

**Study Abroad as a
Multifaceted Approach
to Supporting College
Sophomores:**

**Creating Optimal
Environments to
Promote Holistic Student
Development & Global
Learning**

Kira Espiritu, Ph.D.

Director
International Studies Abroad
University of San Diego

Presentation Overview

- Background & Purpose of Study
- Research questions
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
 - Implications for Practice & Future Research
 - Significance of the study
 - Limitations
- Questions

Program/Research Site

Second Year Experience Abroad (SYEA) Program

University of San Diego

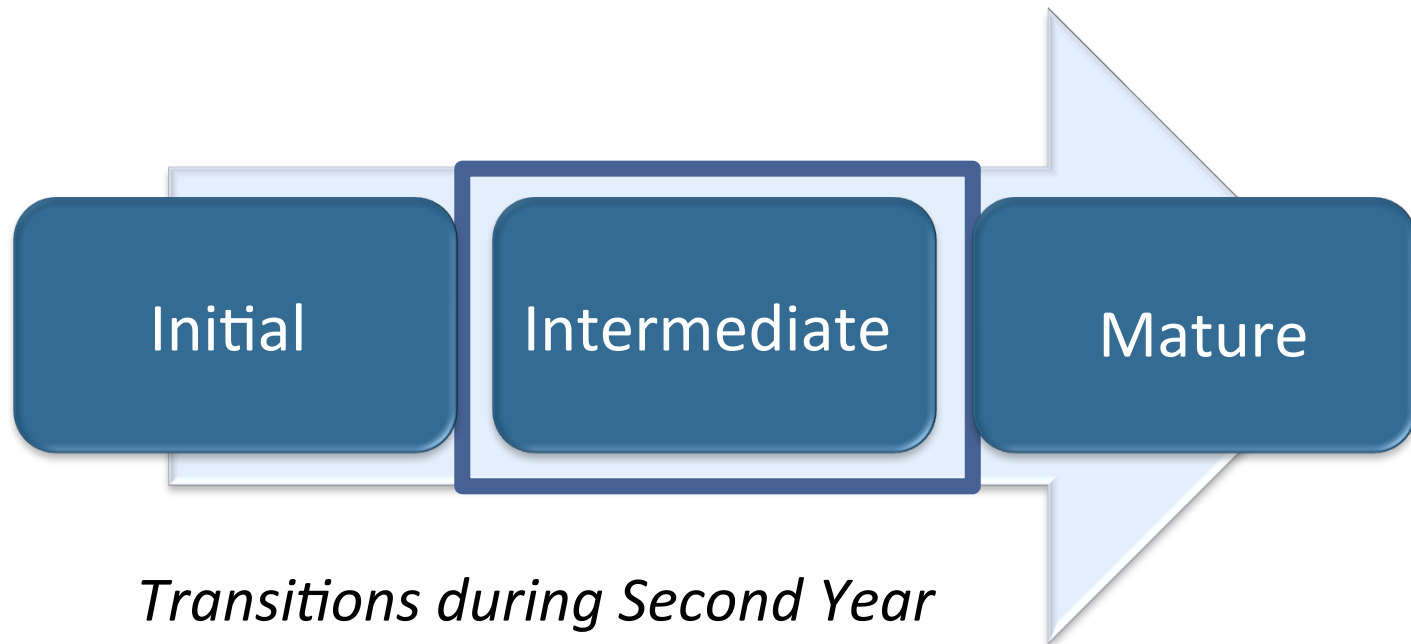
- Institutional response to support sophomores
- Three-week study abroad program for students during intersession (January) of second year
- Locations: Florence, Hong Kong, Barcelona, Seville
- Years: 2011-2013
- Program Components:
 - Academic- Course taught by USD faculty
 - Intercultural learning- Led by USD student affairs staff; Cultural analysis with guided exploration and structured reflection

