

HOW A ONE SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE
AFFECTS AN UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENT'S
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Education

in

Education

Montana State University

Bozeman, MT

April 2006

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of a thesis submitted by

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April 2006

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ABSTRACT

Obtaining a global perspective and world-mindedness is an important component to an undergraduate education in today's complex world. While the focus of a college education is to improve a student's breadth of knowledge, so too, is assisting students in their overall development as citizens of the world. Identity development is a key component to undergraduate education in this respect. In order to determine if study abroad is a useful tool in promoting higher levels of identity development in college students, a qualitative study was conducted with 8 undergraduates at Montana State University, Bozeman. Interviews conducted with the participants in this study indicate that study abroad did have a positive affect on the students' identity development.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly globalized world, nations are rapidly changing and becoming increasingly dependent upon each other for goods and resources. Business throughout the world competes in an environment that sees few national boundaries and limitations. Globalization refers to the opening of world marketplaces as well as the increased interconnectedness between nations and markets (Achterberg, 2003).

Without gaining global competency, students would lack the ability to relate to others in the world in which they live and work (Achterberg, 2003). Global competency in this text refers to one's ability to empathize and approve of other ways of life, as well as one who has the ability to communicate effectively across a variety of cultures (Hunter, 2004). It is crucial that students have the knowledge of different cultures, political systems, and societies in order to be prepared upon graduation for their futures (Morey, 2000). In our changing world, it is important to encourage international awareness and a global perspective in college students (Achterberg, 2003) in order to give students the skills they will need in order for them to be successful in the environment they will encounter in the workforce, as well as in life.

According to the professional association NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, it is increasingly important for students today to participate in study abroad programs in order to gain global competence (Ascribe Newswire, 2003). NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, is a highly respected professional association for educators promoting international education. Founded in 1948 as the

National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, NAFSA's role has changed throughout the years to include a broader voice in international education. A recent report by NAFSA stated that there is a crucial and urgent need for Americans to have international knowledge and skills which include greater knowledge of the world outside of the United States, enhanced leadership abilities, greater feeling of civic responsibility, and unwillingness to continue using stereotypes in judging other cultures. Students can obtain these necessary skills through participation in study abroad programs (Achterberg, 2003).

Current trends in higher education find that Anglo-American students generally express apathy toward diversity on campuses and diversity-related issues (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Domestically, many students focus primarily on the fact that there are differences between racial and ethnic cultures: they do not focus on commonalities that they may share with one another (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Fear of the unknown leads to an "us versus them" mentality, causing segregation on campuses and thus, perpetuates a lack of interest in gaining knowledge of other cultures (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

One method to counter the cultural apathy displayed by contemporary college students is to help them gain an appreciation for diversity and to gain world-mindedness. World-mindedness, in this situation, is defined as an individual who uses all humanity and a global awareness to frame his or her primary reference group, as opposed to using just one ethnic group (Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001).

Those who work in higher education have the ability to combat a number of the prejudices our students could potentially harbor including feelings of isolation and fear of unknown cultures gained from living in the post 9/11 world (Achterberg, 2003). Fear of

the unknown includes unknown cultures, different religions, and alternative ways of life. Research indicates that many American students have much to gain from study abroad compared to university-level students from other countries, due to their pre-conceived notions that all other cultures must conform to American culture (Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001). Certain American foreign policy decisions and negative media portrayals of cultural differences serve to perpetuate these notions.

One way for students to gain the experience necessary to operate in the new global environment is to study abroad. Following a study abroad experience, students become aware of their own unique American culture and have the opportunity to become competent, even proficient, in another culture. Studying in a foreign country allows the student to view America from the outside as a foreigner would; a wider perspective is gained (Hansen, 2002). A benefit of the study abroad experience for students with cultural apathy would be the potential to become less indifferent toward diversity and other cultures. Study abroad helps students to gain an appreciation for other cultures and the differences that they portray (Kaufmann, Martin, Weaver & Weaver, 1992).

A lack of current research on the contribution made by study abroad programs to undergraduate students' development and inconclusive data on the benefits of programs could affect the number of students who participate in study abroad (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Much of the early research on study abroad programs occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. This research was often inconclusive in its findings regarding gains in students' world mindedness and other beneficial values learned during a study abroad. Research on study abroad gains was criticized for lack of rigor and for not using

equivalent control groups to measure change (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). This is a limiting factor in the promotion of study abroad participation.

However, some current research presents results contrary to earlier findings. More recent studies suggest that student views regarding cultural pluralism and increased world-mindedness are positively affected by study abroad. This research also consistently finds that students who study abroad obtain a greater tolerance of others and a higher level of intercultural awareness and objectivity. Study abroad students also begin to avoid using cultural stereotypes and cultural myths in the judgment of others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Higher education stretches beyond the classroom and gains in intellectual content to also educate students in a variety of skills, values, and dispositions. College students have opportunities to become aware of themselves and the world. College students develop personal values and skills that will shape their identities for the future. However, previous research on the effect of study abroad on the identity development of students is limited.

Purpose

Because there is a lack of conclusive research in the area of student development while participating in study abroad, the purpose of this analysis was to investigate how students at Montana State University-Bozeman are changed by a study abroad experience. This study examined the changes that students perceive they make in relation to identity development before, during, and after experiences with study abroad. I

specifically chose to interview college students from Montana, Idaho, Alaska, and Eastern Washington because they are likely to come from rural towns, which are more isolated and less racially diverse. I determined that this group of students could have the potential for a higher level of change following a study abroad experience.

Research Questions

In this study I investigated the following research question: How are undergraduate college students at Montana State University - Bozeman affected in terms of their perception of their own identity development while participating in a one semester study abroad experience?

Overview of the Study

To answer the question stated previously, I conducted a qualitative study on the Montana State University, Bozeman campus. Eight undergraduate students were interviewed prior to studying abroad during the Spring 2005 semester. Six of these students were then interviewed after returning from their study abroad experience. The students' interviews were analyzed for common themes and then compared to a well-known theory of college student identity development. The overall question of what are the students' perceptions of change while abroad is discussed in the results and discussion chapters.

Significance

Results of this study can be used by both student affairs professionals and by faculty members at institutions of higher education. This study may be useful to student affairs professionals, particularly those who work with students in international education, in designing both programs for study abroad. In knowing potential areas of growth for students while on study abroad, those who design programs will be able to incorporate opportunities in the study abroad experience that will foster positive growth in participating students. Additionally, attitudes of students departing for study abroad play a large factor in a student's success in achieving higher levels of identity development while abroad. Those with responsibility for pre-departure programming may find results from this study useful. In assisting students to achieve a high level of enthusiasm for their upcoming experiences, and informing them about their opportunities for growth, the assurance of positive experiences while abroad could affect their experiences positively.

Faculty members can benefit from the results of this study as well, in supporting student identity development based on study abroad. Faculty members can confidently advise their undergraduate students how they might benefit from study abroad. The results of this study could also help faculty to design effective programs for their students that focus on building skills that are demonstrated in the outcome of this study.

Limitations

While this study was successful in looking at the experience of eight Montana State University, Bozeman's students participating in study abroad; it is limited to this group's experiences. This study looked only at students from rural states, and may not accurately reflect those students from larger, urban states and regions because they were not included in this study. The students who engaged in this study participated in a one-semester study abroad, and may have had different experiences had they been in their host countries for either a longer or shorter time. Additionally, these students studied abroad through programs sponsored through the Office of International Programs; Faculty led programs could produce different outcomes.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided for reference for the terms used throughout this study. When I use the following terms this is the definition to which I refer.

Globalization refers to the opening of the world marketplace as well as the increased interconnectedness between nations and markets (Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001).

World-mindedness refers to one who uses all humanity and a global awareness to frame their primary reference group (Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001).

Global Competency refers to the ability of one to empathize and approve of other ways of life, as well as one who has the ability to communicate effectively across a variety of cultures (Hunter, W.D., 2004)

Study abroad is defined for the purpose of this study as a period of time where a student engages in an educational activity through an institution of learning or organization for schooling in a foreign country.

Identity development is the process of students learning and testing their own selves, and discovering how they make meanings. The process of students learning how they relate to both themselves and the outside world (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Summary and Preview

In this chapter I discussed the potential strengths offered to students by studying abroad and introduced the research question that is addressed in this thesis. In the following literature review, I explore the theoretical background of this study, describe the nature of study abroad, and summarize the potential benefits and challenges associated with this form of education. In chapter three, I discuss the context of the study, participants, and overall framework of this study. I discuss the student participants, their experiences, common themes found in their experiences, and the relation to Chickering's theory of college student identity development in chapters four and five. Chapter six will close this thesis with overall results, discussion, and recommendations for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the study abroad experience has not been extensively researched, previous research has reported positive impacts on students' overall development during study abroad. A study abroad experience is usually noted by the participant as being the best experience of his or her undergraduate career (Stryker, 1997; Cash, 1993).

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical foundations that guide this study. Data is provided as a background on current trends in study abroad nationally and the various models for study abroad programs. Issues facing study abroad are discussed and the variables that may affect study abroad are explained. A brief summary of the research conducted on study abroad, as well as relevant research studies are provided in this chapter.

Theoretical Foundations

This study was based on the foundation of student development theory developed by Arthur Chickering. The idea that students develop morally, socially, and personally, in addition to academically, throughout their college experience has been demonstrated with each matriculated student (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Currently student affairs professionals do not agree upon any one central developmental theory to accurately describe all student populations. Because of this, there are numerous theories that could apply to each and every student. For the purpose of this study, Arthur Chickering's theory of identity development will be the basis for analysis in determining student development. The principal idea behind this analysis is to uncover whether or not

the study abroad experience gives students the tools that they need in order to progress in their identity development according to the concepts described by Chickering, which leads students to gain skills necessary to become successful in their navigation of the world.

