States come in and serve different schools. I was imagining myself if I was in Belize, I'd just be heartbroken every time. I would be one of those, 'I don't want to get too close because another group is just going to come in, kids.' I feel that it's kind of hard on their part too. Like yeah, we have to leave in three weeks. So, I felt that would have been really hard on them. It was really hard on them because we make such strong connections. I wish I could go back. We need a Belize part two (Violet, Return Personal interview, 10/9/17).

Whether actually rooted in empathy or a value related to a sense of justice, or perhaps both, students were able to verbalize how all humans have needs that deserve to be met. This viewpoint does signify growth for these specific students even though it does not necessarily reflect an enlightened view, as it tends to essentialize human needs and downplay the value of difference in human experience.

Theme 2: Interaction Style in the Face of Cultural Difference

Students adopted three interaction styles in the face of cultural difference: Contrastor, Connector, or Collaborator. Within each type, I characterize student responses as either conflicted or committed. Committed students seemed to exemplify that category's qualities, whereas individuals with conflicted stances demonstrated contradictory feelings or ideas, i.e., ambivalence. In some instances, that ambivalence could signal a growth opportunity for the student.

Contrastors

Contrastors described interactions with community members while emphasizing difference. They tended to rely more on binary logics in their discussions about their experiences. Although contrastors related stories about particular people or incidents, those stories did not focus on connections with those people. Students characterized each interaction

by how “different” the host culture was from the student’s home culture. Contrastors were surprised by other student participants who seemed to have a deeper connection with local community members or who expressed sadness about the experience ending. In the following comment, Sadie (Committed Contrastor) described how she had developed a renewed appreciation for her life here.

> Yeah, I think that we take a lot for granted. I remember getting so frustrated about not having Wi-Fi, or not being able to drink water whenever I wanted to or even flushing toilet paper. Coming back, I remember looking around my town because I live on a private boarding school campus, because my Dad teaches there, and I remember looking around and just being amazed at where I lived. I think that was crazy for me. I almost felt guilty coming back to this beautiful place that I had never thought was this beautiful before. I just thought it was a normal town with a school in the middle of it. Now I realize the high school I went to was just unreal, and even Lorelai [is unreal] (Sadie, Return Personal interview, 10/27/17).

Connectors

Connectors, on the other hand, focused on the relationships they formed with community members. Those students regaled me with multiple stories about their interactions with local people. Sometimes those accounts romanticized individuals and/or the host culture. The narratives were highly high emotional in character and seemed to have been selected for sharing because of their impact(s) on the individual involved. Several connectors described interactions effusively, while two seemed to have a visceral emotional response by visibly tearing up and/or shaking on remembering and relating their stories. Connectors could state how important these experiences were to them. Nonetheless, they did not articulate how they expected those events/exchanges would affect their future behavior.

In her comments below, Cora (Conflicted Connector) struggled to keep her emotions in check when she described how connected she still felt to those she met in San Ignacio six months after her return from the experience:

> Well, for me personally, I have had a hard time being back because … it was very impactful for me because … I'm actually going back in May, on my own personal vacation, to see the kids again. They mean a lot to me. {Tearing up} I want to cry. So. It's good, though. They mean a lot. I mean, the kids here mean a lot to me, too. I just truly love kids. There [in Belize] was a little different because not that we were helping them, I mean we are just doing more of a service for them because the experience that I got there was, they care a little bit more, and they are more determined than a lot of our kids are here. Sorry! (tearing up and fanning her face with her hand), I don't know; it just made me feel better being able to be with kids that want to learn. I mean, kids here do too. I mean, I'm not saying that they don't, but I don't know. It made me feel like a better person being there and being able to serve them … (Cora, Return Personal interview, 10/26/20).

Collaborators

Collaborators also emphasized the importance of the relationships they formed while on site. However, this group focused on the reciprocal nature of the ties they formed. Collaborators did not tend to use as many emotional words as Connectors to describe their interactions. Instead, they relayed how they thought their experience had encouraged beneficial learning for participants and host community members alike. Collaborators seemed to be able to articulate their change in perceptions more clearly than Contrastors or Connectors as a result of their participation. These students could also integrate their Belize experience with previous experiential activities and future intentions. Whereas contrastors and connectors did not share how the experience changed their behaviors, collaborators did discuss how program-related events had changed their intended future course.

Georgia (Conflicted Collaborator) discussed, for example, how her understanding of service had shifted from a deficit model towards one based on respect and reciprocity:

> We learned so much from them that they just had no idea. … It's not about implementing your ideas and what you think is right, what might work for you. It's just being, 'What do you guys need? How can we benefit you?' And you, in return, benefitted so much from them. I don't know, it's a very, I think it's just a blank slate approach of just come in and then say, 'All right, how do you guys do things and where can my hands be of assistance to you?' and not, 'How can my hands fix your problems. It's how can I serve you guys?' … I think before I went over there, I was like, a lot of our Western ideas work. We're a developed country; we're one of the super nations, we obviously do things correctly, so

> let's go down there and implement our ideas and our way of thinking and doing. But it clearly has to work for them (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Relevance of Interaction Style to Intercultural Growth

Contrastor, Connector, and Collaborator interaction styles highlight the varied ways students on this travel course tended to relate to host community members. Residents acted as cultural mentors for the students, serving as mirrors whereby students could view themselves and others. In this way, relationships with the townspeople fostered the possibility of students' intercultural growth.

Contrastors

However, as noted, not every student developed a deep, bonding experience with local inhabitants. Those students with the Contrastor style did not appear to gain deeper insights into themselves or their host culture as a result of their interactions with community members. There are potentially several reasons for that result, for instance: acute introversion, lack of interest on the part of the student or the particular resident in interaction, personality clash, language difficulty, lack of interest in reflection or analysis of the interactions, or inability to articulate the impact the relationships had on their learning. This does not mean that students with a Contrastor interaction style did not enjoy the program or did not learn anything from it. Instead, it indicates that ties with community members were not a driver for intercultural growth for those individuals.

Connectors

On the other hand, those individuals with the Connector interaction style valued the relationships they formed with local community members. In fact, those participants seemed to develop a deep emotional connection with local people. The highly emotional words and body language used when sharing the stories of their interactions indicated the significance those

students placed on those relationships as catalysts for intercultural growth. The fact that Connectors did not articulate clearly how those exchanges would change their future behaviors does not mean that they did not have an impact. Perhaps those students were still processing the experiences at the time of the return interviews.

Collaborators

The students evidencing the Collaborator style appeared to honor the importance of reciprocity in relationships while also articulating current or future behavioral change resulting from the integration of learning that took place from those interactions. Such incorporation appears to have been a highly desirable learning outcome for the travel course. However, it is significant that this turn does not necessarily indicate the "highest" state of intercultural growth. As a final note, it is important to recognize that the data used to construct these categories is based on comments offered during the return interviews and not from interactions between students and community members that I was able to observe directly.

The following section addresses the critical mechanism prompting intercultural growth: cognitive dissonance leading to feelings of ambivalence. Thereafter, I develop the final theme for this chapter: Encountering the Self: Perceptions of growth in cultural self-awareness.

Feeling Ambivalent

Although student responses often reflected binary logics, several participants moved beyond black-and-white views of cultural differences as a consequence of their program/experience in Belize. The movement from a dualistic response toward a more ethno-relativist conceptualization began with individuals experiencing cognitive dissonance. That internal conflict triggered feelings of ambivalence, or the "coexistence in one person's mind of opposing feelings" ("Ambivalence," 1996). Student participants typically struggled to resolve

this tension in either of two ways: by solidifying preconceived notions of cultural differences or by shifting their perspective to accommodate the challenge with which they now wrestled.

Nora's comment exemplified those ambivalent feelings:

> One time we were all just walking through town, and I guess just … it wasn't full of poverty, but we did see some people who were begging for things. … I thought that going to Belize, nothing would be similar to America. I mean, I felt it would be completely different, but I guess just… because for the first few weeks or so, we didn't see really any poverty in the town we were in. I was [thinking], 'Wow, this is so nice.' I guess when I look over and see a homeless person, it makes me sad just because … I can try to help them, but at the end of the day, I can't give them a house! I expected it [Belize] to be mostly poverty. Then when I wasn't seeing it, it made me. … It was relieving. [I thought] They might not have clean water and stuff, but people are taken care of. Then, when I saw that [begging], it was, what was I thinking? Of course, everywhere is going to have those elements in it (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Although many valuable learning outcomes can take place in a short-term international experience, I was particularly concerned with the intercultural learning that can occur during such programs. Cultural self-awareness is a major feature of that intercultural learning, one to which I turn next.

Theme 3: Encountering the Self: Growth in Cultural Self-Awareness

One highly desired learning outcome for this travel course was increased cultural self-awareness. Simply put, this capability starts with the "capacity to understand oneself as a cultural being" (Hartman et al., 2018: p. 85). Culturally self-aware individuals can define and discuss their culture and how that culture shapes their worldviews, identities, and interactions with others (Deardorff, 2006).

Perceptions of Self

Privilege. An understanding of oneself as a cultural actor also requires a deeper understanding of privilege. The faculty leader assigned prompts asking students to define the concept of privilege and to identify how it affects their lives. Students were also asked to

describe how their privilege came into play during the May Term. Students struggled to define what privilege meant to them and how it resulted in a lived experience that differed from others who did not enjoy those resources. Rachel's comments represented a nuanced understanding of privilege:

> Some of the privileges you can expect if you come from a family that's affluent and you never experienced hardships financially, you are kind of aware of that. You realize that you have it easier than other people, but there are also privileges that you don't know about just based on your gender, or your class, or where you live. You might not be as aware of those privileges. A privilege sometimes is unspoken, and it's an acceptance that may make you feel uncomfortable because you might think that, 'Why am I just accepted for who I am, but someone else isn't?' And they're still a human being too. You kind of want that universal acceptance for everybody, but privilege sometimes stands in the way of that (Rachel, Return Personal Interview, 10/30/17).

Before Eva left for Belize, she defined privilege as,

> having the ability to do something without having to ask. It is sort of the sense where for someone else who maybe is not privileged, they have to ask a lot more questions and jump through a lot more hoops than I do versus where I can easily open that door. … I think we're a very privileged culture because we don't have to jump through a lot of hoops; a lot of doors are ready to be opened for us. From very simple things. Things that we don't think about are totally normal for us every day. I think that part of this trip will be realizing what some of those things are. What are some of the doors that are open for me, and I didn't even realize that they were doors? (Eva, Pre-departure Personal Interview, 4/25/17).

Prior to departing for Belize, Eva recognized that privilege reduces obstacles. After her return, Eva viewed privilege as something one can use,

> It's a tool that you get to use if you choose to help others and to change things because sometimes it's something that someone else doesn't have, and so you would be able to get it almost. We talked about power as well for a little bit, and when we talked about power, and I was writing in my journal... As I looked through the definition, I was [thinking], that's the same thing that I just wrote down for privilege. I think that's not something that people often think of. That privilege is something that you get to use, and it's not just having something, but it's something that you get to use and hopefully use in a good way. Obviously, not everyone does that (Eva, Return Personal Interview, 8/31/17).

Louise had difficulty with defining privilege. As she observed,

> I would say privilege is people who kind of get everything that they want. I don't really know where I'm going with this. But, it's kind of, you see yourself as higher on the totem pole. You're more privileged if you have to drive a car. You'd get to drive a car to school instead of ride a bus (Louise, Return Personal Interview, 11/2/17).

Although Louise's understanding of privilege was incomplete, she was able to recognize that one may have privilege without recognizing it, "I think sometimes you have privilege, but you don't necessarily know that you are kind of flaunting it, I guess? Yeah. And you don't mean to, it just happens" (Louise, Return Personal Interview, 11/2/17).

Cora, on the other hand, really struggled with defining the word itself. She conflated the notion of privilege with entitled behavior:

> Yeah, I used to see privilege as having something, as having the privilege of going to a private college or the privilege of whatever. Now I see it as an act because... how do I word this? You can be privileged, and then you can have privilege. I think if you have privilege like I had the privilege of coming to a new college, but I don't think that I act privileged. I learned that because a lot of these kids, they don't have a whole lot but the ones that do don't act like they do. Even though they say things such as, 'Yeah, I have a big TV in my house,' that's a privilege for them. I don't know; I just see those words as two different things if that makes sense (Cora, Return Personal Interview, 10/26/17).

Sadie defined privilege in her pre-departure interview in this way: "I think being privileged means that you have opportunities to increase your success in the future that not everyone gets a chance to have (Sadie, Predeparture Personal Interview, 4/27/17). Sadie grappled with how her privilege had given her advantages, even though she did not always *feel* privileged.

> I think there's a bad connotation with the word 'privilege,' but I also think a lot of people who see it as possessing a bad connotation have it. I don't want to sound like I'm privileged, but at the same time, I know that I am. I was able to go to a private boarding school that's ranked in the country—but I went there for free. I'm able to go to Lorelai, and I know that a lot of people are unable to do both of those things (Sadie, Predeparture Personal Interview, 4/27/17).

Sadie was also able to identify when she was aware of her privilege in other situations,

> I remember feeling like that when I went to the Caribbean. Just driving around and seeing the houses and all the wild dogs everywhere. I mean, and then you go back home, and it's … I live in a pretty nice suburb (Sadie, Pre-departure Personal Interview, 4/27/17).

She expected to experience a sense of privilege in Belize, "probably just even walking around or driving throughout the city and at the school. I think that's definitely when I will feel it the most" (Sadie, Pre-departure Personal Interview, 4/27/17).

However, Sadie's understanding of privilege became more muddled after her experience in Belize, and she then appeared to conflate privilege with acting entitled or 'living your best life:'

> I knew that I was privileged before I went on this trip. Just being able to go to a private college is not something many people can do, and we *barely* can do it. I knew that I was privileged compared to a lot of people in the world, but then going there [Belize], I realized the severity of it, almost and that being privileged doesn't mean that you're living the best life either. Just because you're privileged doesn't mean that you're getting the most out of life. Yeah, but. … Yeah. I don't know. I have trouble defining privilege because there's a humble definition of it, and then there's a not humble one. It's hard to think about it now because there's just so many different ways you can look at it. The materialistic way or the people that… like the woman that I was talking about. I don't think she felt unprivileged. I think she felt very grateful for her life. I think it's almost an eye of the beholder [phenomenon] if you [see yourself as] privileged or not.
> (Sadie, Return Personal Interview, 10/27/17).

Three other students discussed privilege in this way in their return interviews. At some point during the Belize experience, at least one student apparently began to conflate ascribed social privilege with personal behavior that could be described as bratty, snobby, entitled, or uppity. This misunderstanding, unfortunately, affected some others' understanding of the concepts.