Background: Intercultural Maturity & the Second Year

Cognitive

Intrapersonal

Interpersonal



Background: Study Abroad & the Second Year

- Optimal environment for exploration & reflection
 - Cognitive- Challenges to knowledge claims
 - Intrapersonal- Fosters self-exploration
 - Interpersonal- Provides interaction with diverse others
- Fosters intercultural maturity

Research Questions

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

Study Design

Explanatory Sequential Case Study

PHASE I- Quantitative

- Analysis of pre- and post-experience surveys Global Perspectives Inventory
 - Descriptive statistics
 - Inferential statistics



PHASE II- Qualitative

- Maximum variation sampling (2013)
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - Document analysis

SYEA Programs 2011-2013 (7)

| <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Florence Barcelona | Florence Barcelona | Florence Hong Kong Seville |

Overview of Sample- 369 Participants

| Demographic | SYEA | Nationwide ^a |
|------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | | |
| White | 71.5% | 76.4% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8.9% | 7.6% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 7.6% | 7.7% |
| Multiple Ethnicities | 7.3% | 2.5% |
| Native American | .8% | .5% |
| African American | .3% | 2.5% |
| <i>Gender</i> | | |
| Female | 71% | 64.8% |
| Male | 29% | 35.2% |

Note.

^aNationwide data retrieved from Institute for International Education, 2013.

Findings

Research Question #1

What impact, if any, did this program have on participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of student development as measured by a pre- and post-experience survey? How does this vary/differ across program year and location?

Findings Related to RQ#1

Overview of Significance Change across Scales

| | | <u>Cognitive</u> | | <u>Intrapersonal</u> | | <u>Interpersonal</u> | |
|------|-----|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Δ Knowing | Δ Knowledge | Δ Identity | Δ Affect | Δ Social Responsibility | Δ Social Interaction |
| 2011 | FLO | -.03 | 3.56*** | 2.49* | 1.57 | 3.40*** | 1.41 |
| | BAR | -1.50 | 3.75*** | 1.66 | -1.28 | .36 | -.41 |
| 2012 | FLO | -1.20 | 3.15** | 1.83 | .40 | -.22 | .93 |
| | BAR | -.56 | 5.01*** | 3.88*** | .27 | 2.85** | 2.31* |
| 2013 | FLO | 1.59 | 4.88*** | 3.88*** | 2.26* | .19 | 4.08*** |
| | HON | .13 | 2.41* | 2.79** | 1.41 | 1.11 | .46 |
| | SEV | 1.41 | 4.60*** | 2.14* | 2.54* | 1.02 | 1.57 |

Note. FLO = Florence, BAR = Barcelona, HON = Hong Kong, SEV = Seville; *t*-statistics shown in table
 * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Findings

Research Question #2

To what extent were the changes in these three constructs attributable to:

- Participants' demographics such as gender, major, ethnicity, grade point average, level of parent education, and previous study abroad experience
- Program characteristics such as location and year

Significance of Gender by Scale

| Δ Scale | Location | R ² | Variable | Coefficient | t-statistic |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cognitive-Knowing | Barcelona | .25 | Communications | -.62 | -2.55*** |
| | | | Female | .42 | 2.02** |
| Cognitive-Knowledge | Hong Kong | .16 | Female | .45 | 2.16* |
| | Seville | .14 | Female | .47 | 2.44** |
| Intrapersonal-Identity | N/S | N/S | N/S | N/S | N/S |
| Intrapersonal-Affect | Barcelona | .23 | Communications | -.60 | -3/29*** |
| | | | Female | .39 | 2.60** |
| Interpersonal-Social Responsibility | N/S | N/S | N/S | N/S | N/S |
| Interpersonal-Social Interaction | Seville | .29 | Female | .45 | 3.61** |
| | | | Asian | .60 | 2.33* |

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

Other Independent Variables

Significant, No Patterns

- Ethnicity
- Major
- Level of parent education
- Previous study abroad experience
- Grade point average

Non-Significant

- Program location
- Program year

Findings

Research Question #3

What impact, if any, and in what ways, did this program have on the development of participants' intercultural maturity?

