



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Dottorato di Ricerca in
Scienze della Persona e della Formazione
Tematica
Higher Education Internationalisation
and Educational Strategies and Practices
Ciclo XXXII
SSD M-PSI/04

**STUDY ABROAD AND EMPLOYABILITY:
ASSESSING A REFLECTION SESSION FOR STUDENTS TO ARTICULATE THEIR
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

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Anno Accademico: 2018-2019

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Abbreviations

AAC&U	Association of American Colleges & Universities
ACE	American Council on Education
AIFS	American Institute for Foreign Study
CIMO	Center for International Mobility
<i>df</i>	Degrees of freedom
EC	European Commission
EIS	Erasmus Impact Study
<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> Distribution
GLM	Generalized Linear Model
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIP	High Impact Practice
IIE	Institute of International Education
<i>M</i>	Mean
<i>Mdn</i>	Median
N	Research sample
<i>n</i>	Sample subset
NACE	National Association of Colleges & Employers
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
OECD	Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development
<i>SD</i>	Standard Deviation
<i>SE</i>	Standard Error
Greek characters:	
n_p^2	Partial eta squared (effect size)
δ	Observed value
p	p -value (the attained level of significance)
γ_1	Skewness value

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the student participants,
for sharing their stories and their enthusiasm about their international experience.

“Among the many false dichotomies fostered by the continuing debates surrounding higher education, one that I find especially disconcerting is that which pits the professional against the personal. While it is expressed in a variety of ways, it boils down to this: Either you believe the purpose of going to college is to be able to secure a (preferably high-paying) job, or you think there is something more intrinsically valuable to be gained from the years spent earning a degree. My question is: When did these become mutually exclusive?” Lisa Dolling, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 9, 2015, “To Help Students Succeed Professionally and Personally, Teach the Art of Being Human.”

Acknowledgements

It became clear early-on in this endeavor that it would take a village -- of many faculty, friends, family, colleagues and mentors -- offering me their knowledge, expertise, wisdom and support in order for me to succeed. With much gratitude, I have many people to thank for the fact that I have finished this study.

To all of those on U.S. and European campuses who willingly volunteered to host and/or facilitate a session, to connect me to host sites, or to offer to have their students serve as part of the control group, I am extremely grateful. This includes colleagues at twenty different institutions and organizations in nine countries across two continents: Tatiana Alekseeva, Fiorenza Braicovich, Nicole Brini, Visnja Schampers Car, Robert Coelen, Damiano Anelli, Melanie Eislinger, Marita Foster, Jodi Hicks, Jo Honderd, Sarah Huesing, Wayne Johnson, Christiane Kästli, Mirna Koričan Lajtman, Lisa Loberg, Angela Manginelli, Giacomo Maniscalco, Kirsten Matthes, Edilio Mazzoleni, Ann Vu Ngo, Susan Pham, Liudmila Pliner, Amanda Pouydebasque, Dolly Predovic, Jérôme Rickman, Katie Roller, Gianluca Samsa, Refiya Scheltinga, Leann Schmitz, Carola Smith, Erin Tamaki, Amber Bienek Thom, and Michelle Walters. And my former UST career services colleague Becky Durham certainly deserves thanks in this endeavor. I must also thank Osha Roopmarine for her technical expertise in Word.

I must also include a thank you to my employer, AIFS Study Abroad – where Paul Watson and Ailsa Brookes have supported (and been very patient with) me to earn this degree. I also owe many thanks to mentors who would read and comment along the way – Dr. Phil Anderson, who showed great interest in my study and cared all along about how I was doing; Dr. Leigh Lawton who offered needed statistical explanations, and to Dr. Rich Rexeisen who often challenges my thinking. Dr Gary Rhodes was the one to point me in the in the direction of Milan and CHEI in 2014, and I am grateful.

I am honored to be part of the UCSC Center for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) community, with reknoved faculty who share their expertise and experiences with us.

My faculty advisors win the award for the most patience – for finding time for me despite their incredibly full schedules, and for advising me even when it was in addition to their already more than full-time jobs. Dr. Stephen Dunnett was incredibly generous with his time and guidance; he is an exemplary international education professional and am privileged to have been able to have him as my mentor. Dr. Cinzia DiDio is a genuine teacher from whom I learned a great deal about analysis and thinking from multiple perspectives; her expertise was invaluable. Dr. Amanda Murphy and Dr. Fiona Hunter of CHEI, along with Liz Moffatt and Francesca Fionotello, provided me with genuine care, and essential guidance and support. My sincere appreciation goes to the external readers and members of my commission for sharing their expertise.

I have close friends who always asked how I was doing, offered support and often helped me to laugh under stress over these past few years – Rosie, Joan, Catherine, Sarah S., Spence, Sara K., Kathy S., Kathy B., Martha, Connie, Mike, Suzanne, Mark, Charlotte, Lisa D., Lisa L., Paloma, Dawn and Jennifer. My family deserves many thanks too for the love and encouragement they offered all along the way. I do have the best family in the world – Marie & Rick, Emily & Fred, Josie and Gracie, John & Alisa; Matt & Lora, Kate; and John, Eliana and Karl are more than I could ask for as family. Fred excels at Excel and John is a copy editor extraordinaire – and I am extremely grateful for their help. And to my mother Arlene – and including my late father Don here too – I treasure the passion for learning you instilled in us and for the importance you placed on family. I am forever grateful for the closeness of our family.

Last of all, many thanks to my two beautiful daughters Leah and Anna-Claire who tolerate me and my crazy ideas, are supportive of the time I have put into this, who always cheered me on, and who themselves are committed to lifelong learning. I love you so much.

Abstract

Students returned from studying abroad often refer to the experience in superlatives and powerful adjectives – “awesome” “the greatest”, “life-changing.” However, when it comes to talking with potential employers, they typically cannot articulate the knowledge and skills they gained in ways that have relevance to the workplace, or that employers can fully appreciate.

This study assessed the impact of a facilitated reflection session on students’ ability to increase the quality in how they speak about having developed skills abroad. Using a repeated measures design, a pre- and post-session survey was tied to a one-hour facilitated intervention session attended by U.S. and European undergraduates who had studied abroad at least one academic semester; a control group completed the two surveys a week apart without attending a session. In both surveys, students were asked to reflect upon their experience to identify skill(s) demonstrated abroad and to offer an example (by crafting a short story based on the STAR formula). The prediction was that students’ self-perceived ability to (1) reflect upon and (2) identify skills, and to (3) gain confidence and (4) show preparedness in anticipation of job interviews would increase post-intervention. These four factors make up the Assessment Measure, based on the 7-point Likert responses to four statements in the pre- and post-survey. There was a second prediction that there would be an increase in the quality of experimental subjects’ stories at post-intervention (using a 5-level rubric for rating), after having learned a best practice for answering job interview questions (i.e., the STAR formula).

The findings supported the predicted increase in the students’ perceived measures of reflecting and identifying skills and of their confidence and preparedness in anticipation of interviewing for jobs upon graduating. Within groups, there was no change in the Control mean from PRE to POST while there was a significant increase for Experiment. Between these two

groups, there were no differences observed pre-intervention (thus supporting the homogeneity of groups). Critically, the differences found post-intervention support the significant effect of intervention – with the experiment group’s POST score on the four dimensions of the Assessment Measure greater than the POST score of the control group.

The findings supported the second hypothesis as well – that the experiment group would show an increase in the quality of their stories after the intervention compared to the control group (which showed a slight decrease in scores from pre- to post-survey) and resulted in a between-group comparison that was significant.

This study provides support for the efforts of those in higher education who conduct programming such as the reflection session (intervention) in this research which prompts students to consider their skill development from studying or interning abroad and to learn to speak about it in ways that employers will value, especially in the interview process. This study also supports the contribution that international student mobility makes in increasing participants’ employability.

Riassunto

Tornando da uno studio all'estero, gli studenti fanno spesso riferimento all'esperienza usando aggettivi superlativi e potenti: "fantastico", "la migliore", "che cambia la vita". Tuttavia, quando si tratta di parlare con potenziali datori di lavoro, in genere non sono in grado di articolare le conoscenze e le competenze che hanno acquisito, in modi che abbiano rilevanza per il posto di lavoro o che i datori di lavoro possano apprezzare appieno.

Questo studio ha valutato l'impatto di una sessione di riflessione facilitata da educatori sulla capacità degli studenti di migliorare la qualità del modo in cui parlano dello sviluppo individuale di competenze all'estero. E' stato utilizzato un disegno di ricerca con misurazioni ripetute; un sondaggio pre e post sessione ha valutato l'effetto di una sessione di intervento facilitata di un'ora a cui hanno partecipato studenti universitari statunitensi ed europei che avevano studiato all'estero per almeno un semestre accademico; un gruppo di controllo ha completato i due sondaggi a distanza di una settimana senza partecipare alla sessione. In entrambi i sondaggi, è stato chiesto agli studenti di riflettere sulla propria esperienza per identificare le competenze dimostrate all'estero e di fornire un esempio (creando un racconto basato sulla formula STAR). La previsione era che la capacità auto-percepita degli studenti di (1) riflettere e (2) identificare le competenze, e di (3) acquisire fiducia e (4) mostrare preparazione in previsione di colloqui di lavoro sarebbe aumentata post-intervento (sessione). Questi quattro fattori costituiscono la misura di valutazione, basata sulle risposte a quattro dichiarazioni valutate su una scala Likert a 7 passi. Una seconda previsione anticipava un aumento della qualità delle storie dei soggetti post-intervento (usando una rubrica di 5 livelli per la valutazione), a seguito cioè dell'apprendimento di una migliore pratica per rispondere alle domande del colloquio di lavoro (la formula STAR).

In linea con le previsioni, i risultati hanno supportato un miglioramento post-intervento della percezione degli studenti rispetto alla propria capacità di riflettere e identificare competenze, sulla propria fiducia e sul livello percepito di preparazione in previsione dei colloqui di lavoro post-laurea. Per il gruppo di controllo non si è osservato alcun cambiamento dalla condizione PRE a quella POST, mentre si è osservato un significativo aumento dei punteggi PRE-POST per il gruppo sperimentale. Nel confronto tra gruppi, non sono state osservate differenze tra il gruppo di controllo e sperimentale pre-intervento (sostenendo così omogeneità tra gruppi). Tuttavia, sono state trovate differenze significative tra i gruppi post-intervento, con un sostanziale aumento dei punteggi di valutazione per il gruppo sperimentale sulle quattro dimensioni della Misura di Valutazione (Assessment Measure) rispetto al gruppo di controllo.

I risultati hanno inoltre confermato la seconda ipotesi secondo la quale il gruppo sperimentale avrebbe mostrato un aumento significativo della qualità delle storie a seguito dell'intervento rispetto al gruppo di controllo, il quale ha mostrato una leggera diminuzione dei punteggi dal pre al post sondaggio.

Questo studio fornisce evidenza a sostegno degli sforzi di coloro che nell'educazione terziaria gestiscono programmi simili alla sessione di riflessione (intervento) valutata in questa ricerca e che stimolano gli studenti a riflettere sullo sviluppo delle competenze acquisite durante periodi di studio o lavoro all'estero e ad imparare a parlarne in un modo che verrà apprezzato dai potenziali datori di lavoro durante i colloqui. Questo studio evidenzia inoltre il contributo della mobilità studentesca internazionale rispetto all'incremento dell'employability dei partecipanti.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Institutions of higher education have long sought to both articulate the objectives and realize the benefits of international student mobility as a key component in higher education internationalization. While higher education institutions (HEI) place considerable emphasis on preparing students with skills for the 21st century workplace, such as the ability to adapt to diverse work environments, employability (or transferable skill development) has been emerging as an outcome reported by students who study abroad – especially across the U.S. and Western Europe.

Diversity/Global Learning is one of the educational practices identified by Kuh (2008) as “high-impact” (along with others such as internships, service learning and capstone courses and projects). The outcomes of such practices include improved student outcomes, with higher levels of student engagement and greater retention rates (Association of American Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], 2018). The assumption is that these outcomes make a contribution to the greater objectives of higher education – that is, preparing graduates who are ready to enter the workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills.

There is a reported overlap among the key skills sought by employers and the key skills students report developing while learning abroad (Jones, 2012). Skills used to define intercultural competence align closely with the transferable skills employers value – for example: initiative, adaptability, respect, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills (European Commission, 2014; Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009; Diamond, Walkley, Forbes, Hughes, & Sheen, 2011; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Hubbard, Rexeisen, & Watson, 2018; Potts, 2014; Sutton & Rubin, 2004; VandeBerg, Paige, & Connor-Linton, 2009). Numerous surveys indicate

that employers point to these skills as valued assets in screening potential job candidates (European Commission, 2010; British Council, 2013; Hart Research Associates, 2015; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014)

In the United States, the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) published its *Career-Readiness Core Competencies* in 2017, which includes the category Global/Intercultural Fluency (along with more traditional skill sets such as Oral/Written Communication and Teamwork/Collaboration). NACE (2017b) defines this as: “Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals’ differences” (para. 3). This is a significant recognition by employers – who were joined by professionals in higher education in publishing these competencies – that graduates should demonstrate skills indicating they can work successfully with those who are different from themselves. NACE has also published resources for ways to implement practices – both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities – that foster the readiness competencies (NACE, 2017b). This recognition of the need for global/intercultural fluency has high relevance to the importance of comprehensive internationalization for HEI’s.

Yet while recent studies demonstrate that students report a strong impact from studying abroad on the development of their personal, intercultural and transferable career skills, there is limited research to demonstrate that employability is specifically defined as an outcome of student mobility. This research will contribute to the scholarship on study abroad and its impact on employability as well as to the greater body of knowledge surrounding higher education internationalization and employability.

This study will assess the impact of a post-return (from abroad) reflection process designed to help students identify and articulate the value of studying abroad on career skill development in preparation for transitioning to the workplace after graduation. This research has implications for how student mobility may be regarded as a component of higher education internationalization. It contributes knowledge about how a process of reflection helps students gain awareness of their own employability, as well as to increase the understanding of how study abroad and employability are linked for higher education administrators, faculty and staff involved in international exchange.