Impact of the Experience on Understanding of Self

I asked participants in their post-experience interviews to share how they thought the travel course had affected them. Several talked about how study abroad had made them more curious about the rest of the world. Nora, for example, observed, "I definitely want to experience more now. … I want to go and experience other cultures, … see all that I can see, so I can

compare and contrast and really get to know the world" (Nora Return Personal interview, 10/30/17). For her part, Cora suggested the experience had increased her self-confidence and willingness to take risks:

> I definitely felt proud of myself. It made me more adventurous because I was a little nervous just traveling to another country without my family. That was the first kind of step that I took out of my comfort zone, and then just doing those things that I would have never probably done here. Yeah, I think it definitely helped me. But now I'm back here, and I want to go sky diving, just keep pushing. … I will definitely plan on going to other countries yearly, just to see and experience that. Because after going there [Belize] for three weeks, being here just isn't enough sometimes. I mean, when I got back, I felt like a different person. It was crazy (Cora, Return Personal interview, 10/26/17).

Eight of the ten students were able to articulate how they felt changed from the experience. The other two students did not directly address the program's effects, but it was clear throughout their interviews that the travel course was a significant experience for them. Georgia noted, for example, that she could never go back to just being a tourist,

> Actually, when my family friends asked if I'd ever go back, I said probably not to vacation ever again because I think I'd feel so uncomfortable there. That's not the true Belize in my eyes anymore. That's the 1%. That's the glitz and the glam for the tourists. I changed my perspective on a lot of tourism stuff because I have been down to the Caribbean Islands a few different times, different islands. I was like, 'Wow, these places are great,' and now that I've plenty of experience in a country that relies on tourism, I concluded, 'You're not visiting that country.' It's very different… you're seeing a very small portion of a very—not even the culture in a sense. After something like this, you will never be a tourist again (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Rachel expressed that she felt profoundly changed as a result of her experience. She articulated her gains in understanding herself as a cultural being.

> I think the beliefs that I thought were just common maybe aren't as common now. I feel that I have a stronger sense of who I am in the world. Sometimes you compare yourself to your friend to the people around you, and you're not sure if you're the same or not. Now I know definitely who I am, where I come from, what makes me an individual within a community. I think I'm able to interact better with people now, and I think I'm able to be more personable and share my experiences. I'm more receptive to other people's experiences too… I'm glad that this experience has led me to thinking in that way because I think that I'll be able to connect more as a teacher, hopefully with students that come from different countries… I'll also be open-minded to hear what they have to say about

> their cultures. I might not just go in clueless. I might already have some perceptions of their cultures because I feel that I'm a little more culturally aware now, being out of the country for a period of time. I think that I've always been interested to learn about different cultures, but now I feel that I have more specific things that I want to know that I want to learn (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

One major aspect of cultural self-awareness that surfaced for *all* students was the struggle over national identity, or what it means to be an American. I have labeled this aspect "American-ness," and I address it next.

American-ness

Students struggled to define and reevaluate their American identities. Miranda related how significant the experience had been for her,

> Overall, I think it just changed the way that I view life, I guess. Like I said, I question why we need all the things that we say we need or what we feel is privileged here versus what we feel is just normal. I think it has kind of changed the way I look at how the U.S. works and how people live here in comparison to the different culture that we saw in Belize (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

For four students, the experience in Belize confirmed a sense of connection to their national identities, for good or ill. Hazel highlighted how difficult it was to return home to the United States:

> Now looking back at it, especially when I got back, I think it was a difficult transition. I think it's harder coming back here than it was transitioning to Belize. Just because you realize how fortunate we are here, and how much we have that they don't have, and how much they appreciate the small things (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Louise realized that she wanted to travel and learn more about the United States,

> I know I've met a bunch of people that aren't nice in our culture. So, it's just—I guess it's just who the people are, how they're raised, that's kind of judging. But sometimes, that's just how it is. It's kind of made me realize that I should also travel our own country and learn more about it, go to the Statue of Liberty or the Grand Canyon. It's made me realize that even though it's in our country, it's still going to be important to learn about (Louise, Return Personal interview, 11/2/17).

Miranda discussed how the experience in Belize made her appreciate the "privilege" she enjoys in the United States,

> And I think that going to Belize and seeing that some of the kids can't afford school or are not able to get rides to school, or just go to school, they have to work, I realized that that's something that I see as a privilege for me because my parents are able to pay for school and I'm able to be here and focus on my grades and getting through school without having to worry about food on the table and all those things that some of the kids have to worry about in Belize (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

Often, the internalized ideals of America did not match these students' lived experiences of America. Nora expressed a sense of longing concerning this gap.

> I used to think, well, America is the best. Of course, I'm proud to be an American. I am definitely proud to be an American, but I think I could be happier living in Belize. I experienced only a month, so, of course, I have no clue. I just feel that over there, people were so kind. We definitely have super kind people, super loving people here, but everyone I met [in Belize] was just welcoming and extended a hand for everything. I wish that all of America was like that instead of here and there. I was definitely aware of our country's flaws coming back more than I was when I left (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

The discomfort concerning the gulf between these internalized American values and the [then] Trump administration's vitriolic rhetoric played out in the classroom. Students encountered community children and adults angry about this rhetoric and proposed policies of the Trump administration. Nora, for example, described one angry encounter with students:

> One time in the classroom, Trump was brought up. It just became not a hostile environment, but everyone was uncomfortable just because they had nothing good to say, which whether or not I supported Trump, they were just very angry about the whole thing. People started yelling, and some people threw things just out of anger that Trump was our president. It made us uncomfortable because we couldn't comfort them and say, 'Oh, he's not going to do anything,' because they could say, 'My dad is in America sending us money because he can't make enough here.' We couldn't necessarily comfort them and say, 'Oh, your dad is fine. He will always be there to send back money.' It was a very sad time in the classroom (Nora, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

Georgia shared a similar discussion concerning Trump that made her resent her American-ness:

> We all came home, I think, stereotypically speaking, kind of mad at our American culture. We faced a lot of judgment for Trump while we were down there that we were not expecting. It was really hard, actually, because these kids asked us why we wanted him as president and whether you personally voted for him or not. You had to explain to these kids that that was the way our political system was set up, and that was how he got in. A lot of them, all of them, did not like him and especially his border control [rhetoric] and stuff like that. We faced a lot of hate from that. I mean, even one of our tour guides [whom] I asked if he had been to the States? He said, 'No.' I go, 'Do you want ever to visit?' He goes, 'Absolutely not.' He said, 'Why would I want to go to a place that I'm not wanted?' We all kind of sat there, and a few girls started crying, and they said, 'Really, that's not us. That is our figurehead, but that is not us as a whole.' It was really hard to face things like that (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Some students romanticized attributes they assigned to Belizean culture. Their comments focused on how we, as Americans, should learn a thing or two from the Belizeans. For example, in response to the perceived lack of American friendliness, openness, and acceptance, Georgia remarked:

> We're a very closed-off culture, and we're very private in a lot of senses… They welcomed us in, and it didn't matter that we had the title American next to us. Yet, we're a country so quick to judge and close off our borders and our minds to other cultures. I think also because they are such a loving culture and open-minded and very community-based…I think a lot of our attitudes when we came home were that we live in a very nasty country. that doesn't want other cultures and here these people were taking us into their homes—we literally went to the Belizeans homes and had dinner with them (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Two students were impressed by the story of a resident who took the day off from work to take another community member to whom she was not related to the doctor. The trip took several hours by car:

> I really have a lot of respect for that because I feel like in America, we tend to be so wrapped up in ourselves, in our own schedules that we don't necessarily think to help out someone who's not immediate family or immediate circle. I thought that it was really inspiring that she gave so much of her time to do that, to be with that woman all day on her day off from school, and she really dedicates herself to the community (Rachel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

These people are willing, like Mrs. Flores [pseudonym], to leave her work to help someone else, and we were like, 'Why are we so self-driven?' We're such a selfish society that we do a lot… we do whatever benefits us no matter if it hurts someone else. It would be very hard to find someone who would be willing to pull those strings for someone else nowadays. Because unless you know them personally, people are like, 'I'm sorry, it doesn't affect me' like, 'that sucks for them.' 'I'm so sorry, but that's not my life.' If it doesn't affect them, people move on with their life. The Belizeans are not like that at all. They would rather, in a sense, hinder themselves to benefit someone else if it meant the other person could strive very far with it, which was amazing to see that nowadays because they never really thought about that. I was so used to all of us just doing what benefited us, and that they do things to benefit someone else was great (Georgia, Return Personal interview, 1/9/18).

Other students remarked on the "materialism" of American culture and contrasted that to Belizean culture:

Coming home, some of the things that we didn't have in Belize—air-conditioning and getting your nails done and all those kinds of things, every time I go do those things, every time I'm in somewhere that has AC, I can feel it, 'Wow, we didn't have that in Belize,' and 'It's a waste of energy, it's a waste of money.' I find myself second-guessing some of the things that we have and wondering if it's really a necessity because we lived without it in 105-degree heat, and we were fine. So, I like to think about, 'do we really need this' a lot (Miranda, Return Personal interview, 10/23/17).

They really don't have… as, for example, when my phone broke when I was there, I thought, 'Wow, they don't even … they don't use phones that often.' They don't really need it. I don't need it. It's like they can't; they don't have them in their lives like I can survive without it. … It's not … I can live without certain things I think are necessary, but they really aren't. … We definitely are very materialistic, I think (Hazel, Return Personal interview, 10/30/17).

For Violet, materialism was definitely a negative aspect of American culture,

Maybe we're just greedy and high maintenance, maybe. We're a lot more high-maintenance than they are in Belize. It is what it is in Belize, you just deal with it, and here it's like you've got to have the best of the best. You know you've got to compete with other people and stuff like that, I would say. It's all about money (Violet, Return Personal interview, 10/9/17).

Eva was able to hint at how economic globalization exports this American materialism to other cultures:

> Just all this stuff that we don't really need. I'm thinking about how materialistic our culture can be. This desire to want all of these possessions, I think that to a certain extent, that does make its way down to these other cultures, and they want the same things. It part of the environment isn't doing so great down there because they have so much garbage. I think that that was kind of startling to see. It made me think of American culture in a different way, just realizing that the way that our culture lives its life, that's having an effect on other communities (Eva, Return Personal interview, 8/31/17).

The immersion in Belizean culture allowed all of the students to step back from their American worldview, however briefly, and examine how they defined themselves in the world.

This section has analyzed ten students' intercultural experiences during a short-term faculty-led service travel course to Belize. I have detailed the struggles and epiphanies that participants reported during their pre-departure and return interviews and also shared observations gathered from course documents. In this chapter's final part, I place the IDI post-test results in context alongside the qualitative data.

IDI Post-Test Results in Context

This study's second research question was, how do student experiences with cultural difference and perceptions of their course-related intercultural growth compare with IDI measures of their intercultural competence? I used the pre-trip IDI scores and analysis as a baseline of student intercultural competence before the travel course. I wondered if the participants' experiences in the program would lead to increases in their intercultural competence as measured by the IDI. I planned to use the change in scores and stages to signal whether growth in competence had occurred. I hoped too to analyze the interview data to explain what prompted any growth evidenced. In fact, the resulting post-program scores yielded no definitive answers, but the rich interview data caused me to reassess the relative importance of the IDI measures. I have illustrated student perceptions and meaning-making during their travel course throughout this chapter. I think it is clear that growth in intercultural learning has occurred for

most students. I now turn to discuss the IDI post-experience scores in the context of student observations concerning their experience.

The IDI post-program scores and the individual's subsequent stage on that scale's continuum indicate the respondents' intercultural mindset at one point in time—within the month following return to the United States from the travel course to Belize. I wanted to see if the immersive experience in Belize had prompted any change. All participants completed the IDI a second time by the end of June 2017.

My return interviews took place throughout the fall semester of 2017, with one interview taking place after the turn of the new year in January of 2018. Those conversations suggested that students were still processing the experience, even six months later. I mention this because it is likely that students may have tested differently if they had taken the IDI again after they had additional time to grapple further with the questions their experience had raised for them. However, that was not an option as the College policy stated that students must complete the post-test directly upon their return. This analysis of post-return IDI results addresses the three scores for developmental orientation, perceived orientation, and orientation gap.

The post-experience scores from the IDI assessment indicated a range of results. Half of the students evidenced an increase in intercultural competence (Eva, Hazel, Nora, Sadie, Violet), while the other half showed a reduction in the same (Cora, Georgia, Louise, Miranda, Rachel). In the cases where an increase occurred, the IDI indicated a progression from one developmental stage to another (Polarization to Minimization) in only two instances (Hazel and Violet). Scores increased for the other three students, but they did not result in a change from one stage to another. In the cases where a decrease occurred, those shifts indicated a devolution from one

developmental stage to another (Minimization to Polarization, Polarization to Denial) in two cases (Louise and Rachel, respectively).

Although the IDI results did not allow me to connect scores to reported perceptions of intercultural growth in the interviews directly, the totals were telling in another sense. I found an inverse relationship between the aggregate pre-and post-program developmental orientation score difference and the aggregate pre-and post-experience orientation gap score difference in all cases except two (Georgia and Miranda). This relationship parallels initial IDI results. This finding could be relevant because the orientation gap score is an indicator of a respondent's level of self-awareness—of how he/she typically responds to cultural difference. This suggests that as the gap between the perceived and assessed developmental orientation decreased, self-awareness increased. As self-awareness increased, so did intercultural competence, at least for eight participants.

IDI post-program participant scores fell into three developmental stages: Denial (1 student), Polarization (3 students), and Minimization (6 students). I discussed the Polarization and Minimization orientations and developmental tasks in the section above concerning the IDI. Denial did not appear in the pre-program results, so I here provide some context concerning that stage. Respondents who test into the Denial stage miss cultural difference. This mindset does not correlate noticeable divergences in viewpoints and behavior with cultural differences. The typical individuals who test into this stage have very limited experience with people from other cultural groups and can only rely on generalizations and stereotypes to navigate interactions with them. Some people in the Denial stage are disinterested in different cultures and will actively avoid cultural differences. One student tested into the Denial stage in her post-program IDI

results. I discuss her case in more detail after I summarize how the IDI results generally related to the evidence I gleaned from the interviews.

The scores for half of the participants indicated growth in intercultural competence, which means that the other members of the group either did not evidence increased competency or even experienced a reduction in that capacity. Hammer designed the IDI to measure the intercultural competence of respondents. Perhaps the growth indicated in the interviews does not reflect competence as Hammer defined it, but the knowledge students attained was still valuable. Although there were certainly differing levels of student engagement and learning resulting from this travel course, the interviews indicated that intercultural development did occur. The IDI did not seem to capture all of the changes that students reported in their return interviews. I examine Rachel's case to highlight this discrepancy.

Rachel evidenced a digression from the Polarization (judges difference) stage to the Denial (misses difference) stage. Prior to her Belize experience, she had never left the United States and reported that she had no direct experience with cultural others. She was concerned about how she would be viewed by and relate with local Belizean community members because she had internalized the stereotype of the nation as an impoverished country and the U.S. as an exemplar. She also enrolled in the course for personal satisfaction motives—she wanted to "experience" the culture and saw the travel course as an adventure. In a sense, we may expect Rachel not to show increased competence as she began it with an ethnocentric orientation.

However, Rachel's perceptions of her experience in Belize, at least as revealed in her post-trip interview, do not reflect a decline in intercultural competence. Instead, she exhibited multiple signs of intercultural growth: she reported cognitive dissonance and feelings of ambivalence, possessed mitigating characteristics that helped her manage the ups and downs of

the experience, developed relationships with community members and fellow student participants, and reported how meaningful and significant the program had been for her. I offered several excerpts from Rachel's post-experience interview above, which captured those insights and her intercultural growth. So, what might explain this decrease in competence as measured by the IDI, when the post-return interview painted a different picture of Rachel's experience?