Arthur Chickering's theory of college student development was originally outlined in the text *Education and Identity* (1969) and again revised in 1993 with Linda Reisser. This theory describes students' experiences with identity in terms of seven vectors of development. Chickering used the term "vector" to describe the different areas of identity development because he thought of them as being directed in a forward motion. His theory was developed around the concerns of "emotional, interpersonal, ethical, and intellectual aspects of development" (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, pg.38). The seven vectors are:

- Developing Competence
- Managing Emotions
- Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence
- Developing Mature Personal Relationships
- Establishing Identity
- Developing Purpose
- Developing Integrity (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Chickering's first vector, *Developing Competence*, involves three different levels of competences: intellectual, physical, and interpersonal. In the first area, the student becomes "skilled at using the mind" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The student gains

additional lenses, or frames of references with which to make meanings of their reality. Physical competence involves the student becoming a person who is challenged in a variety of areas, which can include sports, the arts, or any sort of manual activity in which the student can highlight his or her achievements. Interpersonal competence not only signifies the student's ability to communicate effectively with others, but also how he or she is able to work in a team environment and maintain personal views while compromising with others (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Listed as the second vector, *Managing Emotions*, describes the ways college students learn how to develop mechanisms to handle situations before they erupt and explode. A key element to this vector is of the flexibility to control their expressions of emotion. Awareness of emotion is a crucial part of students reaching a higher level within this vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The third vector, *Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence* is centered on the student becoming emotionally independent. The student gains the freedom to become independent and able to stand behind his or her own decisions within this vector. Becoming comfortable with these choices assists the student in developing relationships with others that are more meaningful than previous relationships. Students who demonstrate a higher level of competence in this vector have the ability to make decisions on their own and do not require the guidance and approval of peers or teachers, as they are more confident (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Throughout the course of a student's college career, *Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships*, the fourth vector, is crucial to the student evolving into a person who has the ability to maintain deep and meaningful relationships. A student who has

gained high levels in this vector has an appreciation for differences, is sensitive to culture and ethnicity, and has moved beyond making initial judgments of others (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Establishing Identity, the fifth vector, is perhaps the most complicated of the seven vectors outlined by Chickering. This vector depends upon students deeply connecting to their inner self and defining who they are in terms of their role in the world and their personal lifestyle choices (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). This may mean commitment to religious or cultural beliefs or personal convictions. In many respects, *Establishing Identity* is visible from the outside, as the student lives the life that he or she has chosen, in terms of lifestyle and appearance. *Establishing Identity* can be thought of as an outward and visible sign of whom the individual is. Within this vector, the student becomes comfortable with their appearance and comes to terms with their sexuality (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). It is important to note that the vector titled “*Establishing Identity*” is not to be confused with the more encompassing concept of students developing identities.

For many students, *Developing Purpose*, the sixth vector, is the center of their lives while in college. Students are expected to know what they would like to pursue in terms of a career and life goals by the end of their college experience. Because of this, college is a time for many to determine what it is that they aspire to become, build the skills to get there, and continue with this path even if there are bumps in the road. Commitment to lifestyle and personal decisions regarding establishing families of one’s own also enter the student’s radar in this vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The final, seventh vector, *Developing Integrity*, contains three components. The first is humanizing values, which entails students learning to balance their own interests and values with the interests and values of other individuals and society. Personalizing values, the second component, means the students learn to value the beliefs of others while still committing to their own personal set of beliefs. The third component is developing congruence, which balances “personal values with socially responsible behaviors” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, Pg 51).

Chickering’s theory suggests that higher education’s purpose should be to assist students in their development in terms of these seven vectors along with the academic mission. The theory outlines that as students experience higher education they will interact with and gain competence in the seven vectors, although perhaps not in sequential order. Total competence in all seven vectors may not be gained, but minimally students will gain familiarity and some level of competency with the basic concepts represented by each vector (Reisser, 1995; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Data on Study Abroad

Open Doors reports are annual reports on international education published by the Institute of International Education. Funding for Open Doors reports is made available by funds from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Open Doors, 2005). During the 2003-2004 academic year, 191,321 American college students participated in study abroad programs according to Open Doors 2005. This is an increase of 9.6% from the 2002-2003 academic year. The majority (65.6%) of those students are female. Of the students who study abroad, 38% participate in a one-semester

study abroad. Thirty six point two percent of students who study abroad are of junior standing. The dominant trend in study abroad programs for American students is to spend their abroad period in Western Europe, although this is slowly shifting to include Latin America. The proportion of students who study abroad in Europe has decreased to 60.9% from 62.9% in 2002-2003. As of November 2005, the top five destinations for study abroad were; United Kingdom (16.8%), Italy (11.5%), Spain (10.5%), France (7.5%), Australia (7.2%). The regional breakdown of host countries is as follows: Europe: 60.9%, Latin America: 15.2%, Asia: 6.9%, Multiple Regions: 5.5%, Oceania: 7.4%, Middle East .5%, Africa: 3.0%, North America: .6% (Open Doors, 2005).

Program Models

There are a number of different models for students to choose when researching their options for study abroad. Each model offers students different types of opportunities for experiences during study abroad. There are traditional study abroad models (which are discussed in detail below), internships, student teaching, work, service programs, and various other learning abroad programs. Study abroad programs can vary in length from a number of days or weeks to one semester, to an entire academic year. While study abroad traditionally saw participation from primarily college juniors, the trend is changing to include students of all levels. There are three main, traditional models for study abroad programs. For the purpose of the study I conducted, those students who were engaged all program models were included.

The first model is the island model. Island programs are programs that are designed to take a group of largely American students abroad for a designated period of

time. Either an American university professor or a professor of the host country or countries may teach students enrolled in island programs. This model may take students on a tour of a region or country, or may have a solid home base. Island programs may consist of an institute at an international institution of higher education for American or other international students, or may consist of an American faculty member directing the study. Courses are taught in English in an island program. Students participating in an island program do not have as many opportunities for cultural interaction with the host country as other models of study abroad. Island programs are the most popular form of study abroad for American students.

The second model, direct enrollment allows the student to enroll directly in a foreign institution of higher education. The student either exchanges for a pre-determined amount of time as a temporary or transient student at the international institution, or enrolls as a degree candidate. Direct enrollment allows the student to experience education in the host country as though they were a citizen of that country. Courses are taken with students of the host country and taught by professors of that country, in their native language. Direct enrollment is the most effective method of study abroad in terms of language acquisition and cultural immersion.

The last model is the hybrid model, which combines both of the previous designs. American students participating in hybrid programs are offered the experience of enrolling in courses at an institute or an institution of higher education of the host country. Hybrid programs allow the student more cultural interaction than the typical island program. Study can be conducted in the host country's language, English, or a combination.

Issues Facing Study Abroad

Currently, only about one percent of American undergraduate students participate in study abroad programs (Wheeler, 2000). Participation in study abroad is growing, but many students do not take advantage of the opportunity and benefits of study abroad. College student may not participate in study abroad for many reasons including students having to take a “break” in the academic cycle of the home institution, the transferability of courses taken at the host university to the students’ degree programs, and enrollment costs and associated travel expenses incurred by students enrolling in study abroad programs (Sowa, 2002).

Study abroad is viewed by some as being elitist, or only available to those students who are of the upper class, because of the financial implications to students (Stryker, 1997). Studying abroad is often much more expensive than a semester or year at the student’s home institution. Additionally, students who are able to take advantage of special tuition discounts in their US institution, such as Western Undergraduate Exchange at Montana State University, could potentially be excluded from studying abroad because these programs may have a requirement that students maintain continuous enrollment at the their home institution in order to receive the benefit.

There are an increasing number of affordable study abroad programs as well as a number of scholarships available for students who want to study abroad. In addition, federal legislation (1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965) was passed allowing students to use their financial aid package toward study abroad programs

sponsored by American institutions (Hoffa & Pearson, 1997). This option is making study abroad a more affordable option for many students.

Issues that threaten personal health and safety for students studying abroad may also limit participation. It is important that students follow the US Department of State guidelines for safety abroad and use good judgment in protecting themselves (Scharman, 2002). Students may also need to obtain the proper inoculations as advised for their region of study (Scharman, 2002). Guidance is available to students on which vaccinations and precautions to take prior to studying abroad by the student health service on most campuses. Students must also exercise good judgment and make healthy decisions while abroad to protect their health.

Variables Affecting Study Abroad Outcomes

Research shows that many factors may affect the result of a participant's study abroad experience. These include: the age and maturity level of the student, year in school, student's major, length of stay in the host country, level of openness to new cultures and ideas, skills in the host country's/culture's language(s), and student expectations regarding the experience and characteristics of the overseas institution attended (Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Martin & Rohrlich, 1991; Thomlison, 1991). The student's familiarity with the host culture and previous experience in traveling to foreign countries may also influence the outcome of a study abroad experience (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). The larger the difference between the host and home cultures, the greater the change that can potentially occur within the student (Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001).