Background of the Study

Across both the United States and Europe, HEI's continue to study the impact of education abroad on employability, but more research is needed to measure this relationship (Deardorff & Jones, 2012; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Jones, 2013). Recent political events, along with anticipation of an increase in automation drastically changing the workplace within a few decades, will likely impact economies and job markets worldwide (Davies, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2016; New York Times, 2017). Recent graduates may need to further differentiate themselves by having a solid knowledge of their skill set; in fact, it is predicted that a strong set of transferable skills will become even more important in this age of automation (Frey & Osborne, 2013). Students need direction in learning about the importance of having distinctive examples that demonstrate their skills, and they need guidance in learning to describe their study abroad experience with context and depth (Center for International Mobility [CIMO], 2017; Chapman, 2011; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007).

While the skills resulting from studying abroad have been identified as aligning closely with the transferable skills sought by employers, several studies also reveal a gap in students'

ability to articulate them (CIMO, 2017; Chapman, 2011; NACE, 2017c; Trooboff et al., 2007). Students are often unable to explain their skills to potential employers or to understand the importance of offering actual examples of having demonstrated the skill(s) in question. This results in skepticism by employers about the value of the experience and an under-appreciation for the impact of learning abroad. This research aims to help students to articulate their skills and subsequently may also help employers recognize the frequently-reported outcomes and the resulting value of an international experience.

The offering of intervention sessions which address this has been expanding in recent years on U.S. campuses to assist returned study abroad participants in recognizing their own intercultural development as an outcome of learning abroad. This study will parallel those interventions but focus on helping students recognize their range of transferable skills as an outcome; thus, it has an explicit focus on employability and describing one's skills in ways that have meaning to employers. This post-return reflection is very similar to the most-commonly recommended first step in the career preparation process offered by campus-based career services professionals – that is, an initial self-assessment to identify one's own skill set (Career Dimensions Inc, 2012; Gersch, 2002; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2016; Rutgers University, 2013; University of California Berkeley, 2016). The similarities to the career preparation model include that this is a stand-alone session offered to undergraduates returned from abroad; the length of the session approximates current practice (60-75 minutes). The focus is the same in that it is explained to students that this is just one small part of career preparation – and that campus career offices in the U.S., or internship coordinators in Europe, can help them with other steps that they must complete to be fully prepared (e.g., prepare a resumé, learn about networking and interview etiquette, etc.).

A student workbook titled “Making the Most of Your International Experience” was used in the reflection sessions (intervention) of this research. It was initially created over twenty years ago by U.S. study abroad and career services colleagues (a team that included the researcher), at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. It has been revised and updated on a regular basis in consultation with both study abroad and career services professionals to maintain alignment with current career development practices, yet it has taught students the STAR formula for answering interview questions since its inception (as this remains a highly-regarded method for interview responses). A copy of the workbook is given to each student attending the session and it is theirs to use (and keep) to record their responses to question prompts, and preparing their example of skill development, etc. (See Appendix A for the student workbook).

There was also a 7-page Trainer Guide developed for use by the session facilitators in this study. It contains a short summary of the theories on which the session is based, an agenda and timeline, and specific instructions on delivering each section of the session. This guide was used in the training with each facilitator to provide them the needed information to conduct the sessions. (See Appendix B for the trainer guide).

Building on the many “train the trainer” sessions and webinars the researcher had conducted over the past decade, the researcher identified U.S. campuses to host sessions for this research with experienced facilitators. The researcher also consulted with fellow doctoral students at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore to identify both suitable HEI’s and session facilitators in Europe to host and conduct sessions for this study.

This study will not only contribute to the literature but will provide practitioners (study abroad advisors and career services professionals) with tools and tips on how to organize and facilitate reflection sessions on campus with the student workbook and trainer guide. The

Discussion chapter addresses the lessons learned from this research which may serve to guide practitioners in the future. This research is intended to initiate further dialogue, ideas and collaboration on implementing employability-focused programming into the study abroad experience.

Problem Statement

Ten years ago, an important article – one of the very first examining study abroad and employability – appeared in the U.S. peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* titled “Employer Attitudes Towards Study Abroad” (Trooboff et al., 2007). Based on the information gathered in their discussions with employers, one of the authors’ key recommendations was: “Study abroad and career services professionals should collaborate in order to give students some basic training in how to present what they have learned through studying abroad, in ways that employers will appreciate” (Trooboff et al., p. 30). The field has made some progress on this (see section on Campus-Based Programming in Literature Review), but it is apparent that the institutions of higher education which help students link study abroad and career skills development are still small in number. While these sessions typically use a sequencing of reflection established in the field of career development (as does this study), the impact of these sessions has not been formally assessed.

In a number of studies, researchers found that students report outcomes from their study abroad which match the transferable skills sought by employers (CIMO, 2017; Diamond et al., 2011; European Commission 2014; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Hart Research Associates, 2015). In employer surveys, the skills commonly reported as the most important include teamwork, problem-solving and communication skills – and these skills align with the skills students report developing in the studies listed above (CIMO, 2017; Hart Research Associates, 2015; NACE,

2014). In terms of talking about themselves and their skills in job interviews, students may not have taken the time to first understand their strengths and challenges. As a result, they are typically not able to readily explain their skills to potential employers or understand the importance of offering examples which demonstrate the skill(s) in question (Chapman, 2011; Matherly, 2005; Tillman, 2014; Van de Berg et al., 2007). By helping students recall examples of the cultural differences and the challenges they faced while abroad, and having them assign meaning to their experience and modeling how to talk about their demonstrated skill, it is intended that this research will help expand the way employers understand and value study abroad.

Additionally, a significant issue is relatively few students have the opportunity to participate in a session guiding them in assessing their skills from studying abroad, recalling examples where they have demonstrated the skill, and learning to talk about it in a job interview. Education-abroad professionals report that they are overwhelmed with their current responsibilities but wish to seek the training needed to successfully deliver such sessions (Tillman, 2014). This study encourages education abroad professionals to join in collaboration with career services professionals while seeking to utilize experienced facilitators and to train additional staff. The study also provides a student workbook and trainer guide to increase the offerings for students.

Significance of the Study

The recent efforts to increase student mobility both in the United States and in Europe are a recognition of the benefits that study abroad makes across sectors and clientele – including HEI's, employers, and of course the students themselves. In the United States, the Institute of International Education (IIE) posed a challenge to U.S. universities in 2014 to attempt to double

the number of students going abroad by 2020 (IIE, 2019). More than 800 HEI's as well as other types of organizations – such as education associations and study abroad providers – signed on as “commitment partners” (IIE, 2019, para. 1). The Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act (Senate Bill 1198, 2019) is U.S. legislation introduced to authorize funds to universities to “provide and expand study abroad opportunities for undergraduate students” (§. 2). In November 2018, the Council of the European Union (2018) adopted its support of the Erasmus+ programme, proposing to extend it “to include all levels of education and training” for the period 2021-2027 – which includes study, volunteer and work programs, staff exchanges, and organizational partnerships (Council of the European Union, 2018, para. 1)

Sending students abroad as part of their degree program is often a key component of the campus comprehensive internationalization process of HEI's (Hudzik, 2011). Hudzik (2011) describes comprehensive internationalization as an “emergent imperative” (p. 7), noting that “globalization has been at least as much a phenomenon of economics as of politics. As corporations, large and small, engage in business activity abroad, their needs for language skills, cross-cultural awareness and knowledge of opportunities abroad diversify and intensify” (Hudzik 2011, p. 17). Study abroad is considered a cornerstone in the process of producing globally-minded and interculturally-competent graduates, yet the positive effect of student mobility extends beyond the students themselves. Numerous studies conducted in the United and Europe – such as those by the European Commission ([EC] 2014), Farrugia & Sanger (2017), Hubbard, Rexeisen & Watson (2018), and IIE (2016) – indicate that studying abroad results in an increased level of participants' intercultural competence as well as transferable skills (that are valued in the workplace). It thus appears that the outcomes of education abroad extend their contribution to the common good. In Europe, the *Erasmus Impact Study* ([EIS] EC, 2014) highlights that 64% of

employers think “international experience is important for recruitment” (and notably, this is a considerable increase from the 37% reporting so in 2006) (p. 16), and that another 64% of employers report that “graduates with international background are given greater responsibility” (p. 18).

Citing its report *Gaining an Employment Edge: The impact of study abroad on 21st century skills* (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017), IIE claims that “study abroad has an overall positive impact on the development of a wide range of 21st century skills, expands career possibilities, and has a long-term impact on career progression and promotion” (p. 6). Yet it also appears that currently, students are not inherently able to identify and talk about that impact, especially in ways that employers will appreciate, nor do employers truly understand the possible outcomes of the experience (CIMO, 2017; Gardner, Gross, & Steglitz, 2008; Van de Berg et al., 2007). U.S. institutions have not been highly responsive in offering programming to address this (Tillman, 2014).

This points to an imperative that is not being met – that is, that globally-competent graduates are essential. However, if they do not have the self-awareness, understanding of, and ability to describe the positive impact of the study abroad experience, students will be selling themselves short in articulating the skills they possess for the 21st century workplace. The literature review that follows goes into detail about why the complexity and intensity of student development in the college years typically means that students need a “nudge” from the outside to further their own self-knowledge and awareness, and to understand their strengths and weaknesses (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

The one-hour reflection session that is the focus of this study aims to help students identify and articulate their skills, specifically in crafting a real-life example of how they

demonstrated a skill as the result of studying abroad. Programming that promotes a higher degree of self-awareness among study abroad participants and draws attention to their transferable skill development supports the premise of comprehensive internationalization as a mandate for the 21st century. As de Wit (2010) writes, there are four broad categories of rationales for internationalization: political, economic, social and cultural, and academic (p. 9), and “these are not mutually exclusive, may be different in importance by country and region, and can change in dominance over time. In the present time, the economic rationales are considered to be more dominant than the other three, and in connection to these, academic rationales such as strategic alliances, status and profile are also becoming more dominant (p. 9).

With regard to impact, the number of participants in higher education international mobility activity (study, internships, volunteering/service learning) across the two regions is also impressive. While the estimate is that more than 330,000 U.S. undergraduates study abroad annually (IIE, 2018), the European figure – which expands to include staff and volunteer programs (but only includes those within the Erasmus scheme) – was 737,000 in 2017 (EC, 2018), so upwards of a million outbound people across both regions annually.

This study has significance for higher education to recognize the economic as well as cultural outcomes of study abroad. An increase in students’ transferable and intercultural skills from studying abroad strengthens the degree of their employability at the time of graduation, and perhaps beyond.

Purpose of the Study

This study will contribute to closing the existing gap of knowledge between studying abroad and developing transferable skills by examining the role of self-reflection in guiding students through this process. This research will:

- Assess the value of self-reflection for students to identify and articulate the transferable skills developed as the result of an international experience using mixed methods research.
- Benefit individual students who participate in the reflection by increasing their awareness and understanding of their transferable skills, including intercultural skills.
- Provide institutions of higher education engaged in study abroad (and study abroad advisors) with both quantitative and qualitative analyses on the relationship between study abroad and students' perceived employability.
- Provide education abroad practitioners with a set of tested materials (in English) that they may use to facilitate reflection (training) sessions for students to understand the impact of study abroad in the development of their transferable skills.
- Inform the field about the impact of study abroad on employability as a component of higher education internationalization.

This mixed-methods study aims to assess whether a one-hour long facilitated reflection session can result in an increase in students' ability to articulate their skills developed while studying or interning abroad. A quantitative measure of the students perceived ability to reflect upon and identify their skills, along with their perceived self-confidence and sense of preparedness for job interviews serve as the dependent "impact" variables; the change in these will be analyzed from pre- to post-session. In addition, a qualitative element will factor into the results as there is an open-ended question in both the pre- and post-session survey in which the students are asked to formulate an example of their skill(s) that can be shared with employers in a job interview. The change in the rating of these stories will serve as an important benchmark of the impact of the session.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

This research addresses the primary question: Does an hour-long facilitated reflection session for undergraduates positively impact their ability to identify and articulate the transferable skills they developed as the result of studying or interning abroad?

The first research sub-question of this study is intended to assess the impact of the reflection session based on a pre- and post-survey which both included the same four questions this study calls the “four dimensions” of the Assessment Measure – examining whether the session impacted students’ *Reflection* of the connection between studying abroad and transferable skill development; their *Identification* of specific skills they developed abroad; their *Confidence* in speaking accurately about their skills to potential employers, and finally, their *Preparation* of specific examples of skills developed while abroad.

The second sub-question examines whether attending the intervention results in students’ ability to craft a higher quality story (or example) of their skill development from abroad. This assessment is based on the students’ response to this question, which was posed in both the pre- and post-session survey:

Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

The independent variables were *the intervention* – with the pre-session (PRE) survey and the post-session (POST) survey; and *group* – control vs. experiment, to examine the effect of the session on experiment subjects versus the control subject who did not participate in a session. In addition, the variables of *region* – U.S. versus Europe, and *gender* – male versus female, were

added into the analysis. Here are the hypotheses and predictions to address the two research sub-questions:

Hypothesis #1: Participation in the reflection session impacts students' perceived reflection, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

Prediction #1: Participation in the reflection session will increase students' perceived reflection, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

Hypothesis #2: Participation in the reflection session impacts the quality of students' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Prediction 2: Participation in the reflection session will increase the quality of students' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Further inquiry on independent variables of *gender* and *region*. Two independent variables of *gender* (male, female) and *region* (Europe and U.S.) were added in order to determine whether there were any significant differences based on these traits. For example, it was expected that the impact of the reflection session on students' perceived identification, reflection, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad will not differ between women and men nor between U.S. and European students, nor in their ability to write about their skill development. The General Linear Model (GLM) provided data on the significance of any of these variables in an initial omnibus test; any α -values that met the < 0.05 value used in this study was further analyzed in post hoc tests to determine the effect.

Theoretical Foundation

The numerous theoretical propositions of this research are detailed in the Literature Review, but the basic theories underlying this study are overviewed here; they focus on the characteristics of transformative experiences, the nature and impact of critical reflection and

theories related to knowing oneself, especially with regard to ones' strengths, skills, vocational interests and career development.