Perhaps, her reliance on the universality of human experience played a role. Rachel tested into the Polarization stage before departure. In that phase, individuals assess cultural differences. But those judgments are based on superficial understandings and not on considered insights arising from active reflection on those differences. Perhaps because Rachel did not have well-developed perspectives *and* relied too heavily on her commitment to universality, she regressed to a state that ignores cultural difference to forge bonds with people she viewed as "just like us." Of course, there is no way to know for sure, but I think this explanation could be part of the answer to this apparent anomaly.

Table 8: IDI Pre-and Post-test Comparison

Name	IDI Pre Stage & Score	IDI Post Stage & Score	DO Score Difference	OG Score Difference
Cora	Minimization: 93	Minimization: 91	-2	+3
Eva	Polarization: 77	Polarization: 79	+2	-1
Georgia	Polarization: 78	Polarization: 77	-1	-1
Hazel	Polarization: 71	*Cusp of Minimization: 82	+11	-6
Louise	Minimization: 90	*Polarization: 70	-20	+11
Miranda	Minimization: 100	Minimization: 92	-8	-25
Nora	Minimization: 90	Minimization: 95	+5	-1

Rachel	Polarization: 74	*Denial: 66	-8	+6
Sadie	Minimization: 94	Minimization: 98	+4	-3
Violet	Polarization: 76	*Minimization: 89	+13	-8

* Shift in developmental stage

The primary research question underpinning this study asked how student participants articulated their intercultural learning. There appears to be a hidden assumption within that question—that intercultural learning would occur on this travel course! IDI post-test data provided a partial picture of fluctuations in intercultural competence. After combing through the interview data for this research question, I can confirm that intercultural learning did indeed occur. Indeed, this chapter has captured that knowledge in the participant's own words. The next chapter considers the second research question, how did course/program pedagogical design encourage or hinder intercultural growth?

CHAPTER 6

Findings: The Impact of Pedagogy and Program Design on Intercultural Learning

This chapter summarizes my findings concerning the impacts of programmatic and pedagogical factors on the intercultural learning of the students whose study-travel program experience I studied. The 2017 May Term course to Belize provided the context and opportunity for students to participate in a service-learning experience that challenged their previously held assumptions about Latin America, cultural difference, and service work while seeking to stimulate a more mindful consideration of their identities and privilege.

Findings: Program Design and Pedagogy

This section discusses the central themes arising from the analysis of the following interview questions related to program design: What programmatic and pedagogical factors encouraged or constrained the intercultural learning of the students? How did the faculty leader address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with participants?

Factors that Encouraged Intercultural Learning

Elizabeth shared her motivation for offering this travel course,

> This is the teaching of my life. This is the best thing I do. I love teaching here. I love what I do in the classroom. I love my students [back home], but this is real life and that intensity of living in community like this! I know these young women so well now, and we've got a bond like family. That is where real learning occurs when you build that community, you build that element of trust and you're experiencing something very new and intense, and different, and uncomfortable, and wonderful, and *all* of those things together, and processing it every night [Emphasis Added] (Elizabeth, Post-return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

The Role of the Faculty Leader

Faculty play a vital role in the learning of their students generally and for study abroad experiences, particularly. Faculty leaders create the course. They choose its location and design

its content, process, and learning objectives. They create a classroom culture and interact with their students in purposeful ways. Past research has found that the instructor plays a central part in promoting active learning (Niemi, 2002 cited by Lin and Huang, 2016). Much learning results from the relationship that students develop with their instructors. In this sense, the personal characteristics of professors do matter. Those who show a constellation of such characteristics including, "tolerance, openness, and candor, being patient and slow to reprimand, compassion and unconditional attention and focusing on students' learning" have been referred to as charismatic teachers (Raelin, 2006 cited by Lin and Huang, 2016, p. 140).

Personal Characteristics of Faculty Leader. The students responded positively to Elizabeth's charismatic presence. Every one of the students I interviewed lavished praise on their faculty leader. Some of these positive reviews were about the structuring of the journal prompts and reflection discussions, but other comments seemed to be about Elizabeth as an individual. Three students explicitly stated that they chose to enroll in the course because Elizabeth was leading it. For instance, Cora shared a comment about Elizabeth's inspirational personality.

> I love her. Well, I had Elizabeth for other classes before, so I already knew her. She's one of the reasons I chose to go on this trip because she's just inspirational. That's the only word I can think of because she just beams positivity. Being around her for three weeks, just that alone you could learn something because she just spreads love and kindness and positivity and, 'Let's serve them,' and, 'What else can we do to serve you?' and, 'Hey, we've already built a stage but what else do you want us to build?' She's just constantly looking for ways to serve people. I mean, just the way that she loves people naturally is just amazing, so she's great. I wouldn't have had it any other way, and I don't think anybody [else] would have been able to lead this trip the way that she did (Cora, Return Personal Interview, 10/26/2017).

Faculty leader personal characteristics often influence the rationale for, and character of, a particular course. Elizabeth chose to partner with Peacework because that nonprofit organization had worked in San Ignacio for several years and had formed a partnership with the

local people built on reciprocity, respect, and trust. The following observation from my pre-departure interview with her revealed Elizabeth's philosophical foundation for creating the Belize travel course:

> Peace is really a personal goal of mine. I'm a peacenik to the core of my being...But it has to be modeled. What would peace look like? What would non-violence in every situation look like? I feel like that's my purpose in this world-- to love people and provide this sense of peace. I think that's how we get… that's how we'll get world peace if we do that enough because my students will know the people in Belize are not the 'Other' (Elizabeth, Predeparture Personal Interview, 5/1/17).

For Elizabeth, it was essential that this experience avoid exploitation and model the values reflected in the quotation above. Elizabeth also applied a "Peace Curriculum" as the basis for work with the local children. Lorelai students followed this loose set of guidelines as they developed their classroom lesson plans, which often included art projects, meditation, and "mindful movements" (yoga). In the next section, I describe the other ways that Elizabeth set the tone for the course to encourage intercultural growth.

Setting the Tone. Faculty leaders establish the overarching atmosphere for their courses by creating goals and priorities and leading by example. Elizabeth centered the course on intercultural contact and assigned the highest priority to creating an atmosphere of warmth and openness for the students. She chose developing relationships with the students and community members as the raison d'être of the course. Elizabeth identified her role as "creating that space where relationship can happen" (Elizabeth, Predeparture Personal Interview, 5/1/17).

Balancing Challenge and Support. She recognized that students would first need to experience dissonance if they were to achieve a perspectival shift. Kiely defined dissonance as the "incongruence between participants' frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience" (2005: p. 8). Elizabeth expected students to face dilemmas in which their preconceived notions would conflict with the lived

reality of their experience. Such dissonance is the catalyst for intercultural growth. As Elizabeth observed, “But for those big learning goals to occur, there’s [going to be] big changes in how you’ve perceived your privilege, how you see the world as not the ‘‘Other’ but as One’ (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Elizabeth intentionally built-in opportunities during which students could experience such dissonance with the decisions she made about course setting, the types of service in which students participated, multiple points of student-community member interaction, and provocative journal prompts and reflection/discussion sessions. Elizabeth laid the groundwork for the dissonance by locating the course outside of the United States. She reasoned that,

> You have to have a foreign experience outside of what is your norm. I think you have to get out of your bubble—knocking you off your equilibrium. I think it takes a different level of interest to… there’s something… I think there’s a little bit of the lure of the exotic that people have to go somewhere different (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

The “lure of the exotic” is a problematic but nonetheless accurate description of student interest in studying abroad. I have encountered this frame many times during the years in which I have worked with students in this field. I appreciate Elizabeth’s recognition of student perceptions and her goal to challenge those.

The students certainly experienced disequilibrium and dissonance during this travel course. Some of that instability arose from actual physical discomfort, while other portions were activated by cognitive dissonance or emotional discomfort. Elizabeth described the physical challenges the students experienced in our post-program interview:

> The food was challenging—obviously, the heat. Being uncomfortable was challenging. Being physically uncomfortable, eating food they weren’t familiar with. Food was so important to them, and I guess it was their source of comfort, and familiarity and they were just… everything seemed to focus around, ‘What are we having for our next meal?’ It was on this level of anxiety for them. I think they were… everything is so new. They’re in a new place. Nothing looks the same. Nothing feels the same. I think they were

> looking for those little things to hold on to that were their sources of comfort. They would want French fries, and they would want pizza (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Physical discomfort or unfamiliar foods, or the distress of high daily temperatures was a jarring experience for the students. Georgia commented that Elizabeth helped her to stay positive in the face of those daily concerns:

> She was a fantastic person to have, and just her outlook made our experiences amazing. I think if it was anyone else there, they would have started complaining at some point because it's hard not to complain sometimes. It was so miserably hot and so humid, and the only AC we had was above our beds. Their water pressure was low because they had thirty people showering. There were some points when you said to yourself, 'Oh my gosh, why am I paying to be here? Why am I doing this?' Then you see Elizabeth, and she looks good with a smile on her face, and she's like, 'Hi, my ladies, how are we doing?' You'd respond, 'Not right now, Elizabeth, no. I want to enjoy my misery for a second, and I want to spread it.' [Elizabeth would say] 'Actually, no, we don't have space for that or time for that…' And then you could not help but smile around her. She just made the trip. Absolutely. She was like the icing on top (Georgia, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Although attention to the physical discomforts may appear superficial or what Kiely would call "low-intensity" dissonance, it still pushed some students to examine their needs and wants. For instance, Violet's experience of the heat and humidity caused her to question her basic definition of needs.

> We all complained about the heat all the time, but after a few days or a week into it, I just got tired of hearing people complaining about it…When I see people slacking off and complaining about the [heat], I began to react, 'They do this there every day.' We just need to get over it and do it. Then once I came home a few months into the summer, our air conditioning at home went out, and it was really hot, and my family was complaining. 'It's fine," I said. 'If I can do it in Belize, you all can do it here.' Yes, and if the washing machine breaks, we can do the laundry in the bathtub. I feel like I've learned a lot (Violet, Return Personal Interview, 10/9/17).

Students responded to Elizabeth's nurturing approach. Past researchers have found that students who feel supported are more likely to be engaged in learning (Reeve, 2006 cited by Lin and Huang, 2016). Elizabeth consciously built strategies into the course design to boost group

cohesion and inclusivity. In turn, the students felt supported, which helped them to roll with the challenges of the experience. As Nora mentions below, her trust in Elizabeth helped her to manage her feelings of unpreparedness and uncertainty.

> I think Elizabeth was the absolute best person to go on this trip. She prepared us by saying, 'Have an open mind. Have an open heart, especially.' I think that we met a few times before, and she told us things that might happen and how to go about them. We all put together some peace lessons. I think that just her saying, 'We're all going to work together. We're all going to love one another. We're going to love the people we meet.' I think it just prepared us perfectly for going to Belize and not knowing what was going to happen. I don't think we could've been prepared any better. Even when we were unprepared, I feel that she had prepared us to be that way, just because of how she went about explaining it. She loves Belize with this being her fourth time [there], she's really done it. She really knows what she's doing, and she's built relationships with the people there. I think with her being our leader; we were really set up to be successful going to Belize (Nora, Return Personal Interview, 10/30/2017).

Emphasis on Building Relationships. The previous section outlined some of the ways that Elizabeth promoted dissonance while still creating a nurturing environment for participating students. This section details some of the strategies she used to foster relationships. Whether it was ties between herself and the students, relationships among group peers, or connections among the students and community members, Elizabeth placed relationship building at the core of the course. That effort began with her choice to partner with Peacework. As noted above, Peacework collaborates with local community leaders to identify and advance improvement projects that local residents wish to realize. By engaging in service directly involving the community's stated needs and wants, Elizabeth avoided the trap of undertaking service solely for the students' sake.

Elizabeth led a group of twelve young women for this travel course, and intragroup harmony was a priority. She structured the living arrangements to foster belonging and group cohesion.

> I think living in very, very close community had its challenges at times, but they handled it really well. I mixed them up. I made them move rooms every week so that they wouldn't get cliquish. I mixed them up with their partners for different activities, all very intentionally, and planned who was going to room with whom very intentionally, because there were certain… I didn't want cliques. I wanted to bust that up, and I wanted every single young woman to feel included in this family, in this community that we had. That was a challenge (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Georgia commented that she appreciated Elizabeth's inclusivity.

> I think Elizabeth is one of the greatest people on the face of the earth. She just has such a positive outlook on life, and so no matter what was thrown our way, she stayed so positive the whole time and even when, you know, we were tired and hot. She would have a smile on her face, and she was just pepping us up any way she could. She was, yeah, absolutely fantastic. It was a great experience with her absolutely overall, and she was with twelve girls, which isn't easy to handle because we're girls. She did just a great job of just including everyone and just making everyone feel like they were wanted the whole time, which was super cool because I personally only knew two girls on the trip before we departed, but that was it (Georgia, Return Personal Interview, 1/9/2018).

The travel course welcomed students from various disciplines but was of obvious interest to education majors. Seven of the twelve enrolled participants were education majors. Ten of the twelve students participated in this research. In this study, half of the ten participants were education majors. The students who did not have an education background or experience working with children were apprehensive at the thought of writing lesson plans and delivering instructional content. For the classroom service, Elizabeth paired education majors with non-majors. Miranda commented that this strategy was very helpful to her.

> Elizabeth is awesome, first of all. She's great. She was super helpful the whole time if we needed anything in terms of planning, lessons, or what we needed to bring with us, things that we might need or find useful, stuff in terms of the service work, just anything in general. She was super open to helping you. She also was really great about the way that she paired us with our teaching partners; we did it in pairs. So, she had someone who was an education major with someone who wasn't, which was really great because the education major was able to help, say 'these are the learning goals that we need to accomplish.' And then, we were able to work together to find creative ways to do that. But I think if I would I have been with someone who maybe wasn't an education major, we would have been very lost. So, I think she was great in deciding to pair us with someone who knew what they were doing a little bit, had a little bit more experience [with teaching] (Miranda, Return Personal Interview, 10/23/2017).

Elizabeth provided emotional warmth and compassion for students. Participants trusted and felt supported by her. She focused on the strengths of each individual and encouraged them to try new things. One of the "new things" that Elizabeth expected the students to experience was eating dinner with local families. Every week, student pairs went together to share a meal with a local family. Elizabeth pointed to initial hesitancy that some students felt about attending the local family dinners in her post-program interview,

> That ended up being one of the best things we did, really pushed them far out of their comfort zone. They were resistant at first, but I kept encouraging them. I said, 'I love you like my own. I would never put you in danger. Just let this happen. It's going to be a cool, cool experience you'll never forget,' and it was (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

The dinners obliged students to engage with community members in a different way; they were not teaching or building; they were receivers of the gifts of time and food. They had no role other than simply being with the local people, which was difficult for some students to navigate. It forced them to see themselves with people whom they would not under normal circumstances engage in this way. Perhaps it is harder to Other people with whom you have just broken bread. Eight of the ten participants identified the "homestay dinners" as an important point of intercultural contact and discussed the experience as both intimidating and rewarding.