Student Development and Study Abroad

The body of research conducted on students that have studied abroad and their developmental outcomes is limited. There have been very few studies conducted in recent years and even fewer in the past, that have measured the outcomes and issues relating to identity development and the acquisition of the values associated with study abroad. The few studies that do exist have found that the study abroad experience can be a beneficial component to undergraduate education. The results suggest a positive impact on a student's development through the following outcomes: increased desire to participate in extracurricular activities, new desire to learn foreign languages, loss of competitiveness, and increased involvement in international activities (Kaufmann, et al., 1992).

Researchers suggests that it may be easier for students to experience and be open to change while engaged in a study abroad program because they are away from their normal peer group including their family and friends (Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Meara, 1994). Students do not have the pressure of being held to their normal behavior and can feel free to experiment with new belief systems and to experience new ideas and culture (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). New peer groups that students interact with while participating in study abroad make up a special support network. The students can go through changes together in a non-threatening, change-friendly environment (Kaufmann, et al., 1992).

Study abroad may be viewed as a form of experiential education. Experiential education is defined as learning through experiencing or doing (Hopkins, 1999). A student's non-academic experience, such as weekend travel or relationships developed with new friends or host family, may count for as much benefit as his or her academic

experiences (Hopkins, 1999). Students who study abroad have the opportunity to experience learning by doing, experiencing a culture not only on paper, but three-dimensionally using all of their senses. Students often state of their experiences abroad that they learned how much they actually knew and how to apply the skills that they have developed during their education (Christie & Ragans, 1999).

One criticism of study abroad states that there is little to be gained from short-term (less than six months) experience. According to the literature, for a true immersion to take place, at least one year of residence must be experienced. This gives the students ample time to become acclimated to the culture and to begin to view their experiences as members of that cultural community (Kaufmann, et al., 1992).

Relevant Research Studies

A useful study to be aware of, for the purposes of this analysis, is an inquiry conducted on Montana State University-Bozeman students that were participating in the study abroad process during the 1997-1998 school year (Borland, Jr., 1999). The results of this MSU study seemed to follow national trends closely in regards to how study abroad programs affect students. The study suggested that students whose study abroad experience has recently ended, meaning they had been home for 5-12 months, sometimes experienced “reverse culture shock”. This is a phenomenon where the students, upon coming home, have difficulty readjusting to the culture of American students. Students in these phases tend to report that they have a new respect for America, American society, and higher education. Additionally, students have a tremendous desire to talk about their experiences abroad in order to sense of their time abroad. In this situation, it

is sometimes difficult for students to find an open person to listen to them. Friends, family, and instructors often tire of the students' constant need to talk about their experiences and may show resentment and/or jealousy. Students developed strong friendships in their host countries and long for these relationships upon arrival at home (Borland, Jr., 1999).

Another relevant study that looked at student gains from study abroad programs was published by Juhasz and Walker (1987) who looked at the impact of student self-perception while participating in a study abroad sojourn. This study investigated whether time spent in a study abroad program had an influence on a student's self-esteem (feelings of self-worth) and self-efficacy (confidence in one's ability and competence). The study was conducted on undergraduate students who spent either a semester or academic year in a university sponsored study center in Rome, Italy. The study was administered through pre- and post-test by the administration of the Student Survival Self-Efficacy Measure (SSS-EM), the Self-Knowledge Scale (S-KS), and the Self-Feelings Scale (S-FS). There was also a required exit essay to be written by the participants. Results of the study found that overall; time spent abroad resulted in increased self-efficacy and self-esteem. Results in this study were particularly noted as being positive in students who had completed an academic year abroad. These changes are demonstrated by increased levels of self-understanding, gain of objectivity, and a better understanding and evaluation of their own abilities and attitude (Juhasz & Walker, 1987).

Educational Attainment and Study Abroad

Students on study abroad develop an understanding of other cultures, societies, and traditions. They improve their ability to discuss international issues and gain knowledge of other countries' political systems. Students also become more knowledgeable about international affairs because of time spent abroad (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Sowa, 2002).

Gaining language skills, considered at one time to be the primary purpose of study abroad, is a large component of a student's educational attainment while abroad. Students who study abroad in non-English speaking countries have improved skills in speaking a foreign language (Cummings, 2001). Many researchers believe that language acquisition is the largest benefit in the realm of educational attainment for study abroad. Students have reflected that the language skills that they have obtained during study abroad are the most valuable aspect of their experience (Kaufmann, et al., 1992).

Attitudes and Values and Study Abroad

Study abroad experiences affect a wide range student attitudes and values (Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Meara, 1994). The list of values gained during study abroad includes enhanced cross-cultural understanding, better understanding of American culture, altruism, better understanding of personal relationships, leadership ability, increased levels of self-esteem, and higher levels of self-confidence (Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Sowa, 2002). Additionally, students that have participated in study abroad are more prepared to assist others in need and have a better understanding of other cultures following their experiences abroad (Sowa, 2002). Students feel empathy toward values and cultures other than their own, and they express an increased desire to experience

other cultures (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002). Additionally, an overseas experience helps one to better understand him or herself and to become more mature (Holland, 2003).

Identity Development and Study Abroad

Having an experience far from home helps the student to become more individualistic compared to levels he or she displayed prior to study abroad. Study abroad allows the student the opportunity to begin to view his or her country and his or her self away from the home environment and the influences of personal cultural bias (Holland, 2003). Through experiences abroad, students develop an appreciation and better understanding of their own cultures, and increase in self-reliance and self-confidence (Juhasz & Walker, 1987; Sowa, 2002). Experiences encountered by students during study abroad have a significant impact on the student's sense of self (Rabinowitz, 1994). Students that have studied abroad generally have increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and respect for others because they have been pushed outside of their comfort zones in experiencing new and different ways of living and different attitudes regarding daily life (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Juhasz & Walker, 1987). They have been encouraged to become more reflective in their thinking (Sowa, 2002).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the theoretical foundation that guided the study and provided a summary of research on the nature of the affects that study abroad has on college students. Study abroad offers the potential for college students to accelerate the gain of certain outcomes, such as world-mindedness and global competency, as well as

increased independence and, self-esteem. Statistics describing participation in study abroad provided a snapshot of the trends in study abroad today. Current trends reveal that there is an increased participation by students, and an increased interest in study abroad by researchers and institutions of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

To understand the experiences of students who study abroad, I used qualitative research techniques to examine the meaning and perceptions of the student participants' experiences. The phenomenological approach used in this study is suited to the qualitative paradigm as it allows me to reveal the "essence" of student's experiences (Schram, 2003). As the researcher, I was invited into the world of the participants' perception of their experiences in order to translate and describe these experiences to a larger audience. I used this method to try to understand how students have used their study abroad experiences to shape their reality (Davis, 2002)

I used Arthur Chickering's theory of college student identity development to support my analysis of the qualitative data. Chickering's theory is well suited to qualitative, phenomenological inquiry (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). As this theory lends itself to investigating a variety of student experiences, both in and outside of the classroom, it allowed me to view the student's experiences from a holistic perspective of identity development. The use of this theory allowed me to view aspects of the students' growth on multiple levels without categorizing students into particular linear stages of growth (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This approach provided me with the ability to discuss whether study abroad in a one-semester increment provides college students with a mechanism for growth in the area of identity development.

Context of the Study

Founded in 1893, Montana State University is a public institution of higher education located in Bozeman, Montana. MSU originally began as the Agricultural College of the State of Montana. MSU is the second largest provider of higher education in the state of Montana, serving the community in the tradition of the land-grant institution through its seven academic colleges; Agriculture, Arts and Architecture, Business, Education and Health and Human Development, Engineering, Letters and Science, Nursing, and University College. MSU has a 2005 Carnegie classification of a Research University with very high research activity.

The Office of International Programs (OIP) on the Montana State University campus directs the campus's international activity including the coordination of the majority of campus-based study abroad programs. An integral part of the Montana State University campus, OIP is focused on bringing international perspective to the MSU campus through curriculum and student interaction. OIP serves MSU's international and domestic student populations, assists faculty with international support, facilitates partnerships with peer institutions abroad, and directs the undergraduate minor in Global Studies.

Currently the Office of International Programs offers students the opportunity to study abroad by directly enrolling with sister institutions around the world. Additionally, OIP also offers students study abroad programs through four consortium groups, College Consortium for International Studies (CCIS), International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), North American Regional Academic Mobility Program (RAMP), and the United States-European Community International Business Exchange Network (US-EC IBEN).

These consortia offer MSU students a wider offering of programs through other institutions who are members of the agreement. Short-term programs are also offered by MSU faculty members through OIP.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, MSU sent nearly an equal number of men and women to study abroad (46% men, 54% women). In addition, there is a large interest by Montana State University students studying in non-traditional regions (outside Western Europe) at a rate of 44% (Office of International Programs).

Participants

The population of undergraduate students at Montana State University during the Spring 2005 semester was 10,150 students. For the academic year 2004-2005, approximately 128 students participated in a study abroad program. During the Spring 2005 semester, there were 41 students participating in study abroad programs through OIP for that semester only. Of these 41 students, 22 were identified as being from the states of Montana, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, and Alaska.

I decided to focus on MSU students who are from rural Northwest US states of Montana, Idaho, eastern Washington, and Alaska. I chose these states for their rural and less racially diverse characteristics and smaller city demographics in order to examine students who collectively make up the majority of the undergraduate student population of Montana State University. This group of students was also targeted for the study because there may be a greater potential for change while participating in study abroad. All students who were eligible for this study (twenty-two) were contacted via email and invited to contact me on their own via email or phone if they were interested in

participation in this study based upon a brief description of the study background and interview process. I emailed eligible students twice in order to identify enough participants to make the study worthwhile.