Transformative experiences are powerful, precisely because of the new and challenging situations the learner encounters. Mezirow's *Transformative Learning Theory* (1991) points to "disorienting dilemmas" which initially result in overwhelming the learner's ability to put it into words. This inability to articulate the experience is commonly witnessed by those (e.g., the facilitators in this study) working in higher education with students returning from study abroad. As well, with the nature of studying being highly experiential, many students report the greatest learning was outside of the formal academic program. Mezirow explains that transformative experiences require careful processing to make sense of what was learned.

Critical reflection is a required exercise to give meaning to one's experiences. Looking back nearly a hundred years to Dewey (1933), he stressed the importance of allowing learners to experience a "state of perplexity, hesitation, [and] doubt" (p. 10); for Dewey, in fact, the process of reflection generates new knowledge. Brookfield (1987) also notes that "inner discomforts" are central to the process of self-reflection; this applies aptly to a reflection process about one's time abroad. Many of the stories students tell about building skills abroad are based on problems, mistakes and misunderstandings that may require some humility and sincerity in order to recall them, assign meaning and share with others.

Another underlying theory in this research centers on the role of the session facilitators: Boud and Walker (1998) establish that reflection is more than just thinking, and that it must focus on oneself. The facilitator must assist students in their learning and this means asking questions that are not neutral nor too intrusive and allowing emotion into the process. For

example, it is acceptable for a student to explain that he/she found something difficult or challenging when offering an example of building a skill.

An important theory about human maturation by Laske (2006) claims that while interaction with others promotes development, an external push is ultimately needed for individuals to continue growing and developing (and that without this push, humans remain static). The critical reflection process in this research is indeed intended to push students and to introduce them to a process they would not likely seek out on their own. Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy – the belief one has in oneself impacts the likelihood of being successful – also provides an important foundation for this research.

Super's (1995) life-long developmental framework with stages titled *growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance/management, and disengagement* proposes that from the ages of 15-24, the exploration stage takes place in which one of the important tasks is *crystallization*, which is acquiring an understanding of one's interests, skills, and values, and to identifying career goals in alignment. A number of career development theorists purport this self-assessment of one's interests and skills as the starting point in the process (Gersch, 2002). It is this identification of transferable skills that this research examines.

Nature of the Study

This research uses a mixed-methods approach in assessing a post-return reflection process offered to U.S. and European students who have spent at least one semester studying or interning abroad as part of their undergraduate degree program. By using both quantitative (Likert Scale) questions and an open-ended question in which students describe how and where they developed a skill while studying abroad, a more robust examination of the impact of the reflection session can be conducted. Session participants completed both a pre- and post-session

survey; a control group consisting of students who had studied abroad but did not participate in sessions completed surveys containing the same questions.

The intervention session follows an operationalized process guided by a trained facilitator using the student workbook and includes: an introduction by the facilitator, some “warm-up” questions, a self-assessment exercise, a skills checklist, paired mock interviews, the facilitator modeling how to build stories (examples), and the participants following that example – first sharing in pairs, and then finally, sharing their stories with the large group. All of the reflection sessions (and the accompanying materials) were conducted in English in both the United States and Europe (note that the session was targeted to students with sufficient English proficiency in non-English-speaking countries).

The dependent variables include the outcomes of the student session: the Likert scores that report their level of articulating and identifying their skills, their level of confidence and preparation in anticipation of a job interview, and their formulation of a story that provides an example of their skill. Demographic data, as well as features of the study abroad program (or internship experience abroad), was also collected. This data helps determine the representative nature of the participants and control group against nationally-reported data and provides a detailed profile of the sample population.

Demographic Information

- Age
- Gender
- University status (class year) while abroad
- Academic major
- Previous travel abroad
- Indication if international student at home university

- Indication if immigrant to country of permanent residency
- Socio-Economic Status (based on Barratt’s SES scale)

Program Abroad Information

- Host country
- Number of weeks abroad

- If studied abroad more than once as an undergraduate
- Primary living accommodation
- Nature of academic coursework (if with other international students or in regular university system)
- Language of instruction or internship
- Engagement abroad: volunteer or community service, travel, involvement in student clubs/organization

Dependent Variable #1: Assessment of the Impact of the Session on Students

The survey data will be analyzed for impact of the reflection process on student as indicated by their response to a seven-point Likert scale of agreement on these four questions:

1. *I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace.* (Reflection)

2. *I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation.* (Identification)

3. *I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad.* (Confidence)

4. *I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers.* (Preparation)

The responses to these questions compose the dependent variables that compose the four parts, or dimensions, of what will be called the assessment measure in this study.

Dependent Variable #2: Students' Stories about Skill Development Resulting From Study Abroad

The responses students provide to an open-ended question will offer examples to support the students' claims of skill development and indicate for example, whether there are common themes in the self-assessments between and among U.S. and European students (e.g., reporting a gain independence or having learned how to shift perspectives) and whether there are certain

program components cited by students as being opportune for skill-building (e.g., homestays promote language skills, etc.). The question reads:

Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

The responses to this question will first be analyzed for quality and assigned a numeric score (based on a 5-level rubric which establishes the evaluation criteria and assigns a single holistic rating). The data will be quantitatively analyzed to determine if the students who participated in the reflection report that they have greater self-knowledge and perceive that they are better prepared to speak to their skills in the job search (especially in interviews) by having specific examples of having demonstrated these skills.

Definitions

Definitions of frequently-referred to terms in this study are offered for clarification:

Career Development – “The process of learning and improving your skills so that you can do your job better and progress to better jobs” (“Career Development,” 2018, para. 1).

Critical Reflection/Self-Reflection – The activity of examining one’s experiences to include thoughtful analysis, including affective to give meaning to one’s experiences.

Education Abroad – May refer to the profession, policy, or practice of international student mobility, to include all forms of academic programming abroad (service-learning, internships, etc.). May also be used interchangeably with *study abroad*.

Employability – Understood to be “a broad range of skills and competencies necessary to function in a working environment and to enable one to succeed in the workplace” (European Impact Study, 2014, p. 29).

Hard Skills – A developed aptitude or ability, such as language skills (“Skill,” 2018, para 1). Especially in the context of employability, the term *hard skills* refers to specific skills, such as knowing word processing (e.g., Microsoft Office programs), accounting, or computer programming.

Learning Abroad – A general term that comprises academic study, internship or volunteer/service learning. In this study, *learning abroad* is used to reference any of the above which are part of the students’ degree program.

Learning Outcomes – 1) The knowledge, skills, and abilities an individual student possesses and can demonstrate upon completion of a learning experience or sequence of learning experiences (for example, in courses, degrees, education abroad programs). In an education abroad context, learning outcomes may include language acquisition, cross-cultural competence, discipline-specific knowledge, and research skills. 2) Advance statements about what students ought to understand or be able to do as a result of a learning experience (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2011, p. 36).

Self-Awareness – Self-awareness is “knowledge and awareness of your own personality or character” (Merriam-Webster.com, 2018)

Soft Skills – A term used to describe skills that have relevance across all job sectors and positions; in this paper, the term *transferable skills* is used in place of *soft skills*.

Study Abroad – For the purpose of this study, *study abroad* refers to an academic term abroad, either bearing academic credit or required as a course of study. It includes internships or service-learning programs which are part of the academic degree requirements towards graduation.

Transferable Skills – “Skills used in one job or career that can also be used in another” (“Transferable Skills,” 2018, para. 1). Examples: problem-solving, empathy and respect, flexibility/adaptability, time management.

Assumptions

This research is based on the assumption of the validity of numerous studies demonstrating that study abroad has an impact on students’ personal development, intercultural competence and transferable skills. It also assumes sufficient validity of students’ self-reporting. Common limitations to self-report surveys include social desirability bias – when respondents wish to show that they have positive traits – and reference bias, which may occur when each respondent is required to conjure up a definition of, for example, being well-prepared for an interview (Brookings Institute, 2017).

There is an assumption that the reflection process is beneficial in students gaining greater self-awareness; it supposes that students who have not undergone the reflection sessions (the control group) may not respond with the same quality of responses to the open-ended question (as in the post-survey for participants), however this may not be the outcome of the study. While the reflection process will encourage students to offer a fair and honest assessment of their skill levels, there is the potential that they may either under- or over-estimate their abilities.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on undergraduates in higher-education in the United States and in Europe who spent at least one semester studying or interning in another country as part of their degree program. The U.S. participants had returned from a semester abroad, representing a variety of majors and program sites, from institutions that varied by type, location, and size. It was determined that focusing on participants returning from at least one semester (or academic

year) abroad would allow for a controlled point of comparison in isolating the variables for each hypothesis.

The participants in both the sessions and control group were asked if they had previously attended a session where they learned how to identify skills they developed abroad and talk about them in ways that employers will appreciate. If they indicated in the affirmative, they were eliminated from the data set. But because students had participated in a range of programs types including study, internships and service-learning, it may be that self-reflection was a component woven in to some of their academic programs. There was however, no question to control for the degree to which self-reflection may have been a component woven into students' programs.

The initial target was a minimum of 100 students to participate in the reflection sessions in both the U.S. and Western Europe (200 total). A total of 251 students attended sessions across the U.S. and Europe. The final number of session participants with usable records in this study was 107 in the United States and 85 in Western Europe (Italy, The Netherlands, Croatia, Russia, and Scotland). A sample of students who studied abroad but did not participate in sessions formed the control group, in which the U.S. respondents numbered 76 and the Europeans 22.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this research related to its design, and efforts were made to address them. This study focused on U.S. and European students, which provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the populations of the two regions. However, it is also narrow in its focus with only selected Western, developed nations involved. The findings of the study cannot be generalized across U.S. or European students, as the sample may not be wholly representative of the two populations. This research was intended to be exploratory to reveal factors that could serve as the basis for future studies on this topic. As highlighted in this study,

there is a great deal to synthesize from the participation of the students in sessions such as those conducted in this study.

While thorough training of the facilitators took place to standardize the sessions' delivery, different personalities may impact the student participants. For example, some groups may be highly participatory and talkative while others may not engage as much. This may have an impact on the reflection process and the results the students offer, especially the thoughtfulness put into the examples they share verbally and on the written survey. Conducting a uniform set of exercises is the constant, yet it is not possible to eliminate the differences resulting from differing personalities in the ensuing discussions. Cultural differences between U.S. and European facilitators (and among each group as well) may also impact the delivery of the sessions.

Experienced facilitators may be more comfortable pushing students to examine their experience and have other students in the room help them identify the various skills that they displayed abroad, especially when facing a crisis or challenge. Despite considerable steps to standardize the sessions (one workbook, same agenda, identical sequencing of activities, etc.), the degree of prodding students for further meaning of their stories may vary by facilitator and play a significant role in helping students understand how to talk about their experiences. Discussions among the facilitators confirmed their intentions to coach students to be honest, realistic and accurate. All noted that it is a significant developmental step for college undergraduates to grasp the connection from experience into articulating transferable skills. This points to the highly-ambitious aspect of this study as it focuses on helping students make a major developmental shift.

The literature review in the next chapter establishes both the larger context for this study – e.g., the objectives of higher education and student mobility with regard to student outcomes, and specifically employability and transferable skills, as well as the theories surrounding the experience of the individual in studying abroad – e.g., self-awareness, nature of transformative experiences, and the ability to reflect and make meaning of one’s experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This project is framed by several broad themes of knowledge which will inform my research question related to the skill development reported by students returning from studying abroad. First, the historical context in which the perceived benefits of study abroad have evolved in the past century in the United States and Europe will be presented. This evolution is important in understanding the current definitions and prominent theoretical models of intercultural competence, as well as the concept of global citizenship. These two constructs are frequently used to establish student learning outcomes in education abroad and assessing its impact. The student learning outcomes resulting from study abroad are being recognized not only for their value in crossing cultures but for their relevance in diverse workplace settings as well.

Another relevant area of research encompasses impact studies focused on outcomes of study abroad participants in the areas of academic, personal, social, intercultural and career development – especially with regard to employability and career trajectory – and support the argument for higher education to make international student mobility a priority.

There is also important literature on the dialogue between higher education and employers about who has responsibility for developing and managing students' employability. Employers' perceptions of the value and benefits of an international experience is inconsistent. The literature on these gaps between employers' and students' regard for the value of an international experience highlight an underlying issue in the field; this project seeks to contribute to its resolution.

Given that the goal of this study is to assess a process of self-reflection designed to promote the recognition and articulation of one's skills, a review of critical reflection and

learning styles is warranted. Transformative experiences are complex and require careful thought to find meaning (or “identify meaning.”). Critical reflection theory supports the hypothesis that participating in this process increases one’s self-awareness – thus, in this case, boosting one’s ability to recognize his/her own skills. An overview of prominent career development theories and models helps explain the point where students may be in their lives as they prepare for the transition to the workplace. Helping students to speak about the transferable skills that resulted from learning abroad helps solidify the value of student mobility as a critical component of higher education internationalization. It also demonstrates the value of learning abroad to the 21st-century workplace. Note that as listed in the definitions in the Introduction (Chapter 1), the term *transferable skills* refers to “skills used in one job or career that can also be used in another” (“Transferable Skills,” 2018, para. 1) such as problem-solving, flexibility/ adaptability and time management. This term may be considered to replace the term *soft skills* in this study.

This review is based primarily on literature from the United States and Western Europe – where the participants for this study reside – along with a few inclusions from other regions (Australia and Hong Kong). The literature across topics is from within the past five to ten years except for works which retain their historical importance or continue to be recognized for their relevance.

Relationship to Existing Literature

Several bodies of literature informed the research question of this study. First, the perceived benefits of study abroad will be overviewed, as they have evolved in the past century. The theoretical concept of intercultural competence and the construct of Global Citizenship are important in linking intercultural skills and a broadened mindset to success in the workplace (de Wit, 2012; Green, 2012). Impact studies that document the outcomes of study abroad participants

in the areas of academic, personal, social, intercultural, and career development will be examined – especially with regard to employability and career trajectory – and will support the argument for higher education to give high priority to student mobility. There are also surveys in which employers indicate their top desired skills of recent graduates and their perception of the value of an international experience to offer a complementary – or ‘other half of the equation’ – view to what students report (British Council, 2013; EC, 2014; Hart Research Associates, 2015; Molony, Sowter, & Potts, 2011).