Elizabeth built-in multiple points of contact between the students and various community members (see Table 9 below). She placed relationships at the heart of the experience: using Peacework to ensure non-exploitive service work with the host community, making intercultural contact the focus of the experience, building in extra points of connection beyond the service work, and participating in local cultural events. As she noted, having relationships with locals "makes it so different from a tourist visit to the country. We're engaged with the community" (Elizabeth, Pre-departure Personal Interview, 5/1/17).

Table 9: Points of Intercultural Contact within Course Design

Points of Contact	Constituencies
Accommodation at Martha's Guest House	Faculty, students, and local female business owner
Classroom Service Work	Students and primary school principal; Students and local classroom teachers; students and local primary school students
Construction Service Work	Students and community volunteers (mostly male)
Homestay Dinners	Students and local families
Women's Co-op: Mayan Tortilla Making	Students and local community women

Facilitating Critical Reflection on Positionality

Elizabeth's philosophical basis for designing the course centered on creating peace. She was well aware of the loftiness of this goal while also recognizing that change experienced by one individual can ripple outward to others: "Are we going to make world peace? Of course not. Are we going to plant some seeds? I hope. … And this is how we build it, one relationship at a time" (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17). Elizabeth realized that there are issues of power in service work.

> Well, from the outside looking in, I think it would look as if we are the powerful ones coming in. We have the privilege of education. We have money that we can spend. We've raised money for a project at the school that they couldn't have done without us, and we have money to send ourselves to this country and pay for all of that so that in our context of the United States, I think money and privilege equates power. I try to take that concept away from my students the best I can to help them see that we're working as equals. And Peacework's philosophy is that you work in partnership, and you see the people at the school as a partner…working together for the good of the students at the school (Elizabeth, Predeparture Personal Interview, 5/1/2017).

In order to promote the peace she highlights, Elizabeth had to balance challenging and supporting the students. Kiely has argued that "it is important to establish a safe and comfortable climate to allow students space to communicate and work through emotions so that they enhance rather than hinder transformational learning" (Kiely, 2005, p. 16). Elizabeth met the students with acceptance and positive regard. She was determined to build relationships with them so they

could safely process their experience. As she said, "My goal is to create the space," a safe place for students to examine and reflect.

However, accepting cultural difference without judgment and examining one's own positionality is not easy, especially in the current highly politicized environment. Elizabeth noted the delicate balance that she had to maintain as a teacher between calling out bigotry while not alienating students,

> But I also think that some of those ideas are really based on an uncritical view of the world. And so, it's kind of like you want to push them enough to examine because you think that most of the time, once they examine that, they'll see some of this inherent racism and bigotry and things like that. But yeah, how do you do that without shutting them down? … I have a lot of conservative students. I want to create a climate where everyone's opinion is welcome. And if you disagree with the professor, you shouldn't be put down or shutdown. And I don't want to do that. I want to… that's how we're all going to learn—if we listen to the other (Elizabeth, Predeparture Personal Interview, 5/1/2017).

Elizabeth created daily journal prompts and discussion sessions that asked students to examine their values and wrestle with questions concerning their power, positionality, and privilege. In her first assignment, she asked participants to read *In the Service of Life* by Rachel Naomi Remen (see Table 10: Assignment #1). That article contrasted service with helping. As Elizabeth stated in her pre-departure interview,

> The essay…is the first assignment I'll give them on the plane. It's about the difference between serving and helping. We're helping has the connotation that we're fixing something, that you're broken in some way or not enough in some way. So, we're going to come in, and we're going to fix that. But service is like I'm getting down on my knees into whatever is happening where you are, and we're going to work on it together as partners. And it's a very humbling role. And I think that's what we have to do—release our power. I'm not more powerful just because I have more education and I have money. And the fact we live in this country of tremendous privilege doesn't make me any better. It makes me *luckier,* and it doesn't make me *better,* so we have to release all that stuff and our sense of a privilege that we are so entitled to because by virtue of having lived here our whole lives and drop all that. And serve, and some students get it. They're just wired that way. Others, it's a little more of a challenge. But that's what… yeah, that's

what I want to help them to figure out [Emphasis Added] (Elizabeth, Predeparture Personal Interview, 5/1/17).

Table 10: Assignment #1

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Journal Prompt #1

Travel Day

Dear Ones,

Through this project, it is my sincere hope that we will serve as beacons of light and love in a world in which people empower one another for positive change. Read the essay by Rachael Naomi Reman. Within her framework of service vs. helping or fixing, write your own goals for this upcoming experience.
Specifically:

What do YOU hope to accomplish personally that will serve you?
What do you hope to accomplish that will serve others?
What are at least five questions you have upon entering into the "experience of mystery, surrender and awe" of this service-learning journey. There is no right or wrong to these questions. Simply share whatever questions are in your mind as we await the unfolding of our time together in Belize.

Peace and Love for Our Journey,

Elizabeth
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In the Service of Life
Rachel Naomi Remen

In recent years the question "how can I help?" has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not how can I help? But "how can I serve?"
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Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help, you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who is not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When we help, we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity, and wholeness. When I help, I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our own strength; we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, and even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is the same as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone, they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am served as the person I am serving. When I help, I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve, I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different feelings.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person, I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix, I do not see the wholeness in the other or trust the integrity of life in them. When I serve, I see and trust that wholeness. It is what I am responding to and collaborating with.

There is a distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, and an experience of difference. In fixing, there is an inequality of expertise that can easily become a moral of distance. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected that which we are willing to touch. This is mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

If helping is an experience of strength, fixing is an experience of mastery and expertise. Service, on the other hand, is an experience of mystery, surrender, and awe. A fixer has the illusion of being casual. A server knows that he or she is being used and has a willingness to be used in the service of something greater, something essentially unknown. Fixing and helping are very personal; they are very particular, concrete, and specific. We fix and help many different things in our lifetimes, but when we serve, we are always serving the same thing. Everyone who has ever served through the history of time serves the same thing. We are servers of the wholeness and mystery of life.

The bottom line, of course, is that we can fix without serving. And we can help without serving. And we can serve without fixing or helping. I think I would go so far as to say that fixing and helping may often be the work of the ego and service the work of the soul. They may look similar if you're watching from the outside, but the inner experience is different. The outcome is often different, too.

Our service serves us as well as others. That which uses us strengthens us. Over time, fixing and helping are draining, depleting. Over time we burn out. Service is renewing. When we serve, our work itself will sustain us.

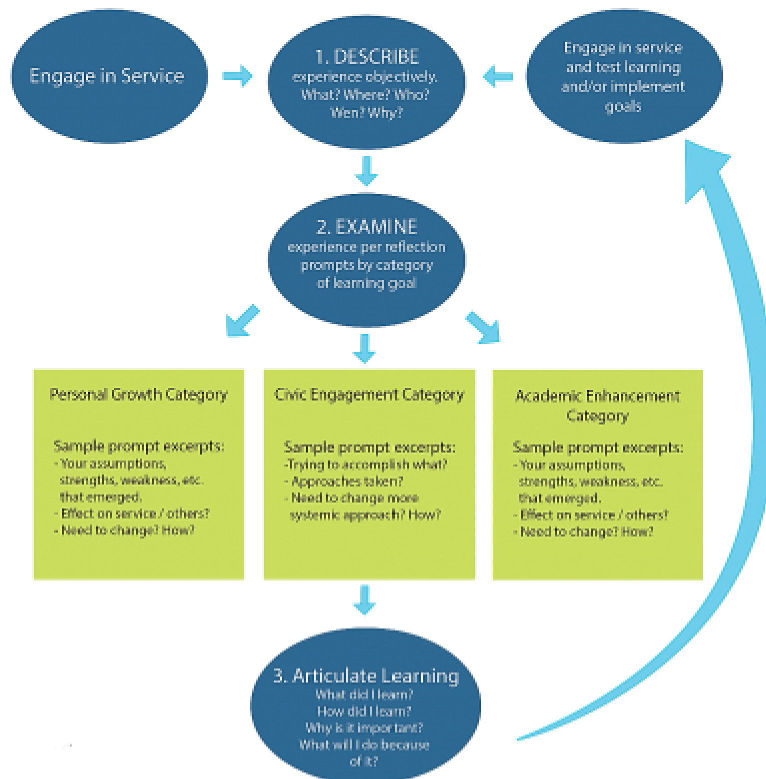
Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery, which has an unknown purpose. When we serve, we know that we belong to life and to that purpose. Fundamentally, helping, fixing, and service are ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak; when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. From the perspective of service, we are all connected: All suffering is like my suffering, and all joy is like my joy. The impulse to serve emerges naturally and inevitably from this way of seeing.

Focus on reflection—DEAL model

Each day the students and the faculty leader gathered together to process the experiences of the day. Elizabeth used the DEAL model by Ash and Clayton (2009) to facilitate discussion and critical reflection (See Figure 7 Ash's and Clayton's DEAL Model below). Ash and Clayton created the approach in response to calls for the assessment of tangible learning outcomes from service-learning experiences (Whitney and Clayton, 2011).

The model has three steps: Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning (DEAL). The first step is to describe an experience using as many details and as little interpretation as possible. The next requires learners to examine the experience against the learning objectives of the activity or course. In service-learning courses, those often involve three categories: academic enhancement, civic learning, and personal growth. For the last step, students should articulate their learning by addressing questions such as, "What did I learn? How did I learn it? Why does it matter? and What will I do in light of it" (Whitney and Clayton, 2011, p. 158).

Figure 7. Ash's and Clayton's DEAL Model (2009)



The DEAL model underlaid many of the journal prompts and discussion topics Elizabeth used in individual and group processing. Table 11 below lists the prompts that she prepared before the start of the course. She created other prompts and discussion topics spontaneously in response to daily happenings during the program (See Table 11 Prompts below).

Table 11: Prompts

Prompt
Describe one image from our drive to the school that was noteworthy to you.
Imagine living in this town for one year. What would you be most excited about? What would be most challenging?
Select four emotions that could best express how you have experienced this trip thus far and explain how certain events have brought these emotions out in you.
What do you see as the greatest asset of this community? Greatest need?
I imagined Belize to be…….Now I see it as……
Describe today using your five senses
What does the work of Peace look like to you? What is your role?

Where did I see goodness today?
What color best describes today and why?
What looks the same as "home," and what is different?
Grocery Store – What is different? What is the same?
What surprised you most about today?
Describe today in six words
Are there cultural taboos in Belize?
List reasons to celebrate Belize
Ask someone from this community to tell you his/her 5-minute life story. Listen intently. What did you learn?
How have you felt "fully human" during this experience?
How have you experienced fear? Fearlessness?
What have you learned about physical work?
Where have you seen beauty?

Elizabeth created journal questions to ensure students engaged host community members and to assist them with processing their emotional experiences. Her goal was to personalize local community members and to encourage students to be non-judgmental:

> My focus was helping the students process what they were seeing and what they were learning with the teachers and the students without judgment. Processing it with 'This is different than how we do it. It doesn't make it worse or bad. It's just different. Let's talk about why it's different, and how it's different, and how we can learn from one another and moving away from the mindset of we're here to help,' which creates that hierarchy of 'I'm better than you, and I'm going to help you undo it… teach you to do it our way.' Try to get rid of that and more of a celebration of 'These are the Belizean people, this is how they live, this is how they teach, this is how they run their school. Aren't we privileged to be here and work with them for three weeks?' Working with that mindset, we spent a lot of time on that at our meetings (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Nine students commented on how vital the daily reflection meetings were for their processing of the experience. Violet, Miranda, and Nora suggested that without the journals, they may not have thought deeply about the experience and would have missed insights.

> I think all of our journals helped us really reflect and think about what we were there to do and what we were learning from it, not just there having a good time. They all really stuck. I just think there was a reason behind every journal assignment. I felt like [that] because we would answer the question and reflect on it as a group. Reflecting as a group really helped me because everyone had different insights on the experience. It was really helpful to hear everyone's opinion, and you just really think; it just really gets deep and personal, and you just connect it back to the States and our education in our home and our

> community. We had a lot of good discussions. They stand out because if we didn't, I don't think if we, we would get a lot from the trip itself but if we didn't have those discussions, I think some people would miss the small insights of the trip and they just really helped you reflect and understand why we were there and what we were doing (Violet, Return Personal Interview, 10/9/17).

As a future teacher, Cora admired the intentionality of the daily prompts for fostering deeper understanding:

> She was very intentional with her general prompts. She had a reason for making us write people's five-minute life stories. Every night after our journal, we would have a debrief about it, and the 13, 14 of us [including Elizabeth and the Peacework representative] would get together and share what we found significant for that day. And that was another thing that was very intentional of her is that not only did we get to hear how our… share how our day, what happened that day, but we also got to hear what happened in other people's days and learn from that. I definitely think that she [Elizabeth] brought a lot of wisdom to the trip (Cora, Return Personal Interview, 10/26/17).

Eva appreciated that Elizabeth participated in the reflection meetings alongside the students.

> I think what I liked the most was the way that she set up the experience in Belize—making sure that we were processing what was going on. Making sure we were taking note of certain things. One day she asked us, she was like, "Just list in your journal five new things that you thought today." During that entire day, you'd be thinking and looking forward those five few things instead of just going through the day. She'd ask us to talk about someone we met that day, so then you'd have to meet someone, you'd have to talk to them and write about it. I liked the interactive processing part of it. I think that it really enriched the experience. I wish that I had someone to do that on all of my trips. That'd be so cool because there are just things that you don't naturally normally think about. I really liked that. I like that we gathered together every evening and we talked about the journals, and we shared what we had learned, and Elizabeth shared as well. I thought, especially since she's had multiple years of experience, that she was still sharing what she was learning; I really appreciated that (Eva, Return Personal Interview, 8/31/2017).

Hazel found value in processing the day together and felt that it contributed to group cohesiveness:

> A lot of the time, it was a lot to take in and just processing the differences and what we were all feeling--it was nice to do that. …You know that having those questions she gave us made me especially think outside of what I think I would have [normally] written

> down in my journal. She made us think outside of the box. I think it was nice at the end of the day to talk about what other people were feeling and get your feelings out about stuff you saw or heard, or just different things throughout the day. It was really nice to talk in a small setting just to know people in our group well because I think if we didn't talk every night in that group, we wouldn't have gotten as close as we did (Hazel, Return Personal Interview, 10/30/2017).

In both of our interviews, Elizabeth highlighted that the daily reflection meetings were the lynchpin for deeper learning among the students in her view. Although she saw many students grow in their understanding of cultural difference during the program experience, she acknowledged that some still had work to do, especially in interrogating their own privilege:

> I think going to the houses was such an eye-opening experience for the students to see how simply some people live with so few possessions and just a very simple life. Then my girls would come back sometimes to our… to Martha's Inn where we stayed, and the Wi-Fi was down. That was like the worst ever. 'There's no Wi-Fi tonight.' I told them, 'Yeah, well, the wind blew wrong. You know, that's going to happen.' There would be imbalances there of, I think, seeing… They cognitively understood their privilege, but I think there were really… those moments when they came across as entitled, 'Where's my internet?' that I think highlighted that [incongruence] somewhat (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Elizabeth still holds out hope that the students from her 2017 May Term to Belize will continue to process and grow from their experience and that the travel course may have laid an important foundation for their intercultural growth.