The participant identification process yielded eight participants, seven students aged 18-24, one 25 or above. I interviewed eight students in the round of pre-departure interviews, and interviewed six students following their return to the United States. The two students whose follow up interviews I did not conduct chose to remain in their country of study for an additional semester (Fall 2005). In order to maintain confidentiality of the students' identities the names used to describe the students in this study have been changed to pseudonyms.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Student Standing</i>	<i>Location of study</i>
Frank	Junior	Oceana
Megan	Sophomore	Western Europe
Sally	Junior	Oceana
Janet	Junior	Western Europe
Michael	Junior	Eastern Europe
Susie	Junior	Oceana
Lindsey	Sophomore	Western Europe
Phillip	Sophomore	Western Europe

Table 3.1 Student Profiles

Researcher

I am a Master of Education student at Montana State University studying Adult and Higher Education, Student Affairs. I have prior experience in study abroad in that, as an undergraduate college student I participated in a study abroad program. Additionally, as a requirement of my graduate program of study, I completed an internship in the Office of International Programs at Montana State University, and served in an assistance position to the Study Abroad Coordinator. In this position, I learned the structure of study abroad at MSU and the requirements for participating in various programs. From

my previous experiences, I developed an interest in the effects of study abroad on college students because I have a belief that study abroad is a wonderful tool to promote growth in students. To prevent my pre-conceived notions of study abroad outcomes from interfering with the interview process, I went into each interview aware of my bias to the best extent possible. I tried to remain impartial to what I would find with each student. I let the student tell his or her own story and listened to what each student told me of his or her experiences.

Procedure

I interviewed eight undergraduate students for their views on their upcoming experience, personal convictions, and thoughts on several topics. The first interview with each student occurred within three months of his or her departure to his or her study abroad destination. The first follow-up interview was conducted within three weeks of the student's return to the United States during July 2005, and the last was conducted six months following the student's return home in January 2005. I conducted interviews in neutral and comfortable locations on the Montana State University campus in a public conference room, my office, or in an agreed upon public space. One of the post-experience interviews was conducted over the telephone because the student transferred to another university.

Both pre and post interviews lasted from twenty minutes to one hour in length and were tape-recorded for later transcription and reflection. Transcription was performed by me or by a hired transcriptionist. Prior to the start of the interview, I informed the student participants of the details of the research procedure, my background as the researcher,

and their rights as a human subject. I reminded participants that their names and identities would remain confidential.

Pre-departure interviews were structured by use of a protocol of questions (Appendix I) that were designed to uncover each participant's thoughts about their time abroad, their future goals, and levels of autonomy, political and patriotic convictions, and general expectations for their time abroad. Students were also asked to comment on their background and values, previous travel experience, and important relationships in their lives.

I conducted post-return interviews using the same method as the pre-departure interview, but with a different protocol (Appendix 2). I asked students to comment on the highlights of their experiences, if they believed they had changed in any way in the areas of independence, emotions, interdependence, and relationships. I also asked them to comment on their political and patriotic convictions, general thoughts on their personal convictions, and personal goals.

Questions were asked in an open-ended format, and participants were encouraged to answer honestly and to respond in any way that made sense to them. They were given free reign to take the response to the questions anywhere they thought necessary to explain their answers to the questions. Methods such as neutral prompting and paraphrasing were used to encourage response and to clarify what the students were telling me to ensure I understood their position.

Data Analysis

I analyzed data for this study using the verbatim transcripts of each interview. To understand the essence of the participant and to better connect with his or her experiences, thoughts, and values regarding the discussed topics, I conducted a summary of each student in essay format. I maintained the concept of epoche in order to gather information regarding the participants while distancing personal thoughts regarding the subject matter, phenomenon I explored, or my personal feelings toward the participant. The before and after vignettes of each student are reported in Chapter Four.

In the second phase of coding, I looked across the participant experiences for common themes. In a third level of coding I specifically looked for negative or disconfirming cases. In a final step, I compared the collective meaning behind the data to Chickering's seven vectors of college student development. The summary of cross-case themes and my comparisons of these themes to Chickering's theory are reported in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I describe the characteristics of each student before and after his or her experiences with study abroad. The purpose of this chapter is to allow for better understanding of each student in terms of the context of his or her interviews and his or her overall characteristics. Each vignette is a summary of how the student portrayed themselves and their experiences with study abroad during his or her interview. The students' self-described transformations are illustrated here to demonstrate the affect that study abroad had on their identities. The names of each student have been changed to a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

SallyBefore

Sally is looking forward to studying abroad because of the ability this experience offers to meet and interact with new people that can teach her a new perspective and learn to be challenged by relying on herself more. As she is a fun-loving person she cannot wait to live in a big city that is warm and offers her the option of having as much fun and excitement as possible. She is close with her family and has traveled extensively to foreign countries with them in the past. Sally is hoping that study abroad will help her to figure out what she wants to do with her life in the future. She enjoys helping people and has a deep respect for service. Neither Sally nor her family is interested in politics, although personally Sally sees the interconnectedness of those bound together by a

community. Sally's friends are fun loving, outgoing, secure in themselves, and like to party together while maintaining a personal closeness.

After

Upon returning home from her study abroad, Sally feels cut off from her friends at Montana State University and feels as though they have all changed, and that she has no one to talk to except her friends from her host country and her family. She does feel a much more secure bond with her family now that she is back. She also is more secure with herself and her ability to take care of herself and enjoys being alone. While in her host country, Sally had a great time and "partied" as much as possible. Her self-confidence and ability to cope with new situations has increased, both while she was away and since she has returned home. Sally has developed an interest in staying current in world affairs and an increased sense of political conviction, while her level of patriotism toward the United States has decreased. She has a concern for individuals in need, and wants to make a difference by entering into a career and lifestyle that will allow her to work with those who are troubled. She is convinced that her major is right for her and hopes to become more successful in school. She is convinced that it is very important for people to get along and accept one another.

Janet

Before

Janet is a hardworking, energetic person who is currently wide open to new experiences and cannot wait to become a "new woman" while studying abroad. She

hopes to gain critical insight to the world and the culture of her host country in a time in her life when she isn't held down to any particular thing. She values the opportunity to strengthen her skills in speaking the language of her host country, as she knows that this will help her in her future career. As she is motivated, she prefers to be around those who are motivated as well, and that have the energy to keep up with her lively spirit and who have goals to succeed in life. Having the same church that she attends in the United States in her chosen place of study abroad was very important to her as are maintaining good morals and ethics. Being close too her family is important and when she returns to the United States, she expects to be leaving MSU for an institution that is closer to them.

After

Janet, while challenged during her stay in her host country, found that her ability to adapt to new and very different living and learning styles was successful. Independent travel and having to communicate in a foreign language was enlightening to her and she found a great foundation of self-confidence, understanding, and patience. More aware of American stereotypes as a result of discussions with an international array of friends, she found a greater desire to become aware of international news and domestic political issues. Secure in her major, Janet is looking forward to going to graduate school following a couple of years of gaining work experience in her chosen field. She is excited to spend more time with her family and less time with old friends now that she has returned from this experience.

Janet remained a goal-oriented person throughout her study abroad, and was challenged by the culture in her host country and in the classroom. Understanding and

patience were skills that were tested while she was away, and she came home with a broader ability to manage these emotions. Additionally, communicating in a foreign language was difficult and satisfying, leaving her with an increased sense of self-confidence in her abilities to communicate and take care of her self. Independent travel was a huge part of the study abroad process for her, and because of these opportunities, she was able to interact with, and gain a huge appreciation for, different cultures and people.

Michael

Before

Prior to Michael's departure for his host country, he had always found those who study abroad to be brave, interesting and open-minded. From a large family, Michael's family does not understand the draw that Michael feels to take this journey. Thankfully, his friends are supportive of him taking advantage of this opportunity, and have helped him to prepare for what he hopes is a life-changing event. He is ecstatic and nervous to make such a cultural change, and wants to be sure to keep an open mind while he is in his host country, and have a deep and meaningful experience. Michael is unsure of what to expect, and is unfamiliar with the experience of traveling to a foreign country, as the furthest he has been from the Northwest is Florida. He is hoping to have a fresh perspective on the United States when he returns home and is currently suffering from American political system "burnout".

After

While Michael found his semester in his host country to be very fulfilling, it was not without struggle. He found that with the cultural, language and even alphabet differences, that life in his host country is hard. While his language skills and cultural competency slowly increased until the end of his experience, it was not until the end of his time in his host country that he began to feel a close connection to the culture. These experiences led him to greater capabilities as an independent thinker, risk-taker, and life adventurer. He also began to understand the interconnectedness that all cultures and people have to one another, through interaction with the native people in his host country and his reliance on others to assist him in simple communication. His appreciation for the United States grew, simply because Americans have the ability to trust our government, and we do not always have to do things the hard way. This experience has led him to want to pursue his future vocation in a more service oriented manor, hopefully overseas.

SusieBefore

Susie is from a very small, rural community, and realizes that she lacks experience in much of the culture and diversity that the world and even the United States has to offer. She is confident and opinionated, but at the same time, open-minded to new experiences, and at a crossroads in her life. She views study abroad as the experience of a lifetime and is bursting to explore the world, have fun, and meet new people. While she does not feel as though she relates well to people her own age, especially girls, she

prefers to be around intelligent people, she has several older friends that are an inspiration to her in going abroad. Susie attended school in the American Southwest last semester and feels this experience has opened her mind to even more experiences that she will have in her host country. This experience will also be helpful in separating her mother from dependence on her for emotional support as well as support in running their family ranch. In this way, she is ready to detach her unworldly views by having this different cultural experience, yet she is still firmly attached to her rural and agricultural roots.