Several studies reveal gaps in the perception of skills, abilities and communication between recent university graduates and employers. Examining these gaps is important to the central research questions of this study. For example, the Finnish study *Hidden Competences* published by the Center for International Mobility (CIMO, 2017) shows that employers do value international experience to a degree. What they really value, though, is a set of transferable skills – and where the student acquired the skills is not as important as possessing them. Another U.S. study commissioned by the AAC&U, indicates that employers give study abroad low priority as experience – yet they do indicate a value in the skills that can result from study abroad (Hart Research Associates, 2015).

Given the goal of this study to assess the value of students’ reflection on their acquired skills, to articulate them to potential employers and put them to work in their careers, a review of critical reflection and learning styles/learning processes is warranted (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Dewey, 1933; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990; Schön, 1984) along with an overview of prominent career development models.

An Historical Context of Study Abroad

The Twentieth Century. A historical perspective of how study abroad has been regarded over the past century is important in examining how growing interest is connecting it to the development of career skills. There is an evolution of the predominant viewpoints on the benefits of the experience that help us understand the current view – especially prevalent in the United States and Europe – on the value of investing in student mobility to increase employability.

As the first institutionally-sponsored educational tours of Europe were offered to U.S. students in the late-Nineteenth century, the goals were primarily linguistic, cross-cultural and developmental (Hoffa, 2007). In *A History of U.S. Study Abroad: Beginnings to 1965*, Hoffa explains that Post-World War I, the Junior Year Abroad (JYA) and faculty-led study tours became the predominant program types that aligned with the goals of a liberal arts education. Then, with the establishment of an academic credit system, the emergence of general education requirements and residence hall communities, the growing concern for holistic student development became solidified in the higher education system (Lucas, 2006). This new approach, along with other factors such as a growing middle class and efforts to foster peace and understanding, led to a growing student interest in study abroad (Hoffa, 2007).

Hoffa (2007) claims that as the number of students continued to grow in this post-war period, and as international education professionals developed their own curiosity and expertise, their focus moved beyond travel logistics. Student mobility in Europe grew in this same period, and a new level of cooperation was established with the adoption of the Erasmus Programme by the European Commission in 1987 with seven member nations (EC, 2018, para. 4). It currently involves students in 37 nations and has had over three million participants since its inception (EC, 2015, p. 4).

In the late part of the 20th century, the concept of intercultural competence emerged and became a fundamental objective of higher education internationalization (de Wit, 2002). Prominent theorists such as Deardorff (2006), Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) and L. Braskamp, Braskamp, Merrill and Engberg (2008) and L. Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill (2009) offered conceptual frameworks and developmental models for intercultural growth (see section on intercultural competence).

The Turn of the Century. As the 21st century arrived, student learning outcomes became a specific intention of program design (Engle & Engle, 2003, 2004; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Sutton & Rubin, 2004), formal assessment was conducted, and a body of research documented the transformative nature of the student experience (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). In this same period, Jones (2013) points to the recognition of study abroad building students' employability, with this notion supported among many countries, across academic disciplines and in a multitude of work sectors.

With the IIE's *Open Doors* report (2018, sec. U.S. Study Abroad Data) citing that 332,727 U.S. students studied abroad in 2016-2017 and the EC (2018) reporting that in recent years, approximately 300,000 students participate in the Erasmus scheme annually (i.e., studied, trained or volunteered in one of the 37 Erasmus nations) -- bringing the total since the inception of Erasmus in 1987 to over three million by 2017 -- this research holds continued importance for the future of higher education internationalization.

Intercultural Competence – Definitions, Models and Applicability to Workplace

An examination of the definitions and theoretical models of intercultural competence is important to understand its place among the goals of higher education internationalization and its

relation to employability. Here, the body of literature on the expanding definition of intercultural competence, concentrating mostly on Western theorists will be reviewed.

Evolution of the definition. Over the past half-century, a considerable amount of scholarly work has been devoted to this concept and related terms. A number of early researchers in intercultural communication examined the required components for human communication (e.g., a sender and a receiver), categorized the different elements of communication (such as verbal/non-verbal) and highlighted where both explicit behaviors (for example, differences among culturally-acceptable distances in conversations) and discreet cultural differences (such as underlying values and beliefs) may impact the process (Barnlund, 1988; Hall, 1976; Kim, 1988; Porter & Samovar, 1988). The body of intercultural theory further developed into recognizing which traits and processes contributed to effective intercultural communication (Martin & Hammer, 1989; Ruben, 1976; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishhida, 1989).

The concept further progressed from a list of skills to a state of mind, such as inquisitiveness, which promotes continuous learning as a key trait of competence (J.M. Bennett, 2008) and cognitive complexity, which affords people the ability to “make connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information” (Inkson & Kerr, 2009, p. 155). Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) distinguish intercultural sensitivity from intercultural competence in that sensitivity is mostly cognitive while competence extends to encompasses behavioral abilities as well – “to think and act in intercultural ways.” (p. 422). Additional research stresses this importance on behavior as an essential element in defining competence as well (Bok, 2006).

According to Deardorff (2006), the acquisition of intercultural competence is generally defined as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations

based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (p. 247). Deardorff (2006) offered the first research-based definition and framework of intercultural competence after gathering information from fellow interculturalists, trainers and scholars in the United States, Canada, and the U.K. She synthesized the nearly 300 factors offered by her colleagues (and of which they agreed on 44) into 20 concise features using the Delphi method. She concludes that intercultural competence is a dynamic and ongoing process for the individual that needs intentional facilitation and intervention, and that the developmental process itself is as important as the outcome.

J. Bennett (2008) offers a defining set of core competencies: a blend of cognitive dimensions (mindset) that includes both a culture-general framework that can be useful in making sense of differences as well as culture-specific knowledge, but most importantly cultural self-awareness; a behavioral dimension (skill set) that includes such things as empathy, adaptation, resolving conflicts and managing social interactions; and the affective dimension (heart set) which encompasses traits such as curiosity, initiative, cognitive flexibility and suspension of judgment (pp. 18-21).

Prominent models of intercultural competence. A prominent model of intercultural sensitivity, initially introduced by M. Bennett (1986), is one of the only which is developmental and maps progression (versus a list of traits). Bennett has significantly influenced how other scholars regard the construct of intercultural competence; in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), one's response to cultural difference – making meaning of and accepting them – is the basis of ability. The DMIS offers three preliminary – and considered ethnocentric (or monocultural) – stages: denial, defense, and minimization [of cultural difference]. Development then may proceed to ethnorelative (or multicultural) stages of

acceptance, adaptation and finally, integration. The DMIS is premised on humans being naturally suspect of difference. Progression along the developmental continuum requires intentional effort and often an “intervention”, such as a facilitator or cultural mentor. While in real life the development process is not linear nor always forward-moving, the model is illustrated as a continuum from the ethnocentric stages to the ethnorelative stages. The Denial stage describes a person who does not acknowledge or consider the existence of cultural difference. Defense is a mindset of ‘us/them’ with the other perceived as lesser and/or threatening. The final ethnocentric stage is Minimization, in which commonalities across humanity are more important than any differences; it is a ‘safe’ mindset. The leap from Minimization to Acceptance is significant, as it benchmarks a transition to what Bennett calls ethnorelativism. Beyond the stage of Acceptance – where one acknowledges that differences are legitimate and agreeable – one enters the stage of Adaptation and behaves in appropriate ways. In the final phase called Integration, the individual’s identity has combined patterns from across cultures and is socially at ease.

Another significant theorist is Byram in the U.K., who believing that intercultural learning should be a primary objective of language instruction, proposes *critical cultural awareness* as the core area of competence, with four additional skill areas, also referred to as *Les Savoirs* (Byram, 1997) :

- Knowledge (*Les Savoirs*): knowing of self and other, of interaction at both the individual and societal level.
- Attitudes (*Savoir être*): seeing value in both oneself and in others; curiosity, openness.
- Skills of interpreting and relating (*Savoir comprendre*): the ability to interpret information from another culture and compare/relate it to one’s own.
- Skills of discovery and interaction (*Savoir apprendre*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and ability to behave with appropriate cultural practices

- Critical cultural awareness (*Savoir s'engager*): an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (p. 34).

In making a brief but important comparison of Bennett (Hammer et al., 2003) and Byram (1997), Garrett-Rucks (2014) observed in the discourse from her French language students that because Byram's model requires broad skills development, it considers the ability to have a critical perspective on one's own culture as a positive trait whereas in Bennett's model, to denigrate one's own culture is a sign of ethnocentrism. She also observed that Byram's model accounts for curiosity as a positive trait whereas Bennett's DMIS does not take this trait into consideration. She also found that Bennett's model could not make careful sense of inconsistent levels of comments (made by the same student) – for example, some that were considered ethnocentric and some that were considered ethnorelative. Therefore, Garrett-Rucks finds contradictions in the linear progression of Bennett's DMIS.

Intercultural skills as learning outcomes. The VALUE rubrics (Rhodes, 2010) published by AAC&U propose progressive stages of intercultural development across several related skills. These rubrics have relevance in this study as they were used as a model on which to establish the rubrics used by the raters in this study to assess the open-ended survey responses. For example, the AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric offers criteria to assess students' cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication, curiosity and openness. The levels are informed in part by Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (AAC&U, 2009). While the AAC&U rubrics are intended for use in "evaluating and discussing student learning," rubrics should contain four essential features (Stevens & Levi, cited in Center for Teaching & Learning, UC Berkeley, 2016):

1. A task description or a descriptive title of the task students are expected to produce or perform;
2. A scale (and scoring) that describes the level of mastery (e.g., exceed expectation, meets expectation, doesn't meet expectation);
3. Components/dimensions students are to attend to in completing the assignment/tasks (e.g., types of skills, knowledge, etc.); and
4. Description of the performance quality (performance descriptor) of the components/dimensions at each level of mastery (para. 2).

Further discussion on the use of rubrics in this study is addressed in the Chapter 3: Methods.

Assessment. Intercultural competence is often used in the United States as a pre- and post-experience measure by which to identify change or difference resulting from learning abroad. Assessment may be conducted through academic coursework, student self-report and written self-reflection in various forms, interviews, and longitudinal studies. Instruments have been developed by which pre-departure and post-return tests are administered to students who have studied abroad. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) offer a review of more than 300 conceptual frameworks, categorizing them into typologies by approach. For many of these conceptualizations, a survey instrument was developed to assess the validity of the construct. Among the commonly-used instruments in the United States are the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003), the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) (L. Braskamp et al., 2008); the Belief, Events & Values Inventory (BEVI) (Shealy, 2018); and the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Index (CCAI) (Kelley & Meyers, 1999). There is concern that these type of self-reporting instruments provide only half of the equation as they provide only the (self-reported) perspective of the respondents and not that of those with whom they were interacting in the host

culture. As Deardorff (2011) explains, having members of the host culture assess our effectiveness from their perspective would be ideal (p. 75).

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) report that many of these conceptual frameworks identify similar core components to guide their explanation of competence. They can be grouped as follows: *motivation* (affective, emotion), *knowledge* (cognitive), *skills* (behavioral, actional), *context* (situation, environment, culture, relationship, function) and *outcomes* (e.g., perceived appropriateness, perceived effectiveness, satisfaction, understanding, attraction, intimacy, assimilation, task achievement) (p. 7). They believe that a common definition would serve to facilitate the development of tools and methodologies to measure the construct and test its validity while noting that adaptability seems implicitly or explicitly central to nearly all the models they reviewed.

Applying intercultural competence. A key application of intercultural competence is the ability to apply the effective knowledge and behaviors across more than just one other culture different from one's own. As Jones (2013) claims, intercultural competence "is not about specific knowledge of a single culture, but means operating effectively across cultures and challenging our own values, assumptions and stereotypes" (p. 3). Indeed, this ability to apply a learned process is essential; by knowing where differences exist across all cultures enables one to identify, explain and navigate through them. This supports Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) definition of adaptability as context-independent – that "different behaviors and skills are applied in different contexts and situations" (p. 90).

Inkson and Kerr (2009) describe an iterative process of developing cultural intelligence that aligns with an ability to apply knowledge from past experiences to future cultural encounters; it demonstrates the need for personal reflection in order to acquire the skills. We first

acquire knowledge, especially from the kind of learning that takes place from social interactions. From those encounters, we must be mindful of the differences and different cues in other cultures to build a bank of knowledge, which grows over time. That mindfulness (reflection) is what allows us to acquire the appropriate behaviors (skills) that we can transfer in other settings. An important point made by Inkson and Kerr is that “improving your [cultural intelligence] takes time, and you must be motivated to do it” (p. 157). This iterative model, in which one builds on the learning from previous interaction to improve for the future is a key foundation to the reflection process related to this study. A definition of cultural intelligence proposed by Asser and Langbein-Park (2015) explains that “CQ” is a combination of intelligence quotient (IQ), physical quotient (PQ) and emotional quotient (EQ) – thus aligning with other definitions which also encompass cognitive, affective and behavioral components.

Intercultural competence in the workplace. The desire for intercultural competence in the workplace may be the force that ultimately links the benefits of learning abroad to employability. Hofstede (cited in EC, 2014) claims that intercultural competence is “an important strategy for preparing students to live and work within a globalized and complex world” (p. 62). Indeed, as the *Erasmus Impact Study* (EC, 2014) points out: “Social and intercultural competences are therefore an attribute of increasing relevance to educational policies and are also a deciding factor in the selection of new employees” (p. 62).

The importance of intercultural competence in both global and domestic contexts is well recognized by Hammer et al. (2003) who claim that the “ability to engage in effective interaction across cultures is a core capability of the 21st century” (p. 213). Jones (2013) claims that “inter-cultural does not simply mean inter-national” while Jones and Killick (2007) point out that “responding to the diversity of international students and responding to the diversity of home

students are in fact not two agendas but one” (p. 110). Indeed, intercultural skills are not only needed across international borders but in diverse domestic settings throughout many countries of the world.

UNESCO (2013) addresses intercultural competence as a new form of literacy and an essential complement to basic human rights. The UNESCO publication states “Acquiring intercultural competences is a thrilling challenge since no one is, naturally, called upon to understand the values of others. This challenge is a unique opportunity in the history of humankind” (p. 5). This idea of expanding one’s mind and trying to understand the other leads to a discussion about global citizenship.