> On our last night, there were still a few things that were said at our processing meeting that made me think that they're very young, and a lot of the learning that will occur from an experience like that I think comes years later as they process it and as something happens in their life here in this world that makes them realize, 'Oh now I get what Elizabeth was trying to say. Now I get it.' I don't think I fully accomplished that awareness with all of them … but I don't want to judge that either because it is what it is, and I think it was such a wonderful and rich experience for all of the girls (Elizabeth, Return Personal Interview, 11/15/17).

Elizabeth could be characterized as a transformative teacher. Martin and Griffiths (2014) define transformative *researchers* as "developing a research design based on the principles of

participation, collaboration, and openness to gain a deeper awareness of our own frames of reference" (p. 944). Based on the interviews with the faculty leader and the student participants, I think that Elizabeth designed this travel course to Belize on principles of participation, collaboration, and openness. Elizabeth leveraged her personal characteristics and relationships with the students to encourage them to examine their preconceived assumptions, and she created the space for those who were ready to do so to shift their frames of reference.

Factors that Constrained Intercultural Learning

The Structure of May Term Courses

Although the faculty leader incorporated many opportunities for intercultural learning into the course design and pedagogy, the structure of the May Term travel courses constrains intercultural learning. This section examines three obstacles to intercultural growth that inhere in the course type: a lack of a comprehensive curriculum for addressing power and privilege, the time available for pre-departure preparation, and the timing of assessment.

Curriculum for Addressing Power and Privilege

As evidenced throughout this chapter, the faculty leader intentionally designed the course to encourage intercultural contact. She provided journal prompts and discussion sessions designed to push students out of their comfort zones to examine their beliefs, values, and behaviors in the face of cultural difference. She acted as a cultural mentor and provided a safe space and support for participants to share their perceptions. The faculty leader's intentionality, her warm and personable interaction style, and this particular context did foster student intercultural learning in this course. However, as noted in the previous chapter, participants generally did not show large gains in intercultural competence as measured by the IDI, and it is clear that the students still have work to do to interact with cultural others in interculturally

competent ways. I think this result indicates the need for a more detailed curriculum to address power and privilege.

Critical reflection and discussion are key components in helping students shift perspectives. A curriculum that includes more pointed questions or activities for students to examine their positionality may move students forward in their cultural self-awareness. Topics for such activities could include understanding personal and implicit bias, interrogating personal privilege, recognizing microaggressions, examining colorblind racism, and an expanded focus on the role of the United States in maintaining unequal relations of power on the world stage. I think these topics are crucial areas to address if intercultural learning is the aim of these travel courses.

However, I do recognize the difficulty in delivering such a curriculum within the time frame allotted to faculty for the May Term courses. It is clear that some of these concerns should be addressed before students leave campus. I also recognize that faculty have a difficult challenge to strike a balance that encourages students to push themselves toward growth in the face of difficulty without shutting them down. Also, I acknowledge that even an abundance of time, preparation, and intentionality only goes so far if participants are not interested in pushing themselves or incapable of doing the critical self-reflection required for growth.

Timing for Preparation

The timing requirements of the May Term courses do not allow for the thorough student preparation conducive to deeper intercultural insights. May Term courses must start after graduation and finish during the month of May. In order to meet the contact hour requirements for the May Term to be a credit-bearing course, this time frame provides faculty members roughly three weeks of instructional time. Although professors may require a predeparture

meeting, program leaders cannot assign work prior to the actual start date of the course, which makes in-depth preparation extremely difficult.

Elizabeth tried to get around this prohibition by requiring three predeparture meetings. In the first meeting, she discussed the host community and asked the Director of Peacework to talk with the class about the goals of his organization and how they have been working in San Ignacio for several years. In the second meeting, Elizabeth asked the students to read aloud basic information on Belize from the CIA Fact Book, and she led the class in a discussion afterward. For the final pre-departure meeting, students discussed the logistics and schedule of the course, including fundraising efforts to pay for materials for the construction projects. On the plane to Belize, Elizabeth assigned a reading about the dangers of the ideology of "helping" in service work. The faculty leader optimized the intercultural learning opportunities within the structure of the May Term program design, but the relative rigidity of the structure limited opportunities for student preparation.

Timing of IDI Post-test Assessment

All students who participate in May Term travel courses must complete the IDI pre-experience and post-program. The initial effort is administered within the semester prior to the course start date. The follow-up must, by College policy be completed immediately upon return from a travel course. The Director of International Education at Lorelai College told me that the rationale behind this urgency was the fear that students would not complete the follow-up iteration if they did not view it as a requirement for credit for the course. Although the faculty members tell the students that they need to complete the IDI a second time, there is no grading mechanism attached to completion. The hope seems to be that students will perceive the completion of the follow-up as tied to their grade, which in turn, would incentivize them to

complete it. While this logic may have contributed to high IDI completion rates across the years, it may have also led to scores that do not truly reflect the potential gains in intercultural competence that prompted the decision to use the IDI to measure intercultural competency arising from May Term travel courses in the first place. This timeline for the post-program tests does not appear to give students enough time to process their experience fully. This may also be another reason why participant IDI scores rarely evidence the intercultural learning that students believed they experienced when I talked with them during the semester following their course.

Summary

This chapter presented the intercultural learning process and the programmatic factors related to such growth for the students enrolled in the Lorelai College May Term 2017 travel course to Belize. The role of the faculty member was crucial to the intercultural development of the enrolled students. Elizabeth set the tone and structured course objectives and critical reflection strategies to encourage student learning. She intentionally designed the course as an immersive experience in which participants interacted with residents of the community they were visiting. Indeed, contact among the students and local inhabitants was the principal focus of the program. As planned, such contact was sustained and, at times, intense, given the compressed time frame in which it occurred. This created a scenario that required students to step out of their comfort zones and encounter and examine multiple perspectives.

The faculty leader created journal prompts that challenged and motivated participants to become conscious of and actively consider their cultural assumptions and biases. Reflection activities, including discussions concerning positionality, were built into the course design and aimed to provide a suitable balance of challenge and support to encourage introspection. This sort of immersive contact designed to prompt student critical reflection encouraged participants' intercultural learning despite its relative brevity. Nonetheless, structural issues related to May

Term program design may have constrained the intercultural learning of these students. In the final chapter to follow, I connect this study's findings with the larger literature on intercultural learning and the intercultural learning process and discuss their implications for education abroad practitioners and researchers.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

I sought in this study to explore intercultural learning in the context of a short-term, faculty-led, global service-learning travel course to San Ignacio, Belize. I employed a mixed-methods design to gain a deeper understanding of the intercultural learning outcomes attained by course participants. I assessed intercultural competence using a widely employed questionnaire. I used the IDI assessment instrument to gauge whether student participants had experienced any shift in their intercultural competence as a result of their international study and service experience.

I relied on qualitative (individual semi-structured interview) data to understand how student participants perceived and made meaning of their experiences. I used the individual interviews to obtain student self-reported perceptions of intercultural growth. I also explored the lead faculty member's views on student intercultural learning as well as her rationale for the course's pedagogical design. I analyzed how the program leader addressed cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with her student participants. I spoke with students and the responsible professor to identify factors in the participants' international service experience that could result in their intercultural growth.

My goal was to discover whether intercultural learning occurred and if so, to understand the process by which it had occurred through the "lived experiences" of the students themselves. I used qualitative coding to analyze course documents and the transcripts derived from semi-structured interviews with student participants and the program leader and to derive themes from them. Those themes constituted a capsule portrait of the forms of intercultural learning that

individual students gained. Taken together, they also helped me gain an understanding of the intercultural learning process. I also examined how the faculty leader designed the course and what pedagogical strategies she employed to promote intercultural learning.

This chapter summarizes the findings for each research question I examined. I connect those conclusions to the larger body of literature and theory on intercultural learning outcomes while presenting an integrated model of the intercultural learning process. I also review the ethical considerations of short-term faculty-led travel courses to destinations in the Global South. Finally, I discuss the implications of this study's findings for educators and study abroad professionals interested in maximizing the intercultural development of students on short-term faculty-led travel courses and offer recommendations for future research.

Review of Research Questions

1. How do student program participants experience cultural difference and articulate their intercultural learning?
2. How do student experiences with cultural difference and perceptions about their intercultural growth compare with IDI measures of their intercultural competence?
3. What programmatic and pedagogical factors encourage and/or constrain student intercultural learning?
4. How did the faculty leader address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with participating students?

Summary of Results

Question One:

How do student program participants experience cultural difference and articulate their intercultural learning? I gathered data to address this question from pre-departure and post-

experience semi-structured interviews and from student course-related Facebook posts. Analysis of this data resulted in the following overarching findings:

- All participants indicated that the experience had been worthwhile. Student vignettes revealed growth in personal, emotional, and intercultural terms. In general, this experience seemed to mature the students. Participants indicated growth in feelings of empathy, gratitude, openness, and adaptability. Several conveyed that this experience contributed towards feelings of self-efficacy in that completing it had persuaded them that they were capable of interacting with culturally different others, dealing with their emotions, and managing the physical discomfort that accompanied the experience.
- Emotions are critical to the intercultural learning process. Nonetheless, many conceptualizations and models of such outcomes do not attend to the affective domain. The travel course to Belize stimulated intercultural learning and growth among participating students. The depth of that knowledge varied for each individual, but their stories revealed shifts in their understanding of themselves as cultural beings. Students discussed how it felt to be immersed in a different culture and how interactions with culturally quite different individuals had prompted them to think differently about both Belizean and United States culture. Overall, students reported that the travel course had encouraged increased cultural awareness, led to changes in previously held assumptions and mindset, and occasioned a deeper examination of their privilege. Cultural self-awareness is a key aspect of intercultural development.
- Participant interviews suggested that relationships with the faculty leader, each other, and with host community members were essential components of their intercultural growth. The warm and genuine personality of the program's professor encouraged student

confidence and willingness to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zones. Her assignments pushed participants to engage with community members. Her emphasis on critical reflection helped students gain deeper insights, more effectively process their experiences, and examine their assumptions. The immersive quality and variety of the intercultural contact allowed authentic and honest communication among many students and local residents. Although students were trepidatious about interacting with local citizens at first, they reported that the sustained, multiple points of contact allowed them to engage with others more confidently. Students perceived that this confidence improved their capability to communicate more generally and across differences more specifically.

- Each student struggled with their cultural identity as an American. Students were challenged by host community members concerning their views regarding President Trump's political rhetoric concerning "foreigners." The physical realities of life in San Ignacio, Belize, differed greatly from those to which the participants were accustomed in the United States. For most students in the group, this confrontation and contrast stimulated cognitive dissonance, which included feelings of ambivalence, discomfort, and/or confusion. Students experiencing such dissonance were also promoted to grapple with the seeming contrast between American values and Belizean values and, in particular, the American focus on individualism and material wealth as indicators of a fulfilled life.
- All students reported that they had experienced cognitive dissonance during the travel course. Dunlap et al. have noted that "student realization of their own socioeconomic privilege, and the accompanying internal struggles, often are triggered by a situation or event" in which a disparity in material resources is obvious (Dunlap et al., 2007, p. 19).

Participants described the difficulty of managing feelings of sadness, anger, and guilt when faced with the physical conditions of residents' homes, the lack of resources at the primary school, and/or inequitable gender roles, among other situations. This dissonance encouraged students to engage in critical self-examination. I will return to this below in the section concerning the intercultural learning process.

During the analysis of the data for this study, I realized that students typically had a particular "style" in the way they engaged with local community members. I dubbed these Contrastor, Connector, and Collaborator. Contrastors described interactions with community members while emphasizing difference. Although contrastors related stories about particular people or incidents, those narratives did not focus on ties with those individuals. Connectors, on the other hand, focused on the relationships they formed with community members. These students highly valued the interactions they had with residents, although sometimes this group romanticized individuals and/or the host culture. Collaborators emphasized that the program had been a beneficial learning experience for participants and community members alike, as they highlighted the reciprocal nature of the ties they had formed.

In addition to the particular style of engagement, I divided individuals into two additional sub-classes: committed and conflicted. This was a useful categorization because it helped me to see how ensconced the students were in their styles. Those who fit a committed classification had fully adopted that engagement style. I included individuals in the conflicted class whose stance evidenced a measure of ambiguousness. In these cases, the individual appeared to act on the basis of a particular style most of the time but sometimes engaged in a different mode. Being positioned in this sub-class can indicate growth or regression in that it may arise when an

individual is learning how to engage in a new way, but it may also appear when an interaction is challenging, and the person reverts to a previous stance.

I was not a participant observer on this travel course. Instead, I relied upon the self-student self-reports for this study. I did not directly ask students specific questions concerning how they engaged with community members in my interviews, nor did I include individual community members in this research. Hence, this finding should be considered preliminary and additional research would be required to flesh out these style types and determine how they relate to intercultural competence.

Question Two

How do student experiences with cultural difference and perceptions about their intercultural growth compare with IDI measurements of their intercultural competence?

Higher education institutions continue to identify the assessment of intercultural outcomes as an important task (Egron-Polak and Hudson, 2014 cited by Deardorff, 2017). As noted previously, intercultural competence is a contested, complex, and multifaceted concept (Deardorff, 2006). Because of the lack of conceptual clarity, it is not surprising that there is also no one "right approach or best measurement tool for assessing this complex concept" (Deardorff, 2017). This inquiry supports the conclusions of previous research studies that highlighted the difficulty of defining and measuring the development of intercultural competence (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2006, 2011; Spitzberg and Chagnon, 2009). I employed a mixed-methods approach incorporating data on intercultural growth from a quantitative assessment and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and document analysis to obtain a fuller picture of the intercultural learning that occurred for participants in the Belize travel course I investigated.

I employed the IDI educational version 3 to gauge the intercultural competence levels of program participants before and after their experience abroad. The pre-test scores placed the students in stages along the intercultural development continuum (Hammer, 2012) from a more ethnocentric outlook to a more ethnorelative outlook. I took their pre-test scores and stages as a baseline and then contrasted those with their post-test scores and stages after their return from the travel course. My aim was to examine whether there were any changes in competence levels following the completion of the Belize travel course. I then correlated post-experience test scores and subsequent competence stages with the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and documents in hopes of gaining a more textured understanding of the factors that may have contributed to changes in students' competency levels.

All twelve students enrolled in the Belize travel course allowed me to use their IDI pre- and post-program experience scores for this research. However, only ten of the twelve participants agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews. One of that number participated in the return interview only (Louise). She mentioned to me after her return that she wanted to talk about her experience in Belize after all because she unexpectedly perceived she had changed as a result of the experience. I asked some of the questions from the pre-departure interview in her return interview, but it is difficult to know how much credence to assign to those replies since she was responding to them after she had completed the program. So, I relied principally on the data generated by her post-program interview.