After

While studying abroad, Susie acquired a deep appreciation for the usefulness of having a world-minded perspective. She grew in her ability to interact with different types of people, and appreciates having friends with very different points of view than her own. Susie now has gained a liberal perspective, as opposed to her conservative outlook when she left and now places great value on having a broad and insightful outlook regarding different cultures, religions, and races. Various social experiences during her time abroad gave Susie the ability to test her knowledge, and became affirmed in her ability to adapt to new situations. This led her to have fun, and assert an increased sense of self-confidence in her abilities. While away, she learned that she is much more outgoing than previously demonstrated. She now feels more connected with the urban lifestyle and has changed her mind somewhat about what she wants to do in her future.

LindseyBefore

Lindsey is a mature and grounded student whose faith in her Catholic religion reigns supreme in the priorities in her life. Always striving to be a better, and more challenged person, she chooses to be around those who push her in this area. Lindsay is studying abroad to connect with the culture of her host country and more importantly, the language. She has very strong personal convictions, ideas, and values, mostly stemming from her faith. She has a service-oriented character, and has volunteered extensively. Lindsay is in a quandary about what direction her life will take in the future and is contemplating a diverse range of options including medical school, stay at home wife and mother, teacher, or nun. She has the expectation that study abroad will present her with a clearer path for her to take with her future.

After

Lindsey had a wonderful experience connecting to the culture in her host country, and found this experience to be challenging and testing of her faith in God. She found further affirmation in her faith and chose to spend her life in service to it by advocating for righteous morals and Catholic values in the political spectrum, attending medical school, and studying in the area of bio-ethics. She has grown as an adult. Lindsay is pleased that her parents are no longer considering their relationship as parent to child, and her ability to accept new people and new experiences has grown. She has grown in her self-confidence through putting her faith that god will lead her to the right path. Being challenged by communication and cultural values made her more aware of herself and

assisted in her appreciating the confident person that she is. Failure means that she tried. She feels a tremendous responsibility to carry out God's intentions and has thoroughly engaged herself in the political process to do so. She is enriched by the diverse experiences that she has had with other cultures and races, but feels that there are those who can be just as enriched in life without having had such experience.

Phillip

Before

Phillip is somewhat ambivalent about much of what his experiences have been in the past, and is largely unquestioning of what he has learned throughout his life. His decision to study abroad however, shows that he is committed to having experiences to quell an interest that was sparked while visiting his sister while she studied abroad on the same program, even though he will be a year behind in school when he returns. He is interested in changing location and learning more about the town that he has already visited.

Phillip is aware that he carries and believes in many small-town Montana stereotypes, and believes that he should remain himself while abroad. He does not take life too seriously, and prefers to have friends that feel the same way and that they just like to have a good time.

After

After returning from his semester abroad, Phillip states that he remains the same person that he was before he left, but with a different aspect in his life. He rates his

overall experience as good. Still not convinced that he chose the right major at Montana State University, he is not changing because he just does not want to spend the time. He was most affected by the difference in family life, and stated that he did not want to live in the close family atmosphere that the culture of his host country value and live.

Phillip now feels a better sense of patience than before his experience due to the situations and language barrier that he encountered while abroad. His understanding of cultural differences led him to believe that you have to respect other cultures, while still remembering your own.

Megan

Before

Megan is a very outgoing, bubbly, and open minded person who has the hope of making significant gains in her language ability while away on her study abroad. Although she is nervous to be away from her parents for so long, her brother, who is her best friend will be studying abroad as well in a nearby country. For Megan, learning the language is her number one priority while abroad, although she also hopes to become in tune with the nuances of the culture in which she will be studying, which she finds to be detrimental to her chosen future career as a teacher of the language and culture. She is very confident in herself and abilities, and is looking forward to having the opportunity to be shown new and exciting ways of life and a new perspective on life, as well as new and lasting friendships.

After

Megan did not have a post interview, as she did not return to the United States after one semester of study. She chose to remain in her host country for an additional semester.

FrankBefore

Frank is a science major with a laid-back attitude. A musician, he spends much of his time studying and playing music. Frank is close with his family and very devoted to his Catholic religion. He is very excited to endeavor on this study abroad to discover a new and different reality than the one that he has known his whole life. While abroad, he is looking forward to getting to know new people, take in as much of the physical environment as possible, and explore the terrain that his host country has to offer.

After

Frank additionally, does not have a post interview because he chose to remain in his host country for an additional semester of study. Both he and Megan were unavailable for further continuation in this study.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Overall Findings

The students who participated in this study demonstrated that college students are individuals, and that no two are alike. Each student encountered a new environment during his or her time studying abroad; however, each student was not affected by his or her experiences in the same way. While each student had different reasons for taking advantage of the opportunity to study abroad while in college, the majority experienced a change in their perspectives of the world and in their identity.

After analyzing the student interviews, it was apparent that the more excitement and open-mindedness students' demonstrated at the beginning of this journey, the greater the change that was demonstrated in the second interview. Conversely, the student with the least amount of conviction in his or her decision to study abroad in the first interview, similarly, was the least changed by his or her experience abroad.

Students who already have experience in foreign travel are generally thought to possess a greater ability to succeed in gaining the benefits that study abroad has to offer (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). In the case of the students participating in this study, however, those who had experience in travel did not reveal higher level of growth outcomes than those who did not. Growth seemed more to have to do with the student's personal goals and level of excitement for what they could potentially gain while abroad.

Themes

Self-Confidence

Several students commented on their experience in having higher levels of independence and self-confidence while abroad. However, since returning to the United States, at least two students were struggling with how to interpret their new levels of autonomy into their daily lives and relationships. They commented on this being an ongoing process that they were slowly being able to integrate into their relationships and accept as a new part of their personal being.

Many of the students who had a deeper immersion culturally, gained higher levels than the other students in this study, in terms of confidence. Those participants who went to countries where they were studying in a language other than English went through different experiences than those who traveled to English speaking countries. Students were better able to appreciate their native country and their ability to stand on their own two feet. They gained a higher level of self-confidence in that they could take care of themselves while communicating in a foreign language. *“I will never be shy about talking in English again because I won’t have to think about what I’m going to say, you know?” like I don’t have to put a sentence together. I have no reason to be shy or unconfident again*”, one student remarked.

Independence

The majority of participants noted that they felt higher levels of independence. These higher levels were largely based on the premise that the students had more self-confidence in their abilities than they did before study abroad. One student commented,

“I ended up backpacking all alone which I never would have done if I hadn’t been abroad”.

Students also commented on their increased ability trust their own thoughts and decisions. *“I feel like it’s my decision now rather than a collective thing”*, remarked a student in discussing how she felt about her confidence in decision-making skills.

Commitment to Major

In regards to the students commitments to their pre-departure program of study and major, five of the six students with post-return interviews noted either that they were more committed to their major post-return, or had found an alternate calling that they would be pursuing in the future. One student remarked how much he loved his major following study abroad and had realized while abroad how many great opportunities were available in his field of study. Additionally, each of these students is leaning toward a service-oriented career (helping others), and one that will allow them to practice their vocations overseas.

Student outlooks changed in terms of academic motivation. One student who had mediocre academic performance prior to going overseas referred to a renewed sense of wanting to achieve better success in school. Several other students noted as well that one of the most important values in their current lives is doing well in school.

Four out of six students decided to pursue further education in their current field of study. These students felt that their commitment to their future in their career and field of study could be greatly enhanced by further study, including graduate school. They varied regarding their desire to pursue this goal immediately following completion of

their bachelors' degree. Two students remarked that they might take advantage of masters programs offered through several institutions that combine advanced study with Peace Corps requirements. Service work internationally became the focus of two students' futures, regardless of the mechanism of how it is achieved.

One student, who previously had strong convictions regarding her future career, changed focus greatly, but still within the same major. After experiencing the lifestyle of living in an urban environment, she decided that her previous focus would not allow for the same opportunities she now considered important. Values obtained during her time spent in the host country changed how the student views her field of study overall, and she has taken steps to immerse herself in how to become more literate in the issues facing the world, not just our corner of America. Fieldwork is less of an important factor now, and a more theory-oriented "desk job" is preferable to her. Regarding this change, she stated, *"I found out that I really don't like working really strange hours like weekends and nights, and I kind of would like a 9 to 5 job and then have a life outside of work"*

A student, who had previously been in a quandary pondering several different vocational and personal options for his future, discovered what he wants to do in life. In addition to this, he also discovered what he do not want to do at this time. This student now has a path to follow. Since returning to the US, he has been actively engaging in activities to immerse himself in and become part of the knowledge community for his chosen path. In addition, in order to better become prepared for future schooling in this area, the student has added a second major to better facilitate success in the future.

While most students experienced further commitment to their chosen career paths while on study abroad, one student, found that he was "stuck" in the same major that he

began college in. He chose to remain in their current major simply because it was too late to start fulfilling requirements in a new major. He did not find a calling to another discipline while abroad and felt indifferent regarding their future career and life's path.

Patience

Students remarked that their experiences abroad resulted a greater sense of patience. Some of the factors that students discussed as contributing to these increases were: constantly being around other people, difficulty communicating in the native language, struggles with unfamiliar cultural customs, complications with independent travel, and problems associated with traveling (time delays, heated tempers, close quarters with others). All of these factors challenged these students to become more patient with the situations that they encountered.