Global Citizenship, Skills for the 21st Century

The concept of global citizenship. The literature on the notion of globalization – living and working in a world quickly increasing in cultural diversity and intercultural encounters – has an important place in the dialogue on the need for intercultural competence as part of one’s employability. (With reference to the workplace: 21st-century workplace, global economy or global workforce are among the terms used). For some, global citizenship is a mindset to be attained and nurtured by way of experiences and education, and a compelling reason to thus increase student mobility (Tarrant, 2010; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2013). A recognition of interdependence among people and nations drives Rhoads and Szelényi (2011) to support redefining and expanding the notion of citizenship to the global context. In the United Kingdom, Bourn (2010) offers that the term global citizenship is often used but still open to debate and refinement:

‘Being a global citizen’ . . . could mean equipping students to be effective graduates in the global economy, to understand the complex world in which they will be living and

working. But it could also link to a process of learning, making sense of the world. It also relates to being informed social activists (p. 27).

In the United States, Green (2012) claims that “it is useful to consider the term global citizenship as shorthand for the habits of mind and complex learning associated with global education” (p. 1). She defines the primary features of global citizenship – while relying on the previous works of Schattle (2007) – as:

- A choice and a way of thinking: exercised primarily at home, through engagement in global issues or with different cultures in a local setting. For others, global citizenship means firsthand experience with different countries, peoples, and cultures. For most, there exists a connection between the global and the local. Whatever an individual's particular "take" on global citizenship may be, that person makes a choice in whether or how to practice it.
- Self-awareness and awareness of others
- Practice of cultural empathy
- The cultivation of principled decision-making
- Participation in the social and political life of one's community (pp. 2-3).

Green’s definition encompasses the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains. This is an important point to remember as students learn to speak about the skills they developed studying abroad. Anecdotes that incorporate all three of these dimensions help the listener understand the full meaning of the example or story being told.

Differing perspectives of the term. The construct of global citizenship is not without its critics, including charges that it is an exaggerated and misplaced term (Woolf, 2010), that it is mostly a product of the Northern and Western hemispheres of the world (thus of the developed

world) which renders it ineffective unless it addresses racism and white privilege (Andreotti & DeSouza, 2014). Additional critics find that it is too abstract (L. Davies, 2006), as well as that it is too individualistic a mindset since "the majority of the world experiences social and communal life not in terms of isolated individuals, but as collective identities and traditions" (Dill, 2013, p. 113). However, when global citizenship is figuratively understood as a mindset which recognizes that the implications of one's behavior may have an impact beyond geopolitical borders, or that other cultures may be encountered within one's local community, its tenets are generally supported by higher education internationalization. This approach contributes to the argument that a global mindset supports the development of intercultural skills that may be applied in both domestic and international settings (de Wit, 2012; Green, 2012).

Global citizenship education. The importance of global citizenship has been examined across a multitude of academic disciplines due to increasing diversity worldwide. It is often noted that such diversity requires a different set of skills to communicate and make progress and succeed, especially in the workplace. Yet sometimes it appears that the fundamental reason for the need to adapt in diverse settings gets lost or is not explicitly communicated. It is generally agreed that the world is changing at a pace never seen before in human history, but what are the specific factors requiring a 'global skillset' or a 'broadened perspective'? A report by the American Council on Education (2011) stated:

Today, colleges and universities are asked to prepare tomorrow's citizens not for a single career but for a life of unpredictable velocity and volatility. Simultaneously, they are asked to produce graduates who are capable of communication across borders and citizens who are invested with the capacity to navigate a transparent, permeable world (p. 6).

There is considerable complexity in expecting graduates to blend the discipline-specific knowledge they have acquired with more implicit knowledge such as social norms, values, and cultural appropriateness.

A changing, complex world. Harvard professor Robert Kegan's (1982) model of emerging adulthood points to the ability to define both our own values as well as those of the environment – and how those interface – as one benchmark of maturity. Kegan has also written about why the current complexity of the world demands a new and different skill set in the book *In Over Our Heads* (1998). He claims that we all play several different roles in our lives and we continually confront a wide range of conflicting expectations and demands. This is compounded by the broad spectrum of information and expert opinions so easily accessible to us and leading to confusion. Because of this overload of information, Kegan explains that we face an environment never before experienced.

Theories of stage development point to the fact that human maturation is neither even-paced nor predictable (Stuart, 2012). If the world is becoming more complex and requiring a new and expanded skills set – yet people are not likely to further their own development without an external push – how will we adapt? Laske's (2006) model of maturing into adulthood points out that the normal process of socialization pushes people to a certain point of development, but without further external push they will remain static. The outcome is fewer connections, less consideration for others and undeveloped collaborative skills.

Just as researchers such as Engle and Engle (2004) and Paige and Vande Berg (2012) recommend intervention to increase students' intercultural growth, Stuart (2012) explains that student development theory must be a consideration in working with students who study abroad, as some type of structure is required to manage transformation and change. This research project

promotes critical reflection to push students to identify both the skills they may possess, as well as those they may still need to acquire. This assumption of an external push has relevance to this project: there is a value in pushing emerging adults to take time to think about what their current transferable skills are, which ones are key to their intended career path, and which ones need further attention to help them accomplish their career objectives.

Higher Education and Employability

Student employability has not always been a primary objective of higher education but is becoming a more pressing priority in many countries around the world. While arguments exist around the importance of maintaining an appreciation for the fundamental value of learning (and not allowing it to become a business commodity) (Edmundson, 2013), the practical need for an education to have economic value is a reality in a fast-changing world. In this section, the review of the literature points to an increase in employability as an objective of higher education, focusing on the United States and Western Europe with some global trends as well.

Employability as an objective of HEI's. Matherly and Tillman (2015) explain that the massification of higher education in the last half of the 20th century combined with the changing/growing needs of the labor market have secured employability as a desirable outcome for higher education (pp. 282-283). They also point to a 2013 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, as cited in Matherly and Tillman, 2015) which shows that around the world, “employment rates are highest among higher education graduates, and graduates tend to earn relatively high salaries with stable employment conditions” (p. 283). The OECD report goes on to show that the need for jobs with higher skill levels continues to grow, while lower-level skill positions are decreasing. Another OECD report (2016) on the anticipation of the changing of needed skills explains that automation, globalization and

demographic trends will force such a change in skills that there may be significant shortages of skilled workers, which often leads to declines in productivity and economic expansion. The report recommends proactive measures instead of responsive ones among both higher education and employers.

Changes in the workplace. This idea of a continually-emerging knowledge-based economy was referenced by U.S. President Obama in his farewell speech in January 2017, stating that “economic dislocations” will come from the “relentless pace of automation” of labor (New York Times, 2017). The tension this creates may drive the labor pool into greater disparity of skilled versus unskilled, and not only in the United States. A study published by Oxford University (Frey & Osborne, 2013) predicts that “as technology races ahead, low-skill workers will reallocate to tasks that are non-susceptible to computerisation – i.e., tasks requiring creative and social intelligence.” The study predicts that 47% of today’s jobs will become automated in the next 25 years, and while it may seem counterintuitive, it claims that “to win the race. . . [workers] will have to acquire creative and social skills.”

Skills for the future. Another report entitled *Future Work Skills 2020* (A. Davies, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2016) points to six drivers of change for society: extreme longevity [longer lifespans], rise of smart machines and systems, computational world, new media ecology, superstructured organizations [new technologies driving new forms of production], and a globally-connected world (pp. 3-5). These drivers will set the context for what this study defines as the ten skills needed for the future workplace as:

1. Sense-Making
2. Social Intelligence
3. Novel & Adaptive Thinking

4. Cross-Cultural Competency
5. Computational Thinking
6. New-Media Literacy
7. Transdisciplinarity
8. Design Mindset
9. Cognitive Load Management
10. Virtual Collaboration (pp. 6-7)

While it may seem contradictory in this age of essential and expanded technology skills, according to this study, it appears that many jobs of the future will heavily rely on transferable skills in the domains of communication, creativity, social intelligence, and leadership. This supports the need for students to not only develop transferable skills, but to also develop, identify, articulate and continually self-assess their skills throughout their lifetime. Higher Education cannot ignore the fast pace of change, nor the new skills needed for career competence.

Another projection of the skills that will be most important to employers by 2020 can be found in the *Future of Jobs Report*, published by the World Economic Forum (2016). The top most-valued skills have changed in just five years as follows:

In 2015

1. Complex problem solving
2. Coordinating with others
3. People management
4. Critical thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality control
7. Service orientation
8. Judgment and decision making
9. Active listening
10. Creativity

In 2010:

1. Complex problem solving
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity
4. People management
5. Coordinating with others
6. Emotional intelligence
7. Judgment and decision making
8. Service orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive flexibility (p. 22)

The World Economic Forum report was conducted on a global scale and considers a broad set of drivers that derive these lists. Using the term *Fourth Industrial Revolution* to describe the current state of digital technology and automation, the report cites not only technology but broader socio-economic, geopolitical and demographic trends that impact global employment.

Definitions of employability. While the term employability does not have complete consensus on a specific meaning, the definitions can be sorted into two basic categories when considering it as an objective of higher education. One is based on employment, which is the ability to find, maintain and/or move within the labor market; the other is based on preparing students for industry-specific skills, as well as empowering them with suitable skills.

The terminology has been debated and evolved in recent decades. The Council of the European Union (2012) defined employability as “a combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or enter employment, to stay in employment and to progress throughout their careers” (p. 4). Hillage and Pollard (1998) offer a narrow definition as well in that *employability* means 1) gaining initial employment, 2) maintaining employment, and 3) obtaining new employment if required (“Employability: towards a definition” para 4). Yorke (2006) explains this approach as being concerned with one’s achievement and potential.

Another approach to defining employability broadens beyond knowledge and skills to include more personal traits. Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2010) propose the definition to include “values, intellectual rigour and engagement” (p. 582). Knight and Yorke (2006) offer this definition of employability:

A set of achievements – skills, understandings, and personal attributes” – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (p. 3).

Yorke (2005) builds on this concept of personal or transferable skills as an essential part of employability; these summary points all have relevance to the use of the term in this research:

- The relationship between higher education and the economy is longstanding.
- Employers generally see a graduate's achievements related to the subject discipline as necessary but not sufficient for them to be recruited. In some employment contexts, the actual subject discipline may be relatively unimportant. Achievements outside the boundaries of the discipline (such as the possession of so-called 'soft skills') are generally considered to be important in the recruitment of graduates.
- *Employability* refers to a graduate's achievements and his/her potential to obtain a 'graduate job', and should not be confused with the actual acquisition of a 'graduate job' (which is subject to influences in the environment, a major influence being the state of the economy).
- Employability derives from complex learning and is a concept of wider range than those of 'core' and 'key' skills.
- The 'transferability' of skills is often too easily assumed.
- There is some evidence to suggest that references to employability make the implicit assumption that graduates are young people. The risk is of not considering employability in respect of older graduates, who have the potential to bring a more extensive life-experience to bear.
- Employability is not merely an attribute of the new graduate. It needs to be continuously refreshed throughout a person's working life (pp. 2-3).

Higher Education Internationalization and Employability

One rationale for a university to internationalize is to improve its reputation, quality or global research ranking, while another “revolves around benefits for students of an internationalized education and is primarily concerned with student support, inclusive pedagogy and questions of curriculum. . .” (Jones, 2013, p. 2). As institutions are challenged with making a case to commit the resources to international initiatives and comprehensive internationalization, they seek to assess student outcomes in many ways. There is an underlying assumption that study abroad enhances a student’s education with opportunities not available – or at least not as easily found – on the home campus or in a domestic setting. It is important to examine if and how internationalization – and specifically student mobility – has been considered by HEI’s as a contributor to employability.

The *EIS* (2014) confirms that “the focus on employability in the Erasmus+ programme is strong, as one of its main objectives is to improve the level of competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance to the labour market” (p. 66). The *EIS* claims that:

Internationalization is not a means in itself, but serves the purpose of increasing the quality of teaching, research and social engagement of the respective HEI. It does so by increasing the social and intercultural skills as well as skills and competences in relation to employability of the individuals participating in and benefitting from it (p. 30).

Deardorff and Jones (2012) claim that “intercultural competence development is emerging as a central focus – and outcome – of many internationalization efforts” (p. 283). As Jones (2013) points out further, higher education professional curricula (such as nursing, law, education) have a clear association with future employment, as do business programs and vocation-oriented training curricula such as tourism. However, the association of internationalization efforts to student employability is relatively new which means there are

numerous areas to explore to further build both the research base and practical applications (Fielden, 2007).

A global study on how employers value international study experience published by QS Intelligence Unit (Molony et al., 2011) claims that HEI's

need to be attuned to the needs of the global recruitment market in order to prepare graduates for future workplace demands. As a driver of economic growth, universities and colleges play an important role in understanding global trends and providing teaching and learning opportunities that will support their students in developing the skills and knowledge they need to be future leaders. International education opportunities need to be responsive to global market demand" (p. 20).

Clearly the QS study is implying that skill development should be an inherent aspect of curriculum and instruction, yet without making this explicit, many students may not consciously make the connection from academic learning to workplace skills. If HEI's consider one of their societal responsibilities as preparing students for the workforce, they must help students recognize the rationale for the knowledge and skills imparted to them along the way.

Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2010) offer the idea that universities should strive to instill employability "indirectly, by the promotion of graduate identity and well-being (through the provision of opportunities for functioning) rather than directly through employability skills" (as cited in *EIS*, p. 68). Clearly, this notion of strong personal and interpersonal skills are important in a broader context, yet also pose challenges to instill across all student personality types.

Tomlinson (2012, p. 424) indicates that the dialogue between higher education and employers about whose responsibility it is to provide work-related skills is fraught with confusion and blame (p. 40). While higher education may look to job trends for curricular guidance, it also holds academic freedom as a priority. While these two tensions play out in the

educational realm, employers do look to higher education to include skill development as part of the curriculum. With employability as a major consideration for HEI's today as well as a condition for growth and development for society in general, international experience can be viewed as helping to accomplish educational and societal objectives.