The other two students did not indicate why they chose to abstain from participation in the qualitative dimension of the study. I believe it would have been quite helpful if all students had engaged, especially since one of the two non-participants evidenced a decrease of forty points in their level of competency in their post-program IDI, which relocated them along the

continuum from the Minimization stage to the Denial stage. Unfortunately, I have no other data concerning this student's perceptions of their experience in Belize. The rest of this section outlines the data I obtained for the ten participants in the study.

The IDI report provides three scores: for developmental orientation, perceived orientation, and orientation gap. The Developmental Orientation (DO) score determines the respondent's placement on the IDC continuum. The developmental orientation stage is the mindset from which an individual recognizes and reacts to cultural difference. The Perceived Orientation (PO) score reflects how people view their effectiveness in engaging cultural difference. The Orientation Gap score is the numerical difference between the DO and PO results. All students overestimated their intercultural competence, as measured by the Perceived Orientation Scores of the IDI. This was true for both the pre-program and the post-trip administrations of the instrument.

On the whole, the numerical shifts in DO scores from the pre-to post-tests were quite modest. Seven of the participant's scores shifted under 10 points in either direction. Only one student's results resulted in a developmental stage change. That individual, Rachel, digressed from the Polarization to the Denial stage on the basis of a decrease of eight points. I discussed the contradictory nature of her case in Chapter 5.

Three individuals saw a shift in their scores of 10 points or more. One of those people, Louise, decreased in competency by 20 points, which resulted in her move from the Minimization to the Polarization: Reversal stage. She did not recount any particular incidents during her return interview that would have added understanding to this shift. Again, I did not have pre-departure interview data for her, which may have provided some additional background information. Two students saw gains (11 and 13 points), which moved them forward in the IDC

continuum from Polarization to Minimization. Although these gains in competence occurred, my interviews with them did not corroborate their exceptionality. In other words, these two students did indeed demonstrate intercultural growth in their semi-structured interviews as well, but our conversations did not reveal any extraordinary experiences or keener reflections than other participants.

I do not intend to downplay Louise's decline in competence nor denigrate the growth of that experienced by two other students. Instead, I mean to question why the interview data did not also highlight these three cases or why the IDI assessments for other students whose interviews demonstrated intercultural growth failed to show that shift. I have two possible explanations for this apparent paradox. Either the IDI did not capture the intercultural growth that the majority of the students reported in their return interviews, or there was (were) some other reason(s) for this contrast in these two forms of data. Of course, both of these things may be true at once.

Perhaps the growth that students reported in their interviews did not rise to the level of "competence," as measured by the IDI. Again, I return to the difficulty in defining the phenomenon of intercultural competence. As previously outlined above in the chapter on related literature, scholars and practitioners have employed various terms to describe desired intercultural outcomes. Although Bennett (1986, 1993) measured intercultural sensitivity in the DMIS, on which the IDI is based, that instrument claims to measure intercultural competence. Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) distinguished intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence in this way, "We will use the term 'intercultural sensitivity' to refer to the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and we will use the term 'intercultural

competence' to mean the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways" (p. 422). I am unclear why the architects of the IDI shifted from sensitivity to competence.

Data gathered from the interviews likely indicates that the students who participated in the Belize travel course were able to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences. Of course, the particular abilities to discern the depth and nuances of these differences certainly varied by individual. Could this mean that there was a growth in sensitivity but NOT a significant growth in competence for most of the students? Would these variations align with the continuum outlined by Bennett's DMIS (1986, 1993)? This question remains conjecture as the IDI is the accepted instrument for operationalizing the DMIS.

The experiences reported by the students indicate shifts in attitudes and beliefs. It is not clear whether those individuals also gained knowledge and skills through their intercultural encounters that caused them to "act in interculturally appropriate ways." I had to rely on the self-reports of students concerning their competence in interacting with cultural others. And as we know from the PO scores, my respondents did overestimate their ability in this regard. Also, most students did not claim to come away from this experience as more confident in communicating with cultural others, whereas almost all of them did claim to have experienced shifts in their attitudes regarding cultural others. Are these changes the necessary precursors to increased competence?

Perhaps the timing of the data collection also played a role in the discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative data. Lorelai required students to complete the IDI posttest immediately after returning home from their travel course, while the post-return interviews occurred from two to seven months after they completed their study abroad program. As such, the students had enjoyed much more time to process their experiences by the time that they sat

down to talk with me than they had prior to retaking the IDI. Perhaps if the IDI had been administered later, the quantitative and qualitative findings might have aligned more cleanly.

Question Three

What programmatic and pedagogical factors encourage and/or constrain student intercultural learning?

Data gathered from semi-structured interviews with student participants and with the faculty leader resulted in the following findings concerning the factors that encourage intercultural development:

- Students indicated that the program's focus on intercultural immersion contributed to intercultural learning. They spent the majority of their time in contact with host community residents. Each weekday morning, participants served as classroom teaching assistants. During the school week, they ate lunch with the students and teachers. After lunch, the VT students joined in construction projects to build a stage and update a playground at the school. They worked alongside residents each day to do so. Once each week in the evening, course participants had dinner with a local family in that family's home. This was a challenging but crucial experience for most students (seven direct reports) in that it led to dissonance that caused them to examine their perspectives. They also participated in impromptu cultural events as they arose. The students related that their intensive time spent with residents provided opportunities for them to work and socialize with culturally different others. This finding confirmed arguments in the literature that such immersion is a key factor in intercultural competence (Bringle and Hatcher, 2011; Clayton et al., 2013; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Paige, 1993). The variety and frequency of the interactions allowed students to attain a fuller picture of the people of

San Ignacio. Not only did they interact with residents through multiple points of contact, but the individuals with whom they interacted represented different elements of the community. They spent time, for example, with more formally educated individuals such as the primary school principal, teachers, and town leaders. They also interacted with less formally educated residents, including construction workers, unemployed male volunteers, and mothers who worked at home. Students reported that the interactive nature of the service work was meaningful to them. Eight students directly stated that they personally appreciated contributing in a way that was helpful to the community while acknowledging that they received and learned far more from local residents than they contributed. The students identified relationships as a fundamental aspect of their intercultural learning. They praised the faculty leader's emphasis on building ties with local citizens. The program professor acted as a cultural mediator, helping students navigate the cultural differences they encountered. Some local community members acted as cultural mentors to a few of the students by developing open and honest relationships with them. That group of program participants reported that they came to deeper insights concerning their personal values as well as of the community as a result. This finding supports previous arguments in the literature suggesting that students who had cultural mentors experienced greater increases in intercultural development than those who had no such relationships (Lou and Bosley, 2012; McCloskey, 2019; Paige and Vande Berg, 2012). Students indicated that the personal characteristics of the faculty leader were a major factor in their intercultural growth. Every participant I interviewed praised her positive energy and loving personality. Their comments recognized her skill in relationship building, setting the tone, leading by example, balancing challenge and

support, and integrating the experience through a series of purposefully selected activities for the mind (reflections) and body (yoga). Students identified the journal and activity prompts as key contributors to their personal intercultural development. Those assignments required them to interact with local Belizeans. Reflection on these activities challenged stereotypes and encouraged participants to examine their assumptions concerning different cultures in general and Latin American cultures in particular. Both the supervising faculty member and student participants ranked daily critical reflection activities as crucial to intercultural learning. Students shared their observations of their interactions with local residents as well as their emotions each evening in group discussions. Students received feedback from their peers and the faculty leader to aid in the processing of the experiences of the day during those end-of-day conversations. Every student stated that such reflection was necessary, even though they all observed that, at times, such efforts were challenging. The faculty leader also identified critical reflection as the key mechanism for evaluating the growth of those participating. This finding confirms previous arguments that have identified critical reflection as a key component of the intercultural learning process (Hartman et al., 2018; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Martin and Griffiths, 2014; McCloskey, 2019).

When I asked, students had no suggestions concerning how the faculty leader could have prepared them better for their experience. Those I interviewed did not share any insights into other factors that may have inhibited their intercultural growth. Although taken as a group, students in this travel course did experience a measure of intercultural growth; the structure and requirements of the May Term travel courses are not generally conducive to intercultural development. Factors that may constrain intercultural development include no requirement for

intercultural goals, preparation, or curriculum for addressing power and privilege, the relatively short time available for pre-departure preparation, and the timing of assessment.

Question Four

How did the faculty leader address cultural difference and issues of power, positionality, and privilege with student participants?

The faculty leader used behavior modeling and pedagogy focused on relationship building to set the tone to encourage students to recognize the importance of connection and treating others respectfully. Her deft ability to balance challenge and support for participants provided a safe space in which all student voices were welcomed while simultaneously encouraging individuals to push their own intellectual and epistemic boundaries. The leader's pedagogy emphasized critical reflection through interaction assignments, journal prompts, and daily group discussion sessions.

Students in this course were tasked with providing service to their host community. Indeed, many students were drawn to the course initially because of its focus on service. During their pre-departure interviews, those five individuals talked about "making a difference" and their obligations towards those who "were less privileged." These well-meaning but naïve comments echoed what Mindry (1999) has called philanthropic power, which legitimizes social hierarchy. As Mindry (1999) has contended,

> The language of privilege and responsibility to others is deeply imbued with a sense of hierarchy and superiority. Philanthropic work reinscribes the privileged status of those engaged in such work by emphasizing their superior position in relation to those who become the object of their caring (p. 188, cited by Camacho, 2004).

The faculty leader recognized that service work is likely to involve complex issues linked to power and agency. As highlighted above, the first student assignment was to read an essay that distinguished service from helping. The faculty leader addressed this question again later through

journal prompts and evening reflection. When I spoke with the students about their definitions of service in their return interviews, their conception of it had changed from their pre-departure interviews. Students were quick to say following their experience that service differed from helping. Indeed, seven of those I interviewed were able to dig a little deeper and discuss why helping is different than service, but it was obvious that others did not fully comprehend the difference. This example highlights the fact that students need guidance to address issues of privilege, which they are otherwise often hesitant to examine.

Although analysis of positionality, power, and privilege were not the central foci of the course, the faculty leader did address these issues with the students through critical reflection activities. During the return interview, she made it clear that she was well aware of the limited intercultural growth the students had achieved. This limited change may indicate the need for a more detailed and intentional curriculum to address power and privilege. However, it does bear stating that faculty are not magicians. Participating students must be willing to engage with the material and activities and be able to process their experiences and derive learning from them.

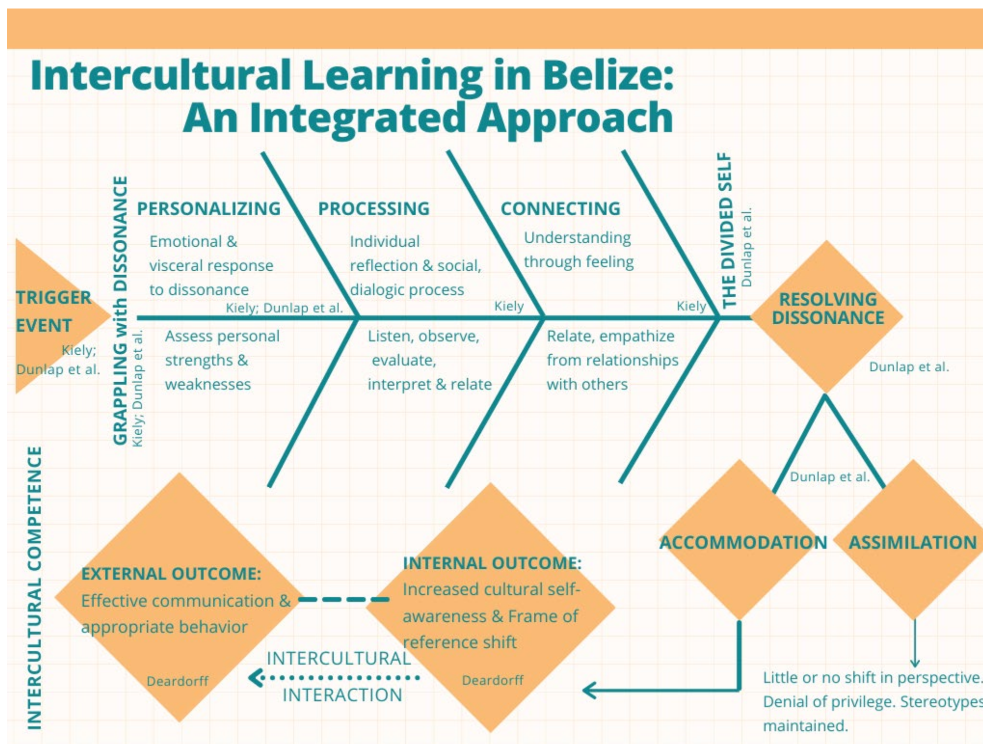
Connecting literature to research: Intercultural learning as an integrated process

One major finding of this study is that students did experience intercultural learning on this May Term travel course. Although the depth and character of that growth was particular to each individual, the learning process appeared to share some common characteristics. The frameworks that informed this research, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1986, 1993), Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model (2005), Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006, 2009), and the Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process by Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, and Davi (2007) provided a structure for the research design and contributed to my understanding of the

process through which the participants of this May Term travel course progressed in their intercultural learning journeys. This section advocates for an integrated approach to allow faculty and analysts alike to understand the growth toward intercultural competence more fully.

As mentioned previously, intercultural competence is a complex phenomenon. Each of the frameworks included in this study provided pieces of the puzzle. No one framework addressed all the intersecting contexts of this study or mediating factors of the intercultural learning process, so I sought to incorporate frameworks into my research design that could address these varying contexts and my research questions. In addition, these frameworks provided a map to track the learning experiences of the students of this May Term travel course. I contribute this integrated model as a heuristic for future researchers as they explore the intercultural learning process. See Figure 8, "Intercultural Learning in Belize: An Integrated Approach," which provides my visual representation of such an integration.

Figure 8: Intercultural Learning in Belize: An Integrated Approach



The IDI post-test scores likely did not fully capture the learning that students experienced in this case for reasons that I discussed above. That said, I cannot claim that every student attained a higher level of intercultural competence. However, I believe the interviews tell a broader and more compelling story of intercultural growth than the IDI did. Since this data reveals student shifts in perspective from a more ethnocentric mindset to a more ethnorelative mindset, the nature of the learning for each individual did align with Bennett's DMIS process (1986, 1993) (See Chapter 2 or Appendix C). The other models discussed in this inquiry provide greater detail concerning the specifics and mechanisms for individual shifts in perspective.

Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model (2005) highlighted the fact that the goal of learning is "perspective transformation," or significant change in the way an individual "understands their identity, culture, and behavior" (Kiely, 2005, p. 7). Such learning is a meaning-making process that arises or results from an experience and reflection on that experience (Kiely, 2005; Martin and Griffiths, 2014). In order for such shifts to occur, learners must become more aware of themselves as cultural beings. Cultural self-awareness is linked to Freire's (1972) concept of conscientization, whereby an individual develops a critical awareness of the political, cultural, and historical context of their social location. It is through the process of acknowledging the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of our own worldviews that we can begin to "learn to unlearn," and only then can there be a possibility for perspectival transformation (Andreotti, 2007).