Because of the nature of traveling and living abroad, in an unfamiliar place, these students experienced the feeling that they could not control many of the situations that they would be able to at home. Because of this, it was necessary for these students to rely on a greater sense of patience to deal with situations that were potentially unfavorable. In addition to increased patience during these times, it was crucial for the students to gain a sense of flexibility to deal with new and different situations. In all, every student who gave a post interview expressed a greater ability to function in a new environment. All based this flexibility on an improved ability to exhibit patience in challenging situations.

One student came to a realization that she could rely on a coping mechanism to deal with her emotions, particularly in the area of patience. Her ability to deal with uncomfortable or undesirable situations was managed by an increased ability to put faith

in her coping mechanism. Because of this, her understanding of how to deal with emotional situations became greatly increased.

Lens with Which the United States is Viewed

Students' views of their home country frequently changed while on study abroad, although not in a uniform direction. A former skeptic of the current American perception of patriotism sees the United States with a bit more respect after experiencing the corruption in the current state of government in the country that she visited. During her interview, the remark was made,

“I think I appreciate our patriotism a little bit more, I appreciate our country a little bit more, even though I really haven't changed any political views, I do appreciate my own country now more. It's given me a new perspective on that, and I'm very grateful for that. And so I'm more appreciative of my homeland, I didn't have that before”

Because of the fresh perspective viewed while studying abroad, this student was able to return to the United States with more optimism regarding the state of our nation, as well as a renewed sense of patriotism. While still critical of certain aspects of the political arena in the United States, the foundation for better civic involvement was laid and this student looks forward to a more positive political outlook in the future.

One formerly patriotic participant lost her respect for patriotic Americans. This student began to view Americans as “over the top” and obnoxious in terms of their display of patriotism. The root of this new view is what the student believes to be an unquestioned acceptance of what the current political administration tells them to display, think, and feel. To this student, not thinking for one's self and understanding current issues in today's American society, is wrong. They do not believe that Americans are

appropriately representing the American perspective, in that uninformed and blind following is truly un-American.

A student who previously had no idea what his thoughts were regarding patriotism, gained knowledge of how the world views the United States and began to take an interest in the issues and themes surrounding patriotism. While this student returned home with a greater sense of patriotism and understanding of the world, the student also became more skeptical of those who blindly accept all that they are told in the media.

Political Views

One student who previously acknowledged that she had no interest whatsoever in politics, or the state of the current nation (United States) gained perspective on how Americans are viewed by the rest of the world while studying abroad. Because of this perspective, she decided that she didn't like how the world could potentially view the US and made an effort to learn more about current political affairs of both the nation and internationally. Now that the student has returned to the US, she has been making a weekly effort to inform herself of what is going on around the world and domestically. Additionally, she is more active in pursuing conversations with other individuals regarding politics and current affairs. This student defined for herself what her position was in terms of American political thought.

A student that previously had strong convictions regarding his political position, gained a more liberal perspective and wants to be surrounded with a more liberal group of peers as a result of his experience. *"I feel a lot more strongly about more democratic*

views than I thought I did'. Because of experiencing a more diverse environment culturally, and exposure to peers who had different thoughts than his peer group from home and Montana State University, the perspective of the student was changed due to a broader view of what the student referred to as the "real world".

Hearing both sides to a political argument and learning to appreciate issues as opposed to basing opinions on values alone became important to one student. Previous to the experience with study abroad, all of this student's decisions were based on feelings and on personal values.

A highly opinionated student's view of politics evolved further into her personal convictions. This student has taken steps to directly become involved with political issues and become more knowledgeable about issues about which she is passionate. By becoming directly involved in the political process, this student is placing action into her political convictions.

While the majority of students in this study found the different setting of being abroad enlightening to their view of the United States, one found the difference to be of no use. This student did not find any difference in their view of the United States.

Better at Taking Personal Emotional Risks

The process of making friends in a new and very different environment was highly intimidating to several participants. While some participants did not speak about this area at all, others found this to be one of the most challenging and rewarding portion of their study abroad experience. Throughout their time abroad, they learned to take emotional risks, such as inviting a stranger to coffee in order to learn more about them in

an attempt to develop a new friendship. One student commented that she was scared to death to place her emotions in a place where she could face rejection from the person with whom she was attempting to make contact. This struggle continued for several weeks until she realized that she had the confidence to face potentially being rejected, and ended up successful in both making new friends, and finding confidence in taking risks.

One student's journey into the daily life of the new culture that he was navigating through proved to be entirely frustrating and emotional. As the student spent time mucking through life doing things "the hard way" while abroad, he risked daily his emotional stability to be able to immerse into a culture that he found to be highly unfamiliar. As the semester proceeded, the student's language skills and cultural proficiency improved. Thus, he was able to find a connection to the people and culture of the society. In attempting to overcome the frustration and anxiety in the initial reaction of attempted cultural proficiency, success was achieved because of the risk the student took to understand the culture and life in his host country.

Different Relationship Needs

Several students commented on their relationships with their parents to be changed, but none of them changed in the same way.

"I think studying abroad was a catalyst in helping me mature, and I think that my relationship with my parents is getting better, it's turning more into an adult to adult relationship as opposed to a parent to child relationship"

One student, while still close with her mother, but in a different way than prior to their departure remarked, *"I have my own life and I think she realizes that more"*.

Because of the time spent abroad, the need for the student to please her parent and to act as a support system for her mother was broken, allowing the student the flexibility to become more independent and to change the nature of her relationship to one that is more mature.

Different Relationship with Friends

A very social student went from having many friends that she was close too and loved to party with, to feeling as though her friends had changed. As a result, she does not interact with the same friends that she was so sad to leave behind prior to departure. This student had the feeling of disconnect from most of her former friends, which she had characterized as close during her pre-departure interview. Of this experience she said, “... *they don't seem like they used to be*”. This student decided to become more selective in the friends that she chooses in the future. Although she is in retreat from her former group of friends, she has gained several close friendships that have become much more meaningful. She is no longer looking for many great friends, but for friends which she can truly share interests and conversations. Along with this, this student has decided that she is not going to befriend every single person that she meets in the future.

A student who previously had friends with very conservative views, which prior to departure, remarked “*I want friends that are, not necessarily super left, but just more, just more open to ideas*”. Due to the new friends that he made while abroad, the attitudes, diversity, and alternate value systems sparked a great interest in this student to re-evaluate his own personal values. Since his own personal values had shifted, this student decided that he enjoyed being around and maintaining friendships with other

persons who are able to look at life in a way that he now is. Although, at the same time, he maintains friendships with some of his old friends, understanding that they have not yet had the opportunity to experience a different and more diverse culture. Because of the limited amount of experience in this student's past with different personality types, he is evolving into a person that craves a wider audience of friends that he can both learn from and have a good time.

Two students in this study noted that their friendships had not changed. One student stated that she already had strong friendships to begin with, and had learned in the past what it takes to retain friendships, and to choose them wisely. In many respects, this student was grounded in her friendships prior to departure and maintained contact with friends and loved ones while away via email. Additionally, many of this student's friends had previously experienced participation in study abroad themselves, and could relate to their friends' experiences.

The other student who did not experience change in relationships in many ways did not allow his time abroad to affect the type of relationships that he was going to have upon return home. Additionally, this student did not experience as many changes in general as the other students in this study.

Comfort in Being Alone

Students in this study demonstrated a difference between pre and post interviews in their appreciation for, and comfort in, being alone. For many of these students, being alone was something that they previously had taken for granted, and found easy to do at home, especially for those studying in huge cities. The act of having alone time became

precious for several students. There were no students who participated in this study who noted an increased need to be around people or who did not feel comfortable alone.

One student participated in study abroad with a friend from home and remarked that because of this, she initially did not have many opportunities to be alone while going through this process. As a result, she realized how much enjoyment came from spending time as a solo person, making solo decisions, and just having quiet time to reflect. The realization that she was comfortable in situations alone resulted in a higher level of overall independence, and satisfaction when solo opportunities came about. Additionally, after spending time alone, she was better able to enjoy interactions, not only with the friend that she was studying with, but with new relationships made in school and during independent travel.

As the daily interactions with an extremely different language and culture took their emotional toll on one student, he found it necessary to be alone in his room at night to synthesize the events of the day. *“I’d have to do some relaxing techniques with my mind... that’s where I had to go in my mind, in order to put it all away”*. This time spent alone was crucial to this student in order for him to make sense of his experience. Although different from the previous example of comfort in being solo, this student used the experience of being alone to make meaning of his daily interactions and experiences. This allowed the current day to not affect the next day, so that the next day, he was free to have a new and even more enriching experience, delving into the culture that he found to be so exciting and different.

One student found that in being alone, she was able to feel a greater sense of independence. Of this experience, she stated [I am] *“Especially just feeling comfortable*

being alone and going out and doing things alone, like I would never do things like I said, you know, like I would never have gone out and done whatever I feel like alone in a big city and a strange country before". For this student, being alone in a large city meant freedom and the sense of accomplishment. This student knew that she had some sense of knowing of the world and was proud that she could navigate successfully alone through it. Because of this feeling, this student had a rewarding experience in becoming a more independent person upon return home.