Tomlinson (2012) proposes that while higher education in the United Kingdom has tried to identify the activities most likely to promote the traits of employability, government's attempts have been mostly "supply-side" formulas which simply attempt to produce a higher number of graduates. But Knight and York (2003) explain: "...We need to distance ourselves from assumptions that higher education can rectify labour market problems and from easy beliefs that employers know best. . . Graduate employment rates have little to do with higher education." (p. 22).

Knight and Yorke propose that in looking forward, the solution will require a shift in higher education, instilling transferable skills into the curriculum (2006). They propose a model with the acronym *USEM* for four broad and interrelated components that impact employability, intending to integrate these into the curricula of higher education:

- Understanding – of subject areas
- Skills (Skillful practice in context)
- Efficacy beliefs, students' self-theories and development, and personal qualities.
- Metacognition, encompassing self-awareness regarding the student's learning, and the capacity to reflect on, in and for action (p. 5).

The USEM account serves as a framework for faculty to integrate employability into the curriculum by building on their own research and theory. Another model, built upon USEM but intended to help students and parents understand the notion of employability is Dacre Pool &

Sewell's CareerEDGE model (2007, p. 280). In this schema, the acronym "EDGE" is comprised of Experience in work & life, Degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills, Generic Skills and Emotional Intelligence. From these areas, one engages in reflection and evaluation to examine self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence (p. 285). These three "S's" contribute to defining one's employability. This model's use of reflection and self-assessment aligns well with this research project's approach to working with students.

One example of an HEI implementing integrated programming on skill development is the University of Minnesota (U.S.A.) with a Career Readiness initiative in its College of Liberal Arts (College of Liberal Arts University of Minnesota, 2017). Students are asked to begin thinking about their potential career readiness in a First Year Student program, while the university brings this topic up in its communication with students and via the advising processes (academic and career services). The college's Career Core Competencies are:

- Analytical & Critical Thinking
- Applied Problem Solving
- Ethical Reasoning & Decision Making
- Innovation & Creativity
- Oral & Written Communication
- Teamwork & Leadership
- Engaging Diversity
- Active Citizenship & Community Engagement
- Digital Literacy
- Career Management (para.4)

Faculty are involved in this initiative and make explicit reference to competency development within their course curricula. Students have the option to earn a Career Readiness Certificate by fulfilling certain course and activity requirements (College of Liberal Arts University of Minnesota, 2017). Efforts are underway to have staff trained across administrative divisions – so that, for example, the study abroad advisors discuss these issues with students (T. Dohmen, personal communication, October 10, 2017). Tim Dohmen, program director in the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, explains that Career Readiness is “meant to help ensure that the value of a Liberal Arts education is recognized by employers.” Dohmen reports that staff are working to identify courses abroad that facilitate development of competency, and that career readiness has been added to the curriculum of an online Global Identity course. This type of initiative may be the start of a practice that will be adopted more readily by HEI’s to fully and formally integrate learning abroad with employability.

International education practices and programming on employability. Social and intercultural competencies are desirable student attributes, and higher education internationalization efforts must include these as learning objectives for programming related to student mobility. Some of the earliest research documenting U.S. students reporting on the value of study abroad with relevance to career impact can be found in a 1988 study titled The “Impact of an International Education on College Acceptance and Career Development” conducted by the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS, 1988) on its undergraduate program alumni. Eighty-six percent of 714 respondents indicated that studying abroad was a “worthwhile investment in their future” due to its impact on career performance and salary, college performance or for other reasons; 79% claimed it contributed to their adaptability and flexibility, while 57% considered studying abroad the reason for their knowledge of international markets (AIFS, 1988. p. 8).

A newly-recognized need. In 2010, the Chronicle of Higher Education published an article titled “Study Abroad’s New Focus is Job Skills” (Fischer, 2010) which described how Cheryl Matherly, an associate dean for global education at the University of Tulsa (Oklahoma, U.S.A.) established workshops and seminars – in collaboration between her campus’ study abroad and career offices – to provide students with the tools to “talk about their time overseas in a way that is meaningful to employers” (p. 2). It was reported that a “growing number of career counselors are going abroad, through the Fulbright International Education Administrators Program. . . [as it is] a natural extension of career-services work to [gain international experience in order to] help students put their experiences in terms relevant to employers” (Fischer, p. 6).

Campus-based programming. In the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, extra-curricular programming was introduced in the United States – often crafted by campus-based professionals in study abroad offices – designed for students to examine the benefits of having studied abroad, with many focused on the acquisition of career skills (CIBER, 2013; Gardner, Gross, & Steglitz, 2008; Kepets, 1999; Tillman, 2006). AIFS published a report in 2014 (Tillman, 2014) titled *Campus Best Practices: Supporting Education Abroad & Student Career Development* which offered examples of U.S. campus-based programming to support students in a variety of ways that link employability to study abroad including:

- Cross-training of study abroad and academic advisors designed to have students consider if they seek to have their choice of program abroad include the potential for enhancing their career
- Sessions upon returning to campus that focus on how students might describe study abroad on their resumé

- Student handbooks that offer examples on how to present your international experience in resumés, cover letters, and interviews
- Web pages that overview a process for students to self-reflect and assess their transferable skills as the result of studying abroad.

Recognition of employability by professional organizations. With professional organizations in international education serving as a forum for current issues and new developments to be presented and discussed, their conference programs reveal what topics are considered relevant to the field. A review of programs from the NAFSA: Association of International Educators annual conference (held in the United States in late spring) over the past 25 years reveals sessions on this topic of study abroad and career development in the 1990's into the early 2000's were not abundant, but a small number of sessions such as these were identified in conference programs: *Using Education Abroad to Build Student Competencies* (NAFSA, 1998, p. 55); *Study Abroad and Career Services: Realizing the Potential* (NAFSA, 2001, p. 49), *International Programs and Career Services: Using Education Abroad to Grow Professionally* (NAFSA, 2003, p. 33). More recently, sessions related to study abroad and employability have included *How Employability is Reshaping the Global Higher Education Agenda* (NAFSA, 2016, p. 76), *Faculty role in linking education abroad learning outcomes to employability* (NAFSA, 2017, p. 57), *Realigning goals of education abroad with employability: successes and challenges* (NAFSA, 2019a), and *Translating the student's study abroad experience to enhance employability* (NAFSA, 2019b).

The University of Minnesota (USA) and CAPA International Programs (a U.S. program provider) joined together to offer a conference in July 2014 on the topic of “Career Integration: Reviewing the Impact of Experience Abroad on Employment” (C. Anderson et al., 2014).

Subsequent conferences were offered in July 2016 in Boston (Learning Abroad Center, 2016), and in August 2018 (Learning Abroad Center, 2018) in Washington, D.C., again intended for both campus-based education abroad and career services professionals. At The Forum on Education Abroad's annual conference in April 2016 (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2016), a half-day workshop titled "Building and Designing Career Development into Education Abroad Programming" was offered for the first time and again the following year (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2017). This career-focused programming appears to be increasing on U.S. campuses. Attendance is frequently voluntary, although sometimes incorporated into the formal curriculum. That may include credit-bearing courses designed to span from the pre-departure period, continue while abroad and finish upon returning home (Tillman, 2014).

In Western Europe, careful attention has also been given to the impact of international education on employment, as the advent of the Erasmus Scheme student mobility has increased in recent decades (EC, 2014). Recent conferences of E.U. and non-governmental organizations have taken up the topic, including an issue of Forum magazine by the European Association for International Education ([EAIE] 2012) on [student mobility and] employability. This professional organization has an interest section on employability and it has been a topic of annual conference sessions in recent years. Archived programs for EAIE's annual conferences (EAIE, n.d.) reveal that in 2012 (Dublin) there were several sessions on the topic of employability including *How can career services truly contribute to students' development?*, *Contribution of Erasmus Mundus to Student Employability*, and *Employers and universities go together like a horse and carriage* (EAIE, n.d.). At the 2013 conference in Istanbul, sessions on employability were also offered including *Employability strategies for graduates: challenges, initiatives, and policy solutions*, *Improve the employability of your students*, and *Connecting*

Universities with the Labor Market (EAIE, n.d.). At the 2018 conference in Geneva (EAIE, 2018), Switzerland, the number of sessions addressing study abroad and employability had grown to 14 along with three pre-conference workshops.

Other initiatives have begun in Western Europe as well, including *The Global Mind Monitor* as part of the Global Minds Programme (2017) developed by the Research Centre for International Relationship Management at Zuyd University in The Netherlands. The *Monitor* is used to assess intercultural competences either once-only, pre- and post-event (for example studying or interning abroad), or longitudinally. The questionnaire focuses on these qualities: openness (cultural empathy, open-mindedness); adaptability (flexibility, emotional stability); social initiative; cultural knowledge/meta-knowledge, intercultural behaviour, and cultural motivation. The results are used to inform HEI's about "optimizing the curriculum in order to maximize the international learning outcomes and the international employability potential of their graduates" (Centre for International Relationship Management Zuyd University, 2017, para. 3).

The approach in Western Europe may appear to have been more focused on policy and curriculum compared to the delivery of direct-student programming recently on the rise in the United States. Yet that may be showing signs of change, as there is programming showing intent to not only increase this intersection of academic training and employability but to see that students are knowledgeable about themselves and are prepared to articulate their abilities. The European Centre for Career Development and Entrepreneurship (2018) sponsored a conference titled "Global Connections & International Career Services: Strategic partnerships and tools for a globalized world" in Berlin, Germany in April, 2018 to address strategies and best practices to link student mobility and employability. A private enterprise seeking to assist

graduates is Expertise in Labour Mobility (2017), which partners with HEI's to provide students with self-assessments, training, job data banks (including international), and tips on searching for a job. The Finnish Centre for International Mobility (2017, para. 7) developed a website dedicated to examining skill development from study abroad, including an online quiz to assess skills and a toolkit for students in higher education to recognize intercultural competences.

Promoting student self-awareness regarding employability. In her dissertation titled *Beyond the Bubble: Study Abroad and the Psychosocial and Career Development of Undergraduates*, Chapman (2011) offers guidelines for campus-based programming after examining how study abroad impacts personal and career transformation, and how participation in study abroad contributes to career choices and life goals. After interviews with forty U.S. undergraduates, Chapman sets forth recommendations for effective U.S. campus-based programming. For education abroad professionals, she lists (1) Focusing on the cultural preparation of students, (2) Implementing meaningful experiences across study abroad programs, (3) Providing students with opportunities for reflection and (4) Harnessing study abroad participants' enthusiasm (pp. 269-274).

Regarding opportunities for reflection, Chapman writes: Findings of this study revealed that although participants grew considerably in their personal development while studying abroad, they often lacked true understanding of the meaning of this growth. . . The result was that many participants were unable to clearly articulate the meaningfulness of their study abroad experiences in terms of their personal and career development (pp. 272-273). Chapman also has recommendations for career service professionals to:

- be involved in study abroad orientation;
- help students develop a study abroad career plan;

- make career counseling services available both during and after study abroad; and
- offer career-focused debrief sessions [upon the students' return from abroad] (pp. 276-279).

Chapman recommends that these sessions “should create a space for students to not only reflect upon the value of their experiences, but also the specific application of new knowledge and skills to their future careers” (p. 279).

High-impact practices – higher education and student engagement. Research in the United States points to study abroad as one of the activities defined as a high-impact practice in higher education (Kuh, O’Donnel, & Reed, 2013; Kuh, 2008). Just as study abroad has personal benefits for the student, research suggests that student participation in activities defined as high-impact increases rates of student retention and student engagement for the institution. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2015) explains that High-Impact Practices (HIPs) “represent enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing. They typically demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and other students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback” (p. 1). Examples of HIP’s are first-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, service learning and study abroad. This supports the need for promoting and providing an opportunity for student reflection on the international experience to give meaning to this important component of student engagement. There are two critical features of engagement which contribute to the quality of the collegiate experience. One is the amount of time and effort students put into their academic and extra-curricular activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum to get students to participate (NSSE, 2015). Helping students understand what they have learned, increase their

self-awareness and articulate their skill development related to studying abroad helps reinforce the objectives of higher education internationalization. With the relatively new practice of ePortfolios identified as an HIP, there is research relevant to this dissertation regarding students' ability to write about their skills. ePortfolios can be defined as "a collection of electronic files that demonstrates one's qualifications, abilities, and experiences that are applicable to the workplace" (Leahy & Filiatrault, 2017, p. 217). The results of one study pointed to students having statistically significant higher quality interview skills after they had participated in a process of critical reflection to identify and write about their skills compared to students who received limited or no interventions (Ring & Waugaman, 2017).

Impact Studies: Student Learning Outcomes in Education Abroad

A number of studies over the past decade demonstrate how the transformative experience reported by students— whether from studying, working or volunteering abroad – results in academic, social, personal and intercultural growth (EC, 2014; Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Dwyer, 2004a; Hubbard, Rexeisen, & Watson, 2018; Sutton & Rubin, 2004; VandeBerg, Paige, & Connor-Linton, 2009). In all of these studies, a majority of the respondents perceived their international experience to have socio-psychological and intra- and interpersonal benefits.

There are a number of areas where study abroad has been shown to have a range of positive impacts on students. The GLOSSARI Project (Sutton & Rubin, 2004), involving students across the University of Georgia system, found that study abroad improves knowledge of cultural relativism, global interdependence and world geography. Several different U.S. research projects found students reporting that studying abroad influenced their desire to attain an advanced degree (AIFS, 2012; Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; Dwyer, 2004b).

Several large-scale studies in the United States and Europe have examined the impact of study abroad on student outcomes in areas of personal growth, intercultural development and career preparation including the IIE's study *Gaining an Employment Edge* (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017), *AIFS Study Abroad Alumni Outcomes* (Hubbard et al., 2018), the *IES Abroad Fifty-Year Alumni Survey* (Norris & Gillespie, 2008), the *EIS* (2014) and the *Study Abroad for Global Engagement project* (SAGE) (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josić, & Jon, 2009a) which align in showing that the development of transferable skills is reported by students. In some cases, the benefits are assessed at a meta-level regarding career impact – such as the effect on the chosen field, or ability to obtain employment. There are also outcomes involving important skills for the diverse or “global workplace” focusing on intercultural competence as well as a range of more generally-regarded transferable skills frequently reported as valuable by employers across a breadth of industries. (See section: Employers' Regard for International Experience and Employability, below).