The personal attributes that students possess and experiences they have undergone shape the learning that occurs. Kiely (2005) has outlined some of the individual and structural characteristics that students bring in the Contextual Border Crossing theme of his model (See Chapter 2 or Appendix D). These include personal biography, personality, learning style,

expectations, prior travel experience, and sense of efficacy. Structural traits include race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability. These characteristics certainly contributed to the variation in the intercultural learning outcomes for each student I tested and interviewed. From my analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, I would venture that motivations for participation, prior intercultural experiences, and emotional management skills also are significant in the learning process during cross-cultural experiences.

Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006, 2009) also acknowledged that the individual characteristics of participants are critical elements of the learning process (See Chapter 2 or Appendix E). She specifically identified the following attitudes as key attributes to growth: respect (valuing other cultures), openness (withholding judgment), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity). The interviews I conducted with student participants confirmed that the students who experienced growth shared stories characterized by respect and openness. Several students exhibited the traits of Adaptability and empathy (See Mitigating Characteristics in Chapter Five). My sense as I reflect on the interviews is that the combination of these traits allowed those individuals who grew in intercultural terms to experience a measure of vulnerability that lent itself to human connection and relationship building.

I cannot speak as confidently about Deardorff's embrace of curiosity and discovery. Deardorff defined neither term in the article on her process model (Deardorff, 2006). Also, I am less clear about how those capacities help individuals tolerate ambiguity. As discussed in Chapter Five, through my interviews with the students on the Belize travel course, I noted that the individuals who possessed the characteristics of adaptability and openness seemed to be able to tolerate feelings of ambivalence better than those who did not. In this research, tolerating ambivalence meant that the individual could observe cultural difference, feel heightened

emotions, and experience cognitive dissonance without shutting down. Again, I agree that tolerating ambiguity is vital, but I do not think it is solely an attitude that individuals alone possess.

Valutis (2015) presents a review of ambiguity tolerance that identifies it as a personality trait (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1949; Furnham and Ribchester, 1995; Sherill, 2001, cited by Valutis, 2015) and a cognitive style (Furnham and Ribchester, 1995; Yurtsever, 2000, cited by Valutis, 2015). Personality traits tend to remain stable over time. Perhaps since it is also a cognitive style, educators could use targeted interventions to assist students in increasing ambiguity tolerance by developing attitudes of flexibility, empathy, and adaptability. Educators should also focus on interventions during which students could gain confidence through completing tasks successfully. In my experience, activities that allow students to practice skills help promote feelings of self-efficacy.

For the students in this study, intercultural learning began with an unsettling experience (trigger event) that prompted reflection on their assumptions and/or values. This sensation is identified by different names in the learning literature: disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000), dissonance (Kiely, 2004, 2005), or cognitive disequilibrium (Dunlap et al., 2007; Piaget, 1985). Basically, dissonance occurs when an individual has an experience that runs counter to preconceived assumptions or expectations. The impulse thereafter is to take steps to resolve that internal discord. Learners resolve such conflicts by either making a change in perspective/mindset or assimilating the new information to align with previously held beliefs. Dissonance is a crucial component of the intercultural learning process (Kiely, 2005; Dunlap et al., 2007).

Kiely (2005) distinguished among types and intensity of dissonance and argued that those influenced the long-term learning of the participants of his study. Kiely's categorization of discord into historical, environmental, social, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and technological types has proven useful because it helps analysts identify potential triggers for learning. I saw the variety of these types in the interviews I conducted. Triggers for dissonance for these students included making adjustments to manage changes in food, housing, cultural norms, language, wildlife, and heat, dealing with unsolicited attention from men of the community, being faced with inequitable gender roles, being confronted with questions about American political rhetoric, completing physical labor in construction projects, working in schools with limited resources and different styles of teaching, and witnessing the relative poverty of some families and areas of town.

Kiely divided dissonance into high and low-intensity varietals. In his formulation, low-intensity discord consisted of some basic adjustments to day-to-day functioning, and high-intensity dissonance included experiences such as witnessing poverty, disease, or violence. He argued in his longitudinal study that high-intensity dissonance "creates permanent markers in students' frame of reference" (Kiely, 2002, 2005, p. 11). I do not doubt that this is the case at all, based on my interviews, but I want to offer a caveat about who should make such observations. I think it is not the "objective" observation of an experience that should determine how the intensity of that experience is categorized. In my view, since learning is the meaning-making process of each *student*, it is the *interpretation* attached to the dissonance that really marks the intensity. For instance, an individual who has never left the United States and has no formative intercultural experience to speak of may find dining in the home of a local family while a chicken roams around on the floor a fairly high-intensity experience. My point is that the

emotional response and interpretation of the experience ultimately resides with the participant. In his next stage, Personalization, Kiely recognized that emotional response to dissonance “compels students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses” (Kiely, 2005, p. 8).

In this study, students in the personalization stage grappled with their emotional responses to the dissonance they were experiencing. Kiely identified various emotions that students could experience during this stage (2005). The students who participated in the Belize travel course reported that they had experienced a gamut of emotions, including anxiety, anger, confusion, guilt, sadness, nervousness, helplessness, embarrassment, joy, gratitude, awe, and shame. The four students who experienced the more “negative” emotions also reported that those concerns prompted them to question whether they were up to the challenge of the program, as those emotions often felt overwhelming. The three students who experienced disproportionately more “positive” emotions tended to romanticize Belizean culture when comparing it to that of the U.S. Naturally, all students reported feeling a mixture of both and positive emotions during various points of the travel course.

Students did not linger in this uncomfortable stage as the faculty leader implemented a daily journal prompt and group reflection practice aimed at helping them to process their experiences. In this stage, students reflected individually on their daily experiences through the journaling activities and times of introspection. As noted previously, both students and the faculty leader recognized the value of the program’s emphasis on critical reflection. The students credited the daily group reflection sessions as necessary for effectively managing the myriad of emotions they were feeling and to analyze their observations and experiences.

Kiely (2005) described the next stage, Connecting, as “learning to affectively understand and empathize through relationships with community members, peers, and faculty” (p. 8). I also

found that connections were absolutely key to the learning process for this group of students. First, participants developed a close, trusting relationship with the faculty leader. That nurturing tie provides a caring and supportive environment. All those I interviewed reported that their relationship with the faculty leader gave them the confidence to engage with the work of this travel course.

Students also developed intimate relationships with each other. The faculty leader discouraged cliques and worked to ensure that each student was respected and included by their peers. Participants shared in their interviews that the feeling of group cohesion and inclusivity led to students viewing the group reflection sessions as a safe space to grapple with their observations and experiences. All students reported that these sessions led to deeper insights than those they believed they would have otherwise attained. The reflection sessions enabled students to relate to and empathize with each other and with host community members.

Lastly, as previously discussed, eight students developed abiding relationships with local residents. These relationships allowed them to understand better the daily lives of others who were culturally different. No participants reported that they had any previous knowledge of Belize culture and history, nor direct experience with anyone of Belizean heritage. For most of these individuals, these were among some of the only encounters they had ever had with people from a different culture. Three of the students indicated in their interviews that they had no direct experience with "other cultures" and characterized themselves as not very knowledgeable about other cultures. Five more students articulated that although they had limited interaction with culturally different others and limited knowledge of other cultures, they valued diversity. Only two of the participants claimed to have had frequent intercultural contact with and knowledge of other cultures. Regardless of their personal experiences with culturally different others, the

experience of interacting with local residents fostered a feeling of connectedness for eight of the students. Participants reported in their interviews that these relationships challenged a share of their previously held assumptions and stereotypes and prompted reflection that encouraged cognitive and values-related shifts.

Kiely's model allowed me to gain a clearer understanding of the quality of the stages of the learning process for this program's participants. But his model stopped at the Connecting stage. This inquiry suggests that even if an individual completes all of the stages of Kiely's model, there is no guarantee that a shift in perspective will occur. My interview data suggested that even when those steps have been traversed, students had a decision to make. For the person experiencing dissonance, the interpretation of that conflict matters. Dunlap et al. (2007) have dubbed this state the Divided Self. In this stage, learners experience a conflict between their "intellectual and experiential sel[ves]" (Dunlap et al., 2007, p. 20) and are compelled to resolve it by either cognitively assimilating or accommodating their new experiences. I did not explore how much of this process was self-consciously undertaken and how much of it occurred unconsciously.

When a learner assimilates new experiences, they fit them into the cognitive categories they had previously adopted. Often, this results in the maintenance of stereotypes, denial of privilege, and little or no shift in perspective or values (Dunlap et al., 2007). In contrast, individuals who accommodate new experiences revise their previously held assumptions and [re]consider their status and privilege in the prevailing social order (Dunlap et al., 2007). In this research, nine learners who attempted to accommodate their experience developed greater cultural self-awareness and evidenced a shift in perspective from an ethnocentric toward a more intercultural mindset. As each student's personal characteristics and experiences varied, the

depth of the intercultural growth of each student varied. I cannot confirm the long-term impact of those shifts from the data I collected.

Implications of Study Findings

This analysis examined how students perceived and responded to cultural difference within a global service-learning context and how a faculty leader addressed cultural difference and issues of power, privilege, and positionality as she developed their program's pedagogy. I have aimed in this inquiry to address a gap in current knowledge concerning the potential for a faculty-led GSL program to contribute to the intercultural learning of participating students. I have sought to sample student voices in this research on intercultural development to provide a deeper understanding of the substance and mechanisms involved in the intercultural learning process.

I next outline the implications of this study's findings for interested scholars and practitioners.

- GSL is an engaging pedagogy with the potential for increasing the intercultural competence of its participants. Students I interviewed appreciated the cultural and experiential qualities of the program. Leaders should be prepared to help participants process issues of power, privilege, and positionality as they are sure to arise in service settings.
- Students identified the daily reflection activities built-in to the program as key to synthesizing their intercultural learning. Nonetheless, overall, the interviews and assessments I conducted suggested that while self-reflection was necessary, it was not by itself sufficient to ensure that individuals fully processed the implications of their

experience. Students required critical reflection with trusted peers to negotiate these issues of identity and difference.

- The relationships that students formed with the faculty leader, each other, and members of the host community were essential to securing possibilities for self-examination and critical reflection. This finding suggests that professors and program designers should prioritize relationship building and creating engaging activities aimed at encouraging and deepening ties amongst group members. Likewise, faculty leaders should include multiple points of intercultural contact in their curricular plans. More, supervising professors must plan intercultural activities along with local residents to ensure that such contacts as occur are desired, respectful, and reciprocal in character. Of course, leaders should also include intentionally reflective activities aimed at helping participants process their intercultural experiences.
- Emotions play a big role in moving students through the intercultural learning process.

This study's findings suggest that program designers and faculty leaders must self-consciously attend to the affective domain. The reflective activities should acknowledge the importance and presence of strong emotions and be geared toward helping students process them. It follows that program leaders should feel comfortable in helping students process emotions. If not, they should complete relevant training.

- The IDI failed to capture some elements of the intercultural growth that students indicated they had experienced in their interviews. This result illustrates the difficulties implicit in assessing so complex a phenomenon as intercultural competence. The lack of conceptual clarity around intercultural outcomes can make the assessment of these terms difficult, especially as there is no "one right approach or best measurement tool" to gauge

them (Deardorff, 2017, p. 124). This study's results suggest that intercultural outcomes should be measured in multiple ways.

- Eight of the ten participating students claimed in their interviews that the formative intercultural contact experienced during this travel course profoundly affected them. In addition, it was clear from the interviews I conducted that students did not fully process their experiences until well after their return to the United States. Indeed, it was clear to me that some interviewees were still processing their experiences several months after their return. Therefore, timing is an important consideration for any leader trying to assess intercultural outcomes.
- The faculty leader made intercultural contact the principal focus of her course. This individual demonstrated a high level of commitment to intercultural growth for her short-term program. That fact stood out as, at Lorelai, there is currently no requirement that faculty include intercultural goals or positionality in the design of their travel courses. This policy lacuna should receive attention to ensure that intercultural competence does not receive attention only when a highly motivated individual leads such courses. Without some attention to intercultural understanding and examination of privilege, travel study programs may unintentionally reproduce cultural stereotypes and undermine possibilities for intercultural development.
- Students benefit from a thorough pre-departure preparation related to both general and specific cultural content to provide appropriate context. The structure of Lorelai's May Term courses does not always allow for thorough student preparation. May Term courses must start after graduation and finish during the month of May. As I noted above, in order to meet the contact hour requirements for the May Term to be a credit-bearing course,

that time frame provides faculty members roughly three weeks of instructional time. More, the college prohibits professors from assigning work prior to the actual start date of the course, which makes in-depth preparation for such programs very challenging. Other faculty leaders are likely to face similar concerns and so must carefully consider the timing and structure of their institution's short-term programs as they design their travel courses.

- While unevenly experienced, those students who participated in the program I examined showed gains in their intercultural learning. Even so, some of these individuals have a long way to go to develop robust intercultural competency. Indeed, some participants interviewed remained mired in binary logics. Those individuals need to be encouraged to examine their privilege and positionality in order to mature and become more subtly aware of the concerns with which they are engaged.

Emerging Questions and Further Study

This research examined the perceptions and experiences of ten White middle-class women and their White middle-class faculty (female) leader. No participant in this research talked about race in their interview. For these individuals, one may assume, their Whiteness was invisible. Future research could focus on gathering similar data from a larger, more heterogeneous sample. For example, I wonder how this study's findings may have differed if there had been students of color involved in the program. Similarly, it seems likely the dynamics of group interaction would have been different if males had participated in the program. It could be that the participants' shared gender added to group cohesion. Women are also often seen to be more relational than men. I wonder if the focus on relationship development would have been as significant to the participants if they were not all female. Perhaps a larger, more diverse sample

would address some of these questions. Also, involving community members in the replication of this study could be helpful in order to learn how they perceived their relationships with participating students.

This study confirmed previous research that found that intercultural learning is a complex phenomenon that may occur over time (Arasaratnam, 2014; Bennett, 1986, 1993; Brindle et al., 2013; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Kiely, 2005). I would be curious to know how students from the Belize travel course would characterize the intercultural learning they gained from the course now that three years have passed since its completion. As such, a longitudinal study of the sort offered here would add to the scarce research (Kiely, 2005) that has examined the long-term effects of formative intercultural experiences on intercultural competence.

This research revealed the ways in which the students on the Belize travel course tended to interact with culturally different others as Contrastors, Connectors, or Collaborators. This was an unexpected finding. I did not ask specific questions about how participants engaged with local residents. Future research could focus on these interaction styles. Investigators could develop an interview protocol directed at uncovering such behavioral styles or patterns. Perhaps community members could be included in such an inquiry as well. They could be asked about the ways that participants engaged with them to obtain a fuller picture of the interaction from a viewpoint other than that of participants. This could shed light on the intercultural effectiveness of student communication and interaction.

My findings also suggested that two of the mechanisms in Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence can occur in a different order than that which she found. That fact caused me to question her use of curiosity and discovery as proxies for tolerating ambiguity. The psychology of learning literature offers measures of ambiguity tolerance (Furnham and Marks,

2013, cited by Valutis, 2015). A potential area for future research would be to examine whether those measures would be helpful to assess what role this critical capacity plays in the development of intercultural competence. This could also be an area for international education practitioners to develop programming and interventions aimed at increasing the tolerance for ambiguity of prospective education abroad participants.