Diversity Awareness

As many of the students who participated in this study grew up in small towns in the Northwest, this group commented that their experiences prior to study abroad with living in a diverse setting (one with mixed racial, social, and cultural classes), were very limited. Students who went into their study abroad experience with an open mind and those who were looking to find a greater sense of understanding in our diverse world, found great success in gaining a more world-minded perspective. One student referred to an appreciation of diversity this way:

"I think I'm expanded my vision, so to speak, to diversity a lot more, and one thing I was pleased to see in [my host country], especially when I was in public, you see a very diverse community, and typical [natives of my host country] seem very accepting of others"

One student noted having never spoken to a person of color before coming to study at Montana State University. This student expressed the most excitement in having diversity-rich experiences. His background consisted of interacting only with those who were from the same background and environment that he was. After having spent this time abroad he returned with a sense of knowing that there is a great big world full of

different people and that these differences should be celebrated. The experience that he had was invaluable in allowing him to better understand how the world is related and interconnected.

Other students' comments were along the same line. Students found that from their experiences with study abroad, they gained a point of view that diversity brings a rich layer of fulfillment to their lives and world. One student commented,

“I think I’m more aware of diverse environments...I think I’m expanded my vision, so to speak, to diversity a lot more..., I think that a good community is one that is very diverse that has a good mixture of ethnicities and cultures and just different people, instead of having one community with one kind of people”.

Five out of six post-return interviewees stated similar points of view.

On the other hand, one particular student noted in his post interview that he did not feel as though diversity was an important part of life. In this student's mind, he did not feel that it should matter if a situation is diverse or not. This student was not affected by his experiences abroad in a manner that allowed him a greater sense of world-mindedness.

In a similar vein, another student stated that while she truly valued and appreciated diversity, she was concerned about diversity in America and the negative situations (hate crimes, racial prejudice, and cultural stereotyping) that can be encountered in diverse settings. In this student's mind, having a less diverse community was fine with her, as then the community is potentially free of such problems.

Relationship with Chickering's Seven Vectors

Based on the experiences presented by each student participant in this study, all students demonstrated higher levels of growth in terms of at least one of Chickering's

seven vectors of identity development for college students. Based on the challenges, environment, and new peers, as well as study in a college setting, study abroad leads most of these students on a journey of self-discovery. Throughout the study abroad process, the students in this study participated in experiences that helped to shape their views of the country that they lived in, the world as a whole, and their own being. As the students' experiences and subsequent emotions regarding their time abroad came to fruition, they were left with a greater sense of knowledge in their own identity.

Developing Competence

As a result of study abroad, students who participated in this study portrayed development in the area competence, but most importantly in the area of intellectual competence. One student was successful in breaking down old impressions of a stereotype that he saw prior to living in his host country. In having a living and learning experience in this country, it was plain to the student that stereotypes are not a clear indication of what people and cultures truly are, and to capture the true essence of a person, place or thing, one must experience it and not pass judgment too quickly. Because of this ability to breakdown the lens with which the world is viewed, the student developed competence in that he possesses a wider perspective with which to make meaning. Other students noted that because of this process, they would be less likely to make initial judgments about others, because they did not know what experiences that person had in their lifetime, and before they made their decision about a person, they would get to know them.

The gain in student knowledge in terms of global perspectives was evident, particularly for those who studied in a foreign language. Their gain in terms of intellectual competence was further developed in that they gained competency in learning a foreign language. With that, new knowledge came the ability to navigate life using the frame of a different culture, leading to greater sense of global competence and world-mindedness.

Managing Emotions

Every student with a post study abroad interview remarked on an increased ability to manage their emotions, specifically their ability to show patience in trying situations. Because of the nature of travel and living in a foreign country, students gained a better sense of flexibility and were able to deal with challenges of living in a distinctive cultural environment.

Students were also able to work through emotions of homesickness and loneliness while away from their families. It became necessary for them to learn to deal with the negative emotions that they were experiencing in order to take advantage of their time abroad.

Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence

The majority of the students who participated in this study ventured on their study abroad without a local network of support. Being so far away from their families and friends, study abroad offered these students the opportunity to become self-sufficient. These students remarked that they felt a tremendous increase in their abilities to take care of themselves.

While being separated from parents, the students who studied abroad had the opportunity to become free of their parents' expectations. Several students commented that their relationship with their parents had changed into one that is more of an adult-to-adult relationship. Because of study abroad experiences, these students are better able to stand on their own personal convictions rather than their parents' beliefs.

Students' comfort in their own being, demonstrated in their increased sense of security in being alone is another example of students gaining within this vector. The student, who remarked that her decisions were now her own, as opposed to solicited outside input, is an example of how a development occurred in this vector.

Prior to studying abroad, students were able to take advantage of the opportunity of setting goals for themselves while away, and many were successful in achieving them. The achievement of these aspirations leads to confidence in their own ability to set and achieve goals while separated from their support network.

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Critical components to development within this vector means having the ability to embrace differences, respect others, avoid ethnocentrism, and create an overall awareness of the world in which one lives. Because of their experiences abroad, the majority of students in this study discussed an increased appreciation for diverse cultures, and the overall awareness of other people's opinions. Students described their conversations with peers abroad and noted how their peer's opinions differed from their own. Many students took what peers said into consideration and perhaps reevaluated their own feelings. At the same time, they were also able to share their own personal convictions with others. In

learning to respect other people's opinions, the students were able to grow in building more mature and meaningful relationships.

Establishing Identity

Chickering's vector of Establishing Identity seemed to produce the least amount of development in the students who participated in post interviews. There were two examples of students gaining in this area. One student noted that she had a better sense of herself in terms of social context. The student was able to blossom within a group of peers who truly understood and accepted her. This student commented that she found a better understanding of how she fit into the world socially and found herself to be stronger, more extroverted, and confident as a result.

The other student who noted gains in this area, committed herself more deeply to her value system, to become an advocate for change in her community. Study abroad assisted this student, as she noted, in becoming aware of her commitment in this area. This commitment made up the core of this student's being and identity, as portrayed in her post interview.

Developing Purpose

Many students who spoke about the goals they set for their study abroad included hoping to find a purpose for their lives. The students who set these goals did in fact find the clarification that they were looking for. In addition, even those students who did not specifically set this as a goal also found that their experiences abroad led them to clarify their future, in terms of vocation and lifestyle.

Examples of development in this vector include students who found commitment in their major field of study and commitment to attend graduate school in their respective fields. Service oriented careers and lifestyles were prevalent in students' pathways following study abroad. Although some of the students were interested in service, such as volunteering, before they left for their time abroad, upon return, there was a renewed interest in pursuing a lifestyle that included helping others. In this, the majority of these students stated that altruism was a value and priority.

Developing Integrity

One student stood out in this study as having made an increase in the area of developing integrity. While this student was committed to her beliefs prior to leaving for their study abroad, there was a new commitment made and realized while studying abroad. The experiences that this student had while away led her to a deeper understanding of herself and more importantly other people and life in general. As a result of this, the student has taken action to become socially conscious of her commitments, and will advocate for what she believes is right. This student also noted, while away, she learned to trust other individuals who did not share the same value system and goals, and eventually learned to respect the differences between them. This was clearly demonstrated when the student discussed traveling for two weeks with another student whose beliefs were different, with each student alternating in choosing their activities daily. While this student displayed strong personal convictions, she was able to respect others who did not share the same convictions. It was clear that this student demonstrated a higher level of integrity as it relates to this vector.

Conclusion

In conclusion, students who participated in this study demonstrated that participation in a study abroad program while in college could assist in the overall development of college student identity. Students each made progress in developing more advanced levels of identity in two or more vectors, with one student gaining in all seven vectors. As the experiences of the students abroad contributed to their overall sense of self, the students also gained many characteristics valuable for them to be successful in today's global workplace as well as in diverse communities. While it is possible that this group of students could have gained similar change in identity had they remained at Montana State University, the students, themselves, directly attributed their changes in identity to their time spent studying abroad.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summary of Study

The idea that undergraduate college students develop competency in making meaning of their identity is a widely accepted outcome of college attendance for students. In this study, I examined the experiences of a group of Montana State University, Bozeman students, who studied abroad over one-semester to determine if the study abroad experience had an impact on their perceptions of identity development. I also attempted to uncover the interpersonal skills gained during participation in a study abroad to identify if these experiences help undergraduate college students build some of the necessary skills to help them to be successful in their future lives.

I conducted interviews both before and after students participated in a one-semester study abroad. The interviews were centered on areas of college student identity development as outlined in a theory by Arthur Chickering. Common themes found throughout the experiences of the students who participated include changes in the students perceptions of self-confidence, independence, commitment to major, patience, lens with which the students view the United States, political views, better at taking personal emotional risks, different needs in terms of relationship with parents and friends, comfort in being alone, and diversity awareness.

I also explored the relationships between the students' experiences abroad and their gain in the seven vectors of college student identity development. There were gains experienced by the students across various vectors, although some students experienced

more gain than others. The vectors in which the students gained the most were Developing Competence, Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence, and Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, as well as Managing Emotions in terms of gain in patience and flexibility. The majority of the students returned home with a new sense of purpose, the ability to appreciate diversity, and a greater global understanding.

The vectors that seemed to evidence the least amount of change across this small sample were Establishing Identity and Developing Integrity. This is not to say that students did not gain in these areas, however, they did not talk about gain in these areas during their interviews.

Discussion

In this study, I found that study abroad did have an affect identity development for this group of undergraduate college student participants. As described by the students themselves, they became more aware of the world outside of the United States as a result of their experiences while studying abroad. While students had varying levels of experience out of the United States before they ventured on study abroad, the majority came home with a sense of gain in the values of world-mindedness and had gained a global perspective of the world in which we live. I believe that study abroad is useful tool for institutions of higher education to assist students in gaining these perspectives, as well as it could be a catalyst for student identity development.