A large study with over 4,500 study abroad participants between 1990 and 2016 was conducted by IIE (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017) to examine the impact of study abroad on employability. The findings indicate that study abroad has a very positive impact on 21st-century job skills, expands one's career possibilities, and has a long-term impact on career path and promotion. In addition, the researchers found that:

- Programs of longer length (semester vs. shorter-term) had a high impact on skill development and job offers.
- Students choosing a less-familiar destination were more likely to report skill development and a sense of career impact.

- Those respondents reporting career development as motivation to study abroad had an overall positive impact in their ability to articulate their skill development and the impact of the experience; they were also more likely to have participated in a highly-structured program (e.g., those that included group projects and the promotion of teamwork and leadership).
- STEM majors who took courses outside of their majors while studying abroad valued the gains made in skill development and 47% reported their study abroad contributed to a job offer (vs. 28% of those who did coursework in their major abroad reported it contributed to a job offer (p. 6).

The *EIS* (EC, 2014) surveyed over 56,000 students who had studied abroad in an Erasmus nation; an international experience was overwhelmingly reported as an essential component to their CV “in an increasingly competitive global employment market” (Fielden, Middlehurst, and Woodfield cited in *EIS*, p. 69). The *EIS* reported that more than 85% of the respondents cited the “wish to enhance employability” as a motivation to study abroad (p. 14). Eighty-one percent of the *EIS* students reported an improvement in their transferable skills upon their return, and in all cases the improvement was greater than they had expected before going abroad (p. 14).

A number of studies have been conducted on students in discipline-specific cohorts, examining the benefits of learning abroad relevant to a preparing for a specific profession such as education (McGaha & Linder, 2012; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Vatalaro, Szente, & Levin, 2015) nursing (Carpenter & Garcia, 2012; Edmonds, 2010; Greatrex-White, 2008), and business (Black & Duhon, 2006; Hallows, Wolf, & Marks, 2011; Orahood, Woolf, & Kruze, 2008; Shaftel, Shaftel, & Ahluwalia, 2007). Other studies identify learning abroad as having positive

impact in securing a first job (Teichler & Janson, 2007), providing a way for graduates to speak about their problem-solving skills (Matherly, 2005), positively impacting vocational identity and career decision-making (Kronholz & Osborn, 2016), as well as affording the graduate some prestige by elevating one's academic status (Brooks & Waters, 2011) and which Varghese (2008) found to be of greater benefit in developing countries.

There is a considerable alignment of the reported outcomes across several large-scale U.S. and European studies. Increases or improvements in traits such as independence, respect for others, empathy, flexibility were commonly reported by returning students (EC, 2014; Dwyer, 2004a; Hubbard et al., 2018; Paige et al., 2009; VandeBerg et al., 2009). Cultural learning – including acquiring knowledge about another culture, as well as increased self-awareness were additional outcomes reported by the majority of students across these same studies.

Reported impact of internships abroad. Several studies that examine the outcomes of completing an internship abroad (in fulfillment of an academic requirement) point to student interns reporting a greater impact from the experience over those who do not intern abroad. Dwyer (2004a) reported that students who completed internships abroad reported greater career development impact over their non-interning peers on factors such as finding a post-graduate job overseas, the likelihood of working for a multinational company, and in it resulting in career planning changes (p. 18). Dwyer also reports that interns indicate a greater likelihood to consider the experience a factor in their subsequent post-return community involvement and maintaining contact with host country friends (over non-interns) (p. 18). Albers-Miller, Sigerstad and Straughan (1999) reported that students who had completed internships abroad were given hiring preference by employers of both multinational and domestic companies over students who

studied abroad, and that internationally-focused companies gave hiring preferences to students who studied abroad over those who did not (p. 71).

Motivation to study abroad. Related to the examination of student outcomes is an examination of students' motivations for studying abroad. Anderson, Hubbard and Lawton (2015) examined the impact of student motivation on intercultural development, which led Anderson and Lawton (2015) to categorize student motivations by world enlightenment, personal growth, career development and entertainment factors. Students rated factors in the category world enlightenment the highest (e.g., "learn about the world," "better understand different cultures"), with personal growth factors (e.g., "increase my self-confidence," "grow as a person") showing the next highest, then career development (e.g., "build my resumé," "gain career skills") followed by entertainment (e.g., "experience the local nightlife," "do some serious partying") which had a significantly lower mean than the other three scales. Another study on motivation (Li, Olson, & Frieze, 2013) concludes that "participants who had high study abroad desire had significantly higher achievement motivation than low study abroad desire participants" (p. 80). Indeed, there may be a self-selection process among those students who choose to study abroad and their determination to achieve and succeed. In a study published by the IIE (2017), authors Farrugia and Sanger report that "[students] Having career prospects in mind prior to choosing to study abroad had an overall positive impact on [students'] ability. . . to articulate their skill development and the impact it had on their career" (p. 6). This finding indicates that integrating elements of career motivation starting with initial advising in the study abroad process holds value in the development of employability. European students reported their motivations for participating in mobility programs abroad in the *EIS* (EC, 2014). The top three reasons were "opportunity to live abroad," "opportunity to learn/improve a foreign

language” and “opportunity to meet new people” (p. 73). The fourth-highest ranked skill was “opportunity to develop soft skills,” and the fifth was “enhance my future employability abroad”. These findings align closely with the responses of U.S. students reported by Anderson and Lawton above (2015).

Employers Regard for International Experience and Employability

It is important to begin this section with a discussion of what is referred to as “hard skills” versus “soft” or “transferable skills”. Until several decades ago, technical or “hard” skills were primary to employment. More recently, technology was considered to have radically changed the skill sets that employers seek across most industries (Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010). The term *hard skills* most often refers to what a U.S. English dictionary lists under the definition of *skill*: 1. the ability, coming from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude, etc., to do something well; 2. competent excellence in performance; expertness; dexterity; or 3. a craft, trade, or job requiring manual dexterity or special training in which a person has competence and experience (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/skill?s=t>). This definition evokes skills such as accounting or computing.

Soft skills is a term that has been used more recently. According to Parsons (as cited in Robles, 2012) soft skills are “character traits that enhance a person’s interactions, job performance, and career prospects” (p. 457). The key feature of soft skills is that they are broadly applicable across professions and positions; they are continually developed over one’s career and lifetime. Robles (2012) explains that interpersonal skills are just one facet of soft skills – that personality and likeability are personal attributes while career attributes include communication, teamwork, and leadership (p. 457). In an article from 20 years ago in *Education Week* (Zehr, 1998), the author explains that a shift from an industrial society to an information economy

resulted in employers valuing soft skills – such as communication, adaptability and interpersonal skills. While *soft skills* remains in use, the term *transferable skills* is also commonly (and interchangeably) used.

Several recent surveys help identify the skills that employers report are of the greatest value when evaluating university graduates as job applicants. Studies measuring employers' most-desired skills identify where and how outcomes from learning abroad contribute to workforce development. Large-scale studies in the United States include the Hart Research Associates report commissioned by the AAC&U (2015) and the annual reports published by the NACE (2014). A study titled *Culture at Work* (British Council, 2013) examined the value of intercultural skills in the workplace as reported by 367 large employers in nine countries. *Global Graduates into Global Leaders* (Diamond, Walkley, Forbes, Hughes, & Sheen, 2011) reports a similar (although not identical) set of skills ranked in order of importance by potential employers. Findings of the *European Impact Study* (EC, 2014) also inform this subject and will be discussed below. While some of these studies have a predominately global-workforce focus (versus regional or national), the skill sets identified have relevance to this research.

<i>Culture at Work: the value of intercultural skills in the workplace</i> (British Council, 2013)	<i>Global Graduates into Global Leaders</i> (Diamond et al., 2011)	<i>Job Outlook 2017</i> (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017)	<i>Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success</i> (Hart Research Associates, 2015)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates respect for others 2. Builds trust 3. Works effectively in diverse teams 4. Qualifications related to job 5. Open to new ideas/ways of thinking 6. Expertise related to field 7. Collaborative 8. Seeks opportunities for continuous learning 9. Self-motivated 10. Time management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An ability to work collaboratively with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries 2. Excellent communication skills: speaking and listening 3. A high degree of drive and resilience 4. An ability to embrace multiple perspective and challenge thinking 5. A capacity to develop new skills and behaviors according to role requirements 6. A high degree of self-awareness 7. An ability to form professional, global networks 8. An openness to and respect for a range of perspectives from around the world 9. Multi-cultural learning agility 10. Multilingualism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to work in a team 2. Problem-solving skills 3. Written communication skills. 4. Strong work ethic 5. Verbal communication skills. 6. Leadership 7. Initiative 8. Analytical/quantitative skills 9. Flexibility/adaptability 10. Detail-oriented 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to effectively communicate orally 2. Ability to work effectively with others in teams 3. Ability to effectively communicate in writing 4. Ethical judgment and decision-making 5. Critical thinking and analytical reasons skills 6. Ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings 7. Ability to analyze and solve complex problems 8. Ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources 9. Ability to innovate and be creative 10. Staying current on changing technologies and their applications to the workplace

The top-sought transferable skills reported by employers have strong similarities; all four lists above hold the ability to work successfully in teams no lower than third place among the top ten ranked skills (with the two globally-focused studies adding in the importance of working in diverse teams). The skills in these lists indicate a keen alignment of intercultural and transferable skills being sought in the workplace.

Employers perceived value of an international experience. Among these studies, findings are mixed on the value that employers place on international experience. In some cases, study abroad has been considered to hold a reputation as “little more than an extra-curricular activity” (Posey, 2003) but more recently, studies in the United States have shown that while international experience itself does not have great influence in the recruitment process, the skills developed through the experience are highly-valued by employers (Gardner et al., 2008; Hart Research Associates, 2015; Trooboff et al, 2007).

The study titled *Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success*, commissioned by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) (Hart Research Associates, 2015) reports that employers ranked study abroad last among seven learning experiences they seek in job candidates. Internships were rated the highest by employers at 94 percent while only 51 percent of employers reported they value the applicant having participated in a study abroad program. The employers also rated “the ability to work effectively with others in teams” (p. 4) as the second most-sought college learning outcome, perhaps not realizing this is a skill often reported as an outcome of learning abroad. The same AAC&U-commissioned study (Hart Research Associates, 2015) reports that 78% of U.S. employers agreed that all students (regardless of chosen field of study), should “gain intercultural skills and an understanding of societies outside the United States” (p. 4). Another survey of U.S. employers (NACE, 2014)

seemingly contradicts this high regard for cultural learning with 260 U.S. employers ranking study abroad as the lowest-priority attribute among job candidates. What these employers also reported is that they value these transferable skills: 77% of employers reported that they scan a student's resumé for evidence of ability to work on a team, 71% seek problem-solving skills and 62% seek flexibility/adaptability (p. 32). Many studies show that these same skills are frequently reported as an outcome of an international experience by students (Dwyer, 2004; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Hubbard et al., 2018; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josić, & Jon, 2009)

The *EIS* (2014) researchers reported that “while 64% of employers consider an international experience as important for recruitment, on average 92% percent are looking for transversal skills such as openness to and curiosity about new challenges, problem-solving and decision-making skills, confidence, and tolerance towards other personal values and behaviours.” (p. 14). This indicates that employers do not recognize the skills typically reported as an outcome of studying abroad, despite greatly valuing those same skills. It is worth noting that the 64% of employers report valuing experience abroad, which is nearly double the 37% reported in 2006 (Ec, 2014, p. 15).

The *QS Global Employer Survey Report 2011* (Molony et al., 2011) draws on over 10,000 respondents from 116 countries on five continents to rate the influence of a candidate's international experience (whether a full or partial degree abroad) in their hiring decisions. A global weighted average showed that 60% of employers responded in the affirmative to the question “Do you actively seek or attribute value to an international study experience when recruiting?” (The affirmative response of U.S. employers was 54%; Spain had the highest among all country averages at 89%; Denmark had the lowest in Western Europe (65%) with all of Western Europe above the global average, p. 15). The QS study reported that “companies in

Western Europe are more likely to seek international education experience regardless of whether the graduate will work in a local or international post, and the majority agree that internationally educated graduates outperform others” (p. 15). Other studies of note report that the greater the international focus of the business, the greater likelihood there is that the firm will value study abroad (Trooboff et al., 2007) and that as student mobility has increased, the value of the experience has subsequently declined (Bracht, Engel, Janson, Over, & Schomburg, 2006).

To further the examination of which skills employers desire, the *Culture at Work* (British Council, 2013) study shows that human resource managers associate intercultural skills with significant benefits to their businesses. Among the advantages are 1) good for reputation, 2) bringing in new clients, 3) build trust with clients, 4) communicate with overseas partners, 5) able to work with diverse colleagues, and 6) keep teams running efficiently (p. 12). The reported risks of not having employees with intercultural skills were 1) global reputational damage, 2) loss of clients, 3), cultural insensitivity to clients/partners overseas, 5) miscommunication and 6) conflicts within teams (p. 13).

The need to educate employers about the value of study abroad remains an issue (Brooks, Waters, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). Trooboff, Vande Berg and Rayman (2007) implore the field to “carry out research on student learning abroad in order to collect data that will help convince employers that specific types of study abroad do in fact provide students with opportunities to develop or enhance desired learning outcomes — whether personal qualities or skills” (p. 29). The Finnish study *Hidden Competences* (CIMO, 2017) reports that students do indeed acquire career-relevant skills from an international experience. The issue is that employers do not understand this, nor do students know how to articulate their gains. In this student, 36% of employers said that they value an international experience when recruiting while 61% of students

considered the international experience on their CV to be an asset (p. 18). (Note that depending on the nature of the business, up to 80% were interested in international experience to some extent in their recruiting).

Hidden Competences (CIMO, 2017) goes on to explain that there are two types of international competences. The first type is by traditional methods such as study, work or other established structures and it is generally not recognized by employers nor valued in recruitment. The second type is more informal – competences acquired with less structure (through daily living, etc.) and while employers do not give the experience value out-right, they do value the skills that participants report from these experiences. This represents a significant communication gap. The Finnish study stresses the importance of being able to articulate one's skills to potential employers.