Final Thoughts

A Way Forward? Developing a Pedagogy of Encounter

The themes and concerns brought to bear by postcolonial theory can guide ethical considerations for developing an intercultural pedagogy. Fiedler (2007) has discussed the potential of intercultural learning spaces,

> If education were to create intercultural spaces where meaning and knowledge is generated through negotiations, it could also facilitate a learning space for global citizens. In such spaces, dialogue concerning difference [has] to be reinstated (taking historical baggage into account), rather than initiated, and identities [have] to be re-negotiated, rather than formed and fixed (Fiedler, 2007, p. 56, cited in Martin and Griffiths, 2012).

If global education abroad or GSL programs are to avoid the risks to the host community outlined previously in this research and provide genuine opportunities for personal, academic, and intercultural growth for students, program leaders must conscientiously create a "pedagogy of encounter," a curriculum that is ethical, engaging, economically and environmentally sustainable, and pedagogically sound. Postcolonial theory offers a good starting point for such work as it offers a critical lens to examine the ethics of current and potential exchange partnerships and programs (Martin and Griffiths, 2012) as well as means by which scholars and practitioners can develop a pedagogy aimed at breaking down "single-stories" and stereotypes. Postcolonial theories can "expose ways in which colonial ideology, discourse, and actions have been perpetuated and continue to surface in various social contexts" (Jorgenson, 2009, p. 38).

Said's *Orientalism* is a foundational text for postcolonial scholars (Caton and Santos, 2009). In that work, Said argued that colonial texts presented a false dichotomy between the West (the standard) and the East (the other). In this binary, the West served as the pinnacle of culture and civilization in contrast to the exotic, backward, and unknowable East (Said, 1978). Western ideals and ways of life were set up as the standard against which Eastern and Southern cultures were to be evaluated (Breen, 2012; Krabill, 2012; Woolf, 2006). This "Otherization" is a condescending ideology that essentializes non-Western society, culture, and people. Western powers used this discourse to "justify the exploration, exploitation, colonization, and 'civilization' of the East" (Echtner and Prasad, 2003, p. 667, cited by Caton and Santos, 2009, p. 193).

Said's work focused on Western constructions of the East. However, the central concept of the "Other-ing" of certain racial and cultural groups for perceived psychological, ideological, and/or economic benefit is pertinent throughout many regions of the world that still suffer the legacies of colonialism, including Latin America and Africa (Shome, 1996, cited by Caton and Santos, 2009). Although formal colonialism has ended, the attitudes that underpinned it are still relevant today:

> While political, and to a less extent economic, decolonization might have occurred with independence, cultural decolonization—what some call decolonization of the mind—has been a much more difficult process (Sharp, 2009, p. 4).

Although this dissertation was not a postcolonial treatise on global experiential programs, that body of theory provides a highly relevant framework to examine discourses on travel as transformation. Postcolonial theory encourages analysts to recognize imbalances in power and cautions scholars to consider the ethical implications and potential exploitive practices of study abroad programs and global service-learning experiences. Postcolonial theory urges those

designing study abroad experiences to base their programs on "reciprocity, equality, and mutuality" (Martin and Griffiths, 2012, p. 923). This framework provides "alternative ways of understanding identity, representation, difference, and responsibility," which are "particularly problematic in the context of intercultural learning in North-South study visits" (Martin and Griffiths, 2012, p. 920).

Overall, this study did suggest that GSL can serve as an engaging pedagogy with the potential to enhance participant intercultural development. The travel course I examined offered an immersive experience that encouraged participants to grow personally and interculturally. Students developed relationships with faculty, peers, and community members that, in general, increased their cultural self-awareness, intercultural awareness and prompted a movement toward a more ethnorelative mindset. This faculty-led GSP program facilitated critical thinking and reflection on culture, cultural identity, and privilege within the context of globalization and advanced capitalism.

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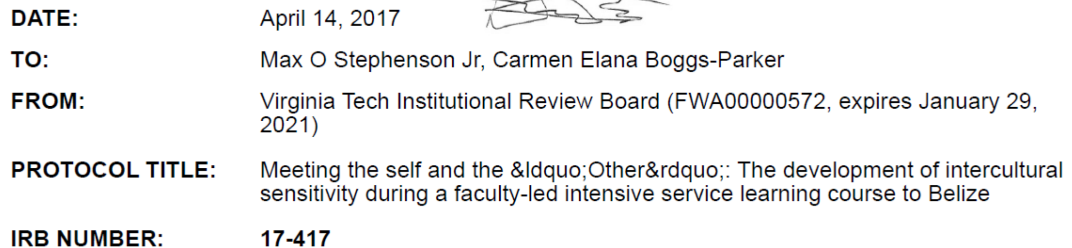
APPENDIX A: Initial IRB Approval Letter

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: April 14, 2017

TO: Max O Stephenson Jr, Carmen Elana Boggs-Parker

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Meeting the self and the “Other”: The development of intercultural sensitivity during a faculty-led intensive service learning course to Belize

IRB NUMBER: **17-417**

Effective April 14, 2017, the Virginia Tech Institution 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) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date:	**April 14, 2017**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**April 13, 2018**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**March 30, 2018**

*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

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

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

Title of Project: Meeting the self and the "Other": The development of intercultural sensitivity during a faculty-led intensive service learning course to Belize

Investigator(s):	**Carmen Boggs-Parker**	boggs@roanoke.edu **540-375-2068**
	Max Stephenson	mstephen@vt.edu **540-231-6775**

I. Purpose of this Research Project

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to explore intercultural learning that occurs as a result of participation in an international service-learning IL course. The results will be used in a dissertation, published in a journal and/or presented at a conference.

II. Procedures

This study will take place in two phases. In the first phase of this study, before departing for the semester program, participants will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) v. 3 online edition. This part of the study will take approximately 20 minutes. Next, participants will also be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview about their expectations of the course. This will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

During the second phase of the study, participants who have returned from the IL term abroad will again complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) v. 3 online edition. Then the students will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview with the investigator. Students will be asked to bring in five photographic images that represent images related to intercultural learning. The interview will last from 60-90 minutes.

Interviews will be digitally audio-recorded.

III. Risks

The risks involved with participation in this study are no more than you would experience in regular daily activities.

IV. Benefits

Participants will have the chance to articulate their thoughts about participating in the course. For those who plan to pursue degrees in research-based fields, participation in this study provides direct and potentially useful experience with the conduct of educational research.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

This is a joint research project between Roanoke College and Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Project No. 17-417
Approved April 14, 2017 to April 13, 2018

All information regarding participants' identities will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office, and no one other than the investigator will have access to it, unless required by law. Consent forms will be kept separately.
At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. Subject's Consent

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

____ Date__________
Subject signature

____
Subject printed name

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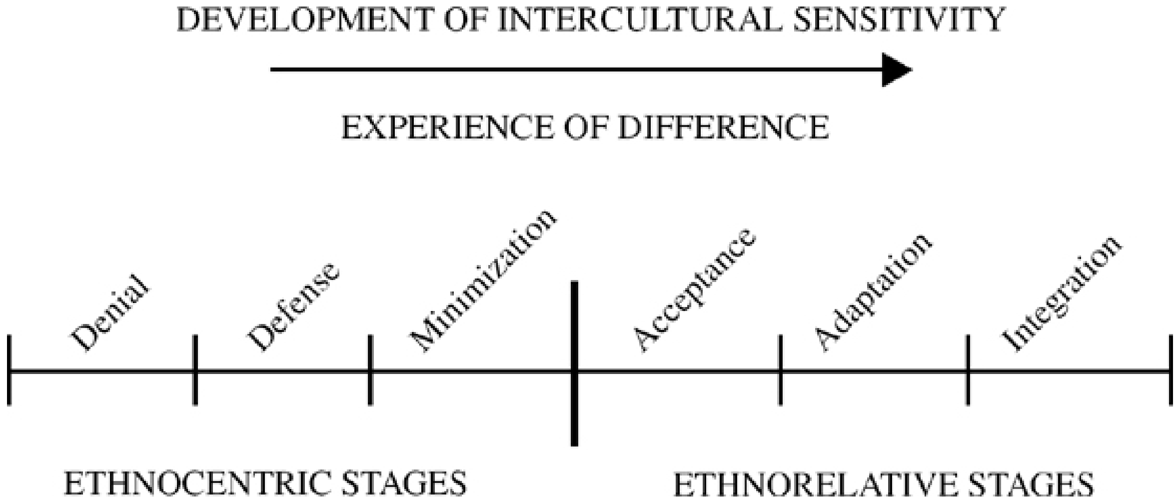
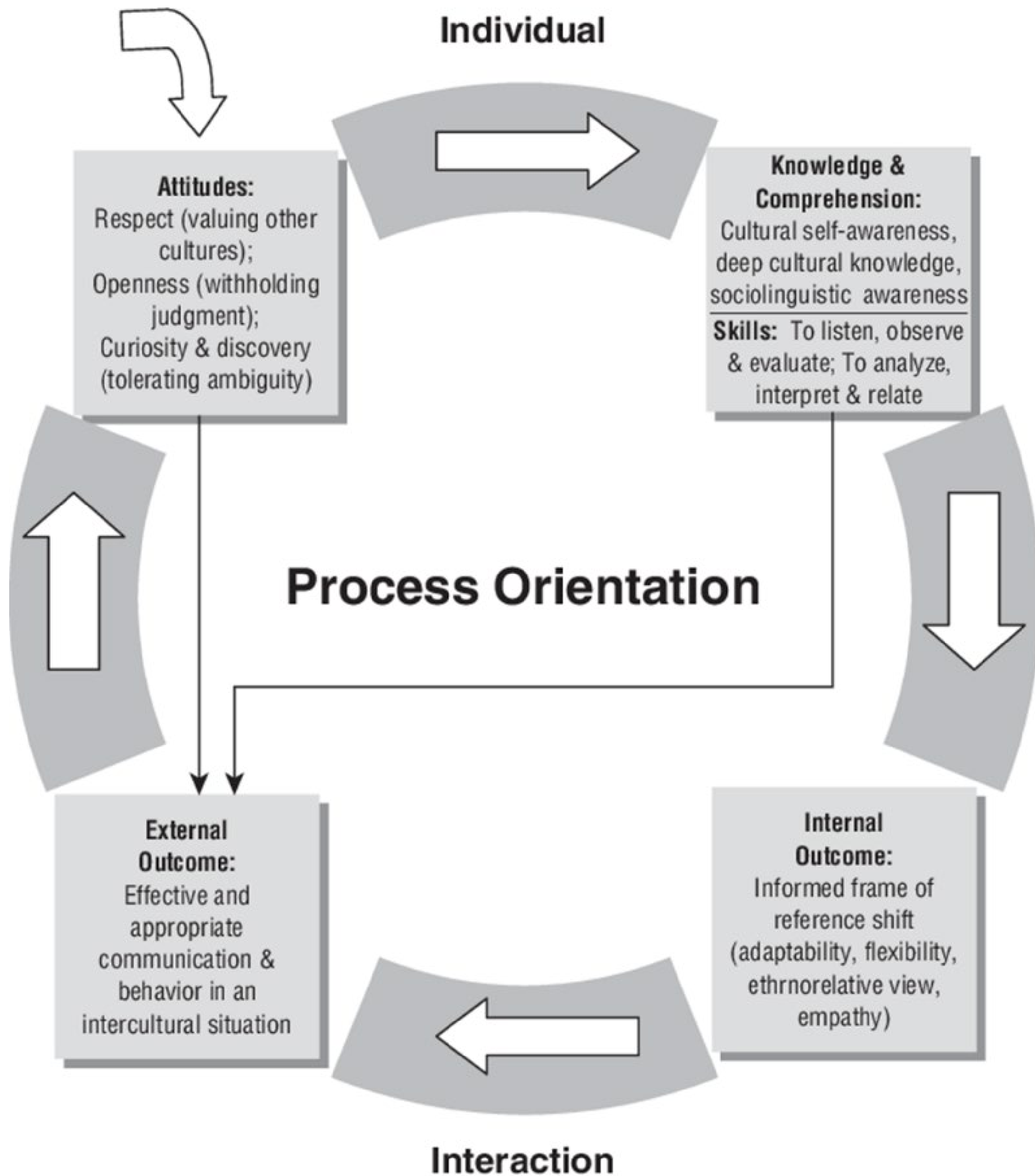
APPENDIX C: Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



APPENDIX D: Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence



APPENDIX E: Kiely's Transformational Service-Learning Process Model

Theme	Meaning & Characteristics
Contextual border crossing	There are personal (i.e., biography, personality, learning style, expectations, prior travel experience, and sense of efficacy), structural (i.e., race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability), historical (i.e., the socioeconomic and political history of Nicaragua and US-Nicaragua relations within larger socioeconomic and political systems), and programmatic factors (i.e., intercultural immersion, direct service-work and opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue with diverse perspectives, and curriculum that focuses on social justice issues such as poverty, economic disparities, unequal relations of power) which intersect to influence and frame the way students experience the process of transformational learning in service-learning.
Dissonance	Dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience. There is a relationship between dissonance type, intensity, and duration and the nature of learning processes that result. Low to high intensity dissonance acts as triggers for learning. High-intensity dissonance catalyzes ongoing learning. Dissonance types are historical, environmental, social physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and technological.
Personalizing	Personalizing represents how participants individually respond to and learn from different types of dissonance. It is visceral and emotional, and compels students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Emotions and feelings include anger, happiness, sadness, helplessness, fear, anxiety, confusion, joy, nervousness, romanticizing, cynicism, sarcasm, selfishness, and embarrassment.
Processing	Processing is both an individual reflective learning process and a social, dialogic learning process. Processing is problematizing, questioning, analyzing, and searching for causes and solutions to problems and issues. It occurs through various reflective and discursive processes such as journaling, reflection groups, community dialogues, walking, research, and observation.
Connecting	Connecting is learning to affectively understand and empathize through relationships with community members, peers, and faculty. It is learning through nonreflective modes such as sensing, sharing, feeling, caring, participating, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting, and doing. Examples include performing skits, singing, dancing, swimming, attending church, completing chores, playing games, home stays, sharing food, treating wounds, and sharing stories.

APPENDIX F: The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process

Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi

Figure 1
The Socioeconomic and White Privilege Awareness Process

Stage 1–*Trigger Event(s)*: Trigger event(s) stimulates service-learner awareness of their own socioeconomic status and/or white privilege in contrast to community partners', resulting in "cognitive disequilibrium."

Stage 2–*Grappling*: Service-learner grapples with socioeconomic, white privilege, racial issues, and/or emotions. The meaning-making process begins.

Stage 3–*Personalization*: Service-learner listens to and communicates more intimately with community partners, and attempts to make greater meaning of what they are learning. The "self" continues to be challenged.

Stage 4–*The "Divided Self"*: Service-learner experiences a conflict between the intellectual and experiential self, and emotions such as "white guilt" as they continue their work in their service-learning environment, and further grapple to make meaning of the situation(s).

Stage 5–*Disequilibrium Resolution*: Service-learner reconciles/resolves the emotional confusion by cognitive "accommodation" or "assimilation."