During their time spent abroad, these students made progress in terms of developing identity as stated by them in the course of their interviews. Through their placements in their new setting abroad, these students found friendships and experiences

that allowed them to become aware of new ways of life, and to develop a deeper understanding of the world as a whole. Given the length of time that the students stayed in their host countries, they were offered an experience that went deeper than an overview of culture and life in their given country. They were able to establish friendships beyond surface acquaintances and gain an understanding of the cultural lives of the population of their study site. Through these interactions with their host country, students were able to make new meanings in how they viewed themselves and their abilities, the world as a whole, their new setting, and their homes in America. Relationships with place, culture, and people, both natives from the host country and other international students, gave this group of students a broader perspective and worldview that is difficult to obtain for students studying at Montana State University.

Through their experiences, this group of students was challenged to critically think about cultural differences and also similarities in order to make sense of their place and time in which they were living. Learning alternate ways of living can trigger a student to reevaluate his or her values and way of life. Several students discussed the fact that they are aware now of how much Americans waste in everything from food to paper to garbage and petroleum products. They were now making a conscious effort to reduce the amount of waste that they generated on a daily basis.

While abroad, the students were able to test their abilities in many ways. Students who studied in a language other than English felt challenged to think about their speech, and realized how easy communication can be in their native language. In this respect, several students noted that while abroad, they told themselves that they would be less shy and self-conscious when speaking English when they returned home. Being away from

family and friends challenged students to make new friends and gain a local network of support. For students who are shy or have never tested their abilities on their own before, this can be a major step in becoming a more self-confident person.

While the students who participated in this study did not all gain in all of Chickering's seven vectors of college student identity development, there appeared to be greater gains in several vectors. Student's gains in independence and self-confidence were demonstrated in the remarks of all but one student. All students learned to manage their emotions by valuing patience, and gaining a better sense of flexibility. Students learned to be comfortable with themselves and their personal choices. They were confident in their ability to take care of themselves. Many ventured out on their own to explore their new country, when remarking that they never would have done that before study abroad. While the appearance of gains in identity development were not all encompassing for all students, the areas in which the students did appear to gain, allowed each student to achieve a better sense of his or her own identity.

Limitations

Students noted during their interviews that they directly attributed their gain in certain areas to their time spend abroad. However, in this study, I have no basis of comparison to students who remained on the Montana State University campus to determine if they also had similar changes in these same vectors. It is difficult to determine if the students who participated in this study gained more or less than those who did not study abroad.

Uncovering student's experiences while studying abroad in a one-semester context displayed that this group of students were capable of experiencing change in the areas of the seven vectors of identity development. However, literature states that in order for a student participating in study abroad to be truly successful in immersing into his or her host culture, he or she must study at the chosen study site for at least one year (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). As this may be the case, in terms of this study, I did not learn perhaps the full extent to which these students could have grown while abroad. Students who participated in a two-semester study abroad could potentially have more to gain. Additionally, the students who participated in this study who did not make substantial gains in identity development during their time abroad may have had more opportunities for growth in they had extended their stay to a second semester. On the other hand, the students could tire of being away from home and begin to experience their time as negative. In this regard, I do not know how a longer experience could have affected this group of students.

The overall results of this study could have potentially been different if I had the opportunity to give a post interview to the two students who did not return from their study abroad. Since these two students both chose to remain in their host-countries for an additional semester, I suspect that they went through an experience that greatly affected them; however, there is no way to know what their experiences were. As this affects the outcome of my study as well, the overall idea that the students did not return indicates that something about them has changed.

We do not know if the results of study abroad are permanent. There is no way to know if the gains that these students experienced will stick with the student or for how

long. The gain in identity that these students experienced could possibly fade as the student readjusts to life back at home. Conversely, they also could experience a lasting change in their view of themselves and the world, however, given the short-term nature of the study these results are not known.

Results could have proven different if the students interviewed had participated in a different model of study abroad. For this study, I chose only students participating in study abroad programs through the Office of International Programs. If the students had participated in a program that was, for example, led by a faculty member from Montana State University, it is possible that the outcome could have been different.

This study could have been stronger had there been more participants who completed pre and post interviews. Additionally, it could have been stronger if there were two different groups of students who studied at different times with which to compare experiences.

Implications for Research

Future directions for those interested in studying the effects of study abroad on college students include a variety of different directions. Research looking at the effects of a two-semester study abroad may help to illuminate whether true immersion occurs only after the student has lived in their host country for one year as is stated in the literature (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). Moreover, researchers could explore a single method of study abroad in terms of its effects on students. As I looked at all models, results from looking at a single model could prove to be very different. In addition, an in depth study of one vector of identity development could be of interest. Future research to be conducted can include delving further into one of the overall themes found in this study,

such as the effect of study abroad on diversity awareness. This would be of benefit to the body of knowledge on international education.

Results of gain in student identity development may not be permanent. It would be useful in the future to conduct a longitudinal study of the effects of study abroad and its relation to identity development in a long-term context. Perhaps the gain that I found in this group of students is only a temporary view of the world, and once the thrill of the student being in a foreign country begins to fade, the students new outlook on the world will as well. On the other hand, perhaps the students' lives will forever be influenced by the experiences they had while studying abroad. Further research in this area can help to answer these questions.

Implications for Institutional Practice

I found in this study that when students departed for study abroad, their attitude going into the semester seemed to direct the experience that they are going to have. As demonstrated by the groups of students who participated in this study, their gain was in direct relation to their positive attitude at the beginning. The goals that the students made for themselves were imperative to their overall outcomes.

While it is very important to send students off on their semester with as much information as possible on safety abroad, and the effects of phenomena such as culture shock and reverse culture shock, it is essential to also encourage students to get excited for the experiences that they are about to encounter. Encouraging students to open their minds to change, and to not only prepare them for the unexpected worst, but also prepare them for the best is an important step in ensuring that students will get the most out of

their experiences with study abroad. As student affairs professionals, especially those who work with students who are embarking on their study abroad, we should impart to our students that the journey they are about to take is unique in allowing them to experience life in a new and challenging way. The time leading up to the student's departure can be crucial in setting the student's level of excitement. It is important that the students be given all necessary information pertaining to their upcoming experience, and that the information is made relatively straightforward, so that they know what they are getting from the beginning. In addition, it is important to assist the students in knowing what their options are in terms of study sites and locations

Making sure that the programs to which we are sending our students are challenging and supportive of their needs is very important, according to the students that I interviewed. The students felt that the more supportive the program was, the better the overall experience. In addition, encouraging students to choose study abroad in a foreign language is also beneficial to encouraging student development. Not only does the student have the potential to gain proficiency in a foreign language, but also has the opportunity to better understand the culture of the country in which they he or she is living.

Institutions need to realize the benefit of study abroad for college students and make an effort to better support the international mission on college campuses. Better institutional support for study abroad programs, as well as for bringing international students to US campuses is a good start in allowing students to have the opportunity to study abroad. In addition, designing curriculum, which allows the students opportunities to spend time abroad without falling behind in their academic programs, could help

encourage students to take advantage of this opportunity for growth. Financial scholarships granted by the institution for study abroad based on financial need are also ways in which the institution would better support study abroad.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study helped to examine the perceptions of identity development in undergraduate students at Montana State University during a one-semester study abroad experience. I found that there is, according to this group of students, an increase in students' perceived levels of identity, particularly in the areas of self-confidence, independence, commitment to their major, patience, world-view lens, relationship needs, political views, emotional risk-taking, comfort in being alone, and appreciation of diverse environments. Study abroad as experienced by this group of students, appeared to be a successful influence on students' perceptions of their identity development, while also giving students the tools to become successful in their futures.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW ONE PROTOCOL

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW ONE PROTOCOL

1. What is your student standing?
2. What is your academic Major?
3. Please tell me where you are from and where you will be studying?
4. Please describe your program?
5. What made you choose the program that you did?
6. Where are you from?
7. Tell me a little about you, your family life and relationships with your family.
8. Why do you want to study abroad?
9. Will you be studying in English or in a foreign language?
10. What is your previous experience with travel or study abroad?
11. How do you define community, and how do you feel it relates to you and your life.
12. What factors did you consider when choosing your program/ study site?
13. What are your feeling on patriotism and national pride?
14. What are your future academic/ career goals?
15. Independence.....
16. What kind of relationships do you have with friends?
17. What do you look for in the kinds of relationships that you have?
18. Who are you, tell me a little about yourself and things that you feel are important.
19. Tell me about your hopes for study abroad. What do you hope to accomplish/ find out/ see?
20. What are you most looking forward too?

APPENDIX B

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW TWO PROTOCOL

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW TWO PROTOCOL

1. What is your student status?
2. Where are you from
3. Where did you study and in what language did you study in?
4. If not English, did you feel a better connection to the culture?
5. Are you pleased with the type of study abroad program that you chose?
6. As a result of your experience, do you feel an increased sense of self-confidence?
 - i. Intellectual, physical, emotional
7. How do you feel about your level of autonomy?
8. How do you feel about your level of inter dependence?
9. Do you feel your ability of manage your emotions has changed?
 - i. Stress, anxiety, anger, patience, depression
10. How is your relationship with your friends now that you are back? Has it changed?
11. How is your relationship with your family now that you are back? Has it changed?
12. Do you feel that the qualities that you look for in people that you develop friendships have changed?
13. What are your feelings about patriotism and national pride?
14. What are your current political convictions?
15. How do you feel about your major now that you are back?
16. What are your plans for the future?
17. What are your feelings regarding diversity?

18. How do you define community?