Overview of Sample- Qualitative (2013)

| Location | Ethnicity | Gender | Course Taken Abroad |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| Florence (5) | European/ White- 5 African American- 1 | All female | Catholic Theology Chemistry Art History |
| Seville (3) | All European/ White | Female- 2 Male- 1 | Ethics |
| Hong Kong (3) | European/White-2 Hispanic/Latino-1 | Female- 2 Male- 1 | Marketing World Religions |

Influences on Interpersonal Maturity

| Domain | Factors |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Cognitive</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group reflections• Cultural interactions• Academic course |
| Intrapersonal | |
| Interpersonal | |

Impacts on Cognitive Maturity

A Reflection on the Impact of Academic Course

[In class] I learned that [one] can make arguments behind why something is **right and wrong**, but that is all perception and lots of **things influence that perception**, so you have to take that into consideration (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Influences on Intercultural Maturity

| Domain | Factors |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Cognitive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group reflections• Cultural interactions• Academic course |
| <u>Intrapersonal</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for identity exploration• Increased self-confidence provoked by identity exploration• Experiences of marginalization leading to contemplation of privilege |
| Interpersonal | |

Influence on Intrapersonal Maturity

A Reflection on Marginalization

It makes you feel bad...it doesn't't make you feel good that other people feel **prejudiced** against. But having that sense of **awareness** is refreshing (personal communication, August 6, 2013).

Influences on Intercultural Maturity

| Domain | Factors |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Cognitive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group reflections• Cultural interactions• Academic course |
| Intrapersonal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for identity exploration• Increased self-confidence provoked by identity exploration• Experiences of marginalization leading to contemplation of privilege |
| <u>Interpersonal</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactions motivated by cultural curiosity• Interactions motivated by desire for mutual understanding |

Influence on Interpersonal Maturity

A Reflection on Desire for Mutual Understanding

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

Influences on Intercultural Maturity

| Domain | Factors |
|----------------------|--|
| Cognitive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group reflections• Cultural interactions• Academic course |
| Intrapersonal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for identity exploration• Increased self-confidence provoked by identity exploration• Experiences of marginalization leading to contemplation of privilege |
| Interpersonal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactions motivated by cultural curiosity• Interactions motivated by desire for mutual understanding |

Other Salient Findings

Intersection of Sophomore Development & Study Abroad

- ◉ Identity development
- ◉ Redefining relationships
- ◉ Developing a purpose in college
- ◉ Emergence of an internal voice

Essential Components of Sophomore Study Abroad

- ◉ Guided exploration & structured reflection (Intercultural Learning component)
- ◉ Developmental appropriateness

Discussion & Implications for Practice

- Disproportionate demographic representation
 - Practice: Engaging diverse student groups
- Divergence of quantitative and qualitative findings
 - Practice: Consider timing of evaluating impacts
- Importance of courses offered in study abroad programs
 - Practice: Course/faculty selection
- Identity education as part of study abroad
 - Practice: Building awareness of privilege
- Selecting developmentally appropriate programs
 - Practice: Strategic advising

Limitations

Generalizability

- One university with unique characteristics (USD)
- Demographic representation

Reliability of Self-Reporting

- Quantitative & qualitative data

Researcher Positionality & Subjectivity

- Monitored through researchers journal

Significance of the Study

- Evaluation of study abroad as an institutional strategy to respond to the developmental challenges of the sophomore year
- Creative uses of study abroad programming
- Contributes to knowledge related to:
 - Development of intercultural maturity in sophomores
 - Impact of study abroad on development of intercultural maturity

Future Research

- Continuation of study at USD with modifications
- Extend study to other universities
- Disproportionate representation in study abroad

Questions