Gaps between the perceptions of employers and recent graduates. Several studies indicate that employers assess recent university graduates' transferable skills differently than the students assess themselves. A study conducted by the AAC&U (2015, p. 8) found that while U.S. employers expect students to have strong communication and teamwork skills – and recent graduates agree on the importance of these skills – the graduates also consistently rank themselves as well-prepared in areas where employers disagree. In key areas – including oral and written communication, working with others in teams, critical thinking skills and ethical judgment and decision-making – recent college graduates report themselves being more well-prepared than employers were, overall, willing to rate them (p. 12). The two categories in which employers ranked recent graduates' preparedness the highest was a tie between “working with others in teams” and “staying current on technologies,” but even with these being the highest-rated of all the skills, only 37% of the employers respond in the affirmative (p. 12).

Other recent studies indicate recent graduates rate their skills higher than employers rate the applicants. A large survey conducted in the United States by PayScale (2017, para. 8) with 63,924 managers and 14,167 recent graduates responding, shows that employers reported the hard skills most lacking by employees was writing (44%), followed by public speaking (39%) and data analysis (36%). The top three transferable skills found lacking by employers are critical thinking and problem-solving skills (60%), followed by attention to detail (56%) and communication skills (46%). An indication of the overconfidence level of recent graduates is striking in examining the “skills gap,” where 87% report themselves being “well-prepared” for the workplace while only 50% of employers feel the same (PayScale, 2017, sec. The Skills Gap). The publication *Job Outlook 2018* (NACE, 2017a, sec. 2) cites employers rating recent graduates on career-readiness competencies. Recent graduates received the lowest ratings (on 5-point scale): global/multi-cultural fluency (2.94/5.0) and career management (3.01/5.0) and the highest on teamwork (3.82/5.0) and digital technology (3.71/5.0).

In Europe, one study indicates that this employer perception issue was less of an issue than in the United States (EC, 2010); as a large majority of employers (89%) agreed that the recent graduates they had hired over the past five years had the skills to work in their company (p. 5). In the study titled *Hidden Competences*, Finnish researchers asked employers what outcomes they expected to see as the result of an international experience and about the value of intercultural skills and competences in recruitment (CIMO, 2017). While 90% of the employers reported that an international experience is a good thing, few actively seek recruits with experience studying or working abroad. The obvious conclusion was that

international mobility produces the kind of competences that the employers are seeking, but they are not able to link these competences and people’s international experiences at

recruitment. The competences acquired through study or work periods abroad are hidden: we are not able to express or recognise them (CIMO, 2017, p. 5).

The study stresses the need to give the outcomes of international mobility “more visibility” (p. 6). The researchers believe that attributes traditionally linked to international mobility (language skills, intercultural competences, tolerance and broad-mindedness) do not describe the outcomes adequately. They propose more specificity about the skills comprising intercultural competence and aim to add three identified competences: productivity, resilience and curiosity. The CIMO study’s finding that is highly relevant to this research is that students “overestimate the degree to which employers value international know-how . . . There is a clear discrepancy between views held by employers and students on the value of international competences in recruitment (p. 18).”

The *EIS* (EC, 2014, p. 14), reports that employers prioritize transferable skills as most important (92%), followed by knowledge in field (91%) and relevant work experience (78%). When using the memo© tool as a form of assessment, the *EIS* reported that 81% of students perceived an improvement in their personality traits, while only 52% actually attained higher memo© factor values (p. 14). The memo© seeks to test students’ ability – while not relying only on self-reporting – to measure curiosity, confidence, decisiveness, self-awareness, and tolerance of ambiguity (CHE Consult, 2014, sec. "Results for your institution"). This misperception among Erasmus students is another indication of students’ overconfidence. The European Union faces another gap related to employment – which is that in 2014, 5.7 million young Europeans were unemployed while only one-third of employers could find employees with the right skills (EC, 2014, p. 61).

Gaps in surveys and self-reporting. It is not surprising that students' self-reporting has been found to misalign with their actual abilities. Recent research by social psychologists (Dunning, 2012; Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, & Kruger, 2003; Kruger & Dunning, 1999) examines why people overlook their own weaknesses. One theory is that people base their overall self-assessment on their strongest areas while overlooking those where they lack. Another is that in general, not enough feedback is received from others, especially any feedback with negative connotations. People also overestimate out of ignorance. In one study, Kruger and Dunning (1999) found that training participants to increase their metacognitive abilities helped them realize their weaknesses. Another consideration in students' overrating and overconfidence is a study examining how self-inflation is more common in the Western world than a universal phenomenon (Heine, Kitayama, & Lehman, 2001).

Just as students overlooking their weaknesses may impact the self-reporting in this study, common limitations to surveys include social desirability bias – when respondents wish to show that they have positive traits – and reference bias, which may occur when each respondent is required to conjure up a definition of, for example, being well-prepared for an interview (Brookings Institute, 2017).

Critical Reflection Theory

If experience is the stimulus for learning, U.S. psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey further established that it is from reflecting on the experience that we acquire new knowledge (1938). In Dewey's model, every life event occurs in a context created by the individual, based on his/her social belonging, and new knowledge is constructed based on past experience(s). Self-reflection is an important factor in developing deeper understanding and acquiring new knowledge (Borton, 1970; Boud et al., 1985; Brookfield, 1986; Eyler, Giles Jr., &

Schmiede, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1997; Schön, 1984), although they are not always in complete agreement about the specific process of reflection. There is a range of terms used in the tradition of the writers that sometimes delineate the peculiarities of their defined processes and purpose for reflection. Yet for the most part, the term critical reflection may also be called self-reflection, reflective practice, of self-assessment, and these are often used interchangeably.

Building upon this need for reflection, David Kolb (1984) established a four-stage cycle of learning with four separate learning styles, positioned on two different opposing spectrums: Active Experimenter vs. Reflection Observer and Abstract Conceptualizer vs. Concrete Experiencer. As Kolb's framework demonstrates, we are likely to first experience something. If it is then later brought to mind with meaning (values, importance, feelings), we can identify the abstract, insightful lessons from it. We can then test out our insight by putting it to practice, and then the cycle repeats itself.

Kolb's theory allows for a learner to enter at any point in the cycle – whether by external guidance (e.g., the teacher) or by one's own preference. While one may enter the learning cycle at any point and follow through its logical sequence, the learner is also likely to linger in a preferred stage, which is influenced by educational training and social environment as well as the natural cognitive abilities of the individual. Complete and effective learning only occurs if one can move through the entire cycle, resulting in an increase of self-awareness and generation of new knowledge. For Kolb, reflection is an essential part of learning rather than independent or separate from it. This points to the need for educators to help students through a process of reflection to maximize their learning and the benefits of an impactful experience such as study abroad.

The Four C's of critical reflection (Eyler et al., 1996) taken from the realm of service learning have importance for learning abroad experiences as well, given the parallel of both being experiential in nature:

- Continuous reflection: should be ongoing, taking place before, during, and after an experience;
- Connected reflection: should link the service in the community with classroom learning. Structured reflection is required to help students bridge the gap between the concrete experience and the abstract issues discussed in class;
- Challenging reflection: should result in educators/trainers posing challenging or even uncomfortable questions in a respectful atmosphere so that the learner begins to think in new ways; and
- Contextualized reflection: should be appropriate and meaningful; the design and setting should correspond to the topics and experiences that form material for reflection (pp. 50-56).

Reflection is often looked to as a process across disciplines to hone in on one's skills in professional practice (Brookfield, 1986; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Schön, 1984; Thomason & Thompson, 2012) and as a tool for adult learners (Brookfield, 1986; Jarvis, 2010). The basic premise of these theorists is that a deeper understanding of one's past experience, behavior and interaction will allow practitioners to better manage future situations. Acquiring multiple perspectives is also highly valued. For example, Brookfield (1995) proposes that teachers utilize reflection to continually examine their own assumptions by seeing their practice through four complementary lenses: autobiographical (as learners of reflective practice); of students' eyes; of

colleagues' experiences; and the lens of theoretical literature to gain new perspectives on one's effectiveness (p. 8). In *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön (1984) distinguishes between "reflection on action" – which is done after the event (with hindsight) – and "reflection in action" which takes place in the moment, by thinking ahead, analyzing and calling upon past experiences to guide your behavior or improvise in the moment (p. 69). Schön's work was built on Dewey's idea of experience, interaction and reflection, yet his reflection-in-action model is also called into question as missing the point that reflection is required before acting (Greenwood, 1993) and that doing so is nearly impossible in a chaotic or crowded classroom setting (Eraut, 1995).

Australians Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) proposed an initial model for reflection that when used in a deliberate and meaningful way, was based on three main components: *return to experience*, *attending to feelings* and *re-evaluation of the experience* (p. 19). They base this learner-centered model on Dewey's definition of "deliberate" to mean that learners have formed a specific intention to learn from their experience. Intent is considered as the foundation for self-directed learning in this model and prompts learners to take steps to reach their desired learning goals. Reflection can take place prior to, during or following an experience, each with a unique benefit: prepare for/anticipate, collect/analyze information, and acquire new knowledge/make sense of experience respectfully (p. 98).

Boud and Walker (1998) later call into question some of the practices of reflection in higher education courses due to misinterpretations in the literature as well as equating reflection with thinking (p. 2). They caution against a number of practices including: fixed-formula reflection which is too linear and focuses on external rather than internal knowledge; reflection without learning in which the skill of the teacher does not assist students in their learning; attempting to contain reflection to remain within the comfort zone of the teacher; over-

intellectualizing reflection so that emotions are excluded or not allowed; uncritical acceptance of experience that considers questioning as damaging; promoting reflection in courses where formal assessment will be based on competitive exams; and the belief that reflection can be easily contained, noting that the “very nature of reflection activities is such that they may lead to serious questioning and critical thinking. . . “ (p. 4). They recognize that all of this means there are many factors to balance (e.g., posing questions to the learner which are neither too benign nor too intrusive, etc.).

To explain the range of interpretations that may result from a shared experience, Boud & Walker (1990) offer that every situation has a “learning milieu” (p. 13) with the cultural, social, institutional and psychological factors interacting to produce a different outcome for each learner. They distinguish the event (what happened) to the experience (how the learner responds and reacts to it). This is an important delineation when facilitating students through a process of reflection and to point out that telling only ‘what’ happened does not serve to enlighten the listener about what the student learned from the experience. For this purpose, Borton (1970) offers a simplified formula of three short questions to conduct reflection, asking “What?”, “So what?”, and “Now what?” to formulate meaningful learning.

In writing for educators, Winter (1986) explains that teachers do not typically deliver the factual information they know, rather they construct who they are by putting themselves into the stories. Winter states “We do not 'store' experience as data, like a computer; we 'story' it—in anecdotes, jokes, dreams, ambitions, and gossip” (p. 176). Helping students construct their experience into these stories is key to communicate something about themselves, their character, and their personal qualities.

Among the major recommendations made about student reflection by the authors of the *Georgetown Consortium Project* – a study involving nearly 1200 U.S. students abroad – are three broad conclusions: that immersing students in another culture does not necessarily promote intercultural growth, that learning interventions were predictive of [influenced] student learning, and student reflection needs to be prompted in order to actualize the experience into learned lessons (VandeBerg et al., 2009, pp. 35-36). In another article co-authored by Vande Berg, the researchers make a recommendation for training students to appropriately and accurately present themselves to employers “in ways that employers will appreciate” (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 30). This aligns with the Finnish report *Hidden Competences* (CIMO, 2017) which notes that “skills and knowledge that result from international experiences are the kind of competences that the labour market needs to be able to face future challenges successfully. . . We seem to be incapable of recognizing these competences; they are hidden. . . we must make [them] visible” (p. 31).

Transformative experiences. Students returning from abroad will often speak about the experience in superlatives and exaggerations – it being “the best,” “the most”, or “awesome” – with regard to its impact. Scholars commonly use “transformative” to describe the impact of study abroad as reported by students (Fry, Paige, John, Dillow, & Nam, 2009; Hoff, 2008; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Vatalaro et al., 2015). One study which examined the knowledge, skills and behaviors acquired by students abroad, also describes students trying to explain the transformative qualities of the experience, commonly with statements such as “I came back as a new human being” (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013, p. 523). Many students consider it a life-changing event – yet even if they recall that it had challenges, they may not immediately realize that the challenges were the foundation of the transformation. Given that reflection should allow for a range of questioning – from narrow to broad, from recent to past, from cognitive to

affective and from euphoric to troubling, it is noted that Dewey (1933, p. 10) stressed the importance of allowing learners to experience a “state of perplexity, hesitation, [and] doubt” (p. 10) and Brookfield (1987) notes that while transformation can occur from a [positive] peak life experience, “inner discomfort and perplexity” (p. 25) are central to the process of self-reflection.

Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory (1991) points to “disorienting dilemmas” which initially result in overwhelming the learner’s ability to put it into words. The impact of learning abroad is often reported as this type of disorientation, defined by Mezirow where a disconnect between our meaning structure and our environment occur. The *EIS* (EC, 2014) reports “students first and foremost perceived Erasmus mobility as a defining period in their personal and professional development, leading to greater maturity and personal enrichment, not least due to the challenges they experienced” (p. 17). These challenges, caused by this disconnect of the cues and environment in the new culture, can spur tremendous personal growth, but a metacognitive process must occur for the learning to be realized. Mezirow distinguishes instrumental learning – which is the acquisition of skills and knowledge – from transformative learning that involves perspective transformation, and in which one critically examines prior interpretations and assumptions to form new meaning. Mezirow’s perspective transformation is achieved through (1) disorienting dilemmas, (2) critical reflection, (3) rational dialogue, and (4) action.

Study abroad as a transformative experience. A transformation on the level described above is complex and takes time and attention to process. Chapman (2011) interviewed U.S. undergraduates returning from abroad and concluded that “although participants grew considerably in their personal development . . . they often lacked true understanding of the meaning of this growth” (p. 272). Chapman claims that “without an immediate outlet to reflect

and make sense of their experience . . . many participants were unable to clearly articulate the meaningfulness of their study abroad experiences in terms of their personal and career development” (pp. 272-273). Hutchins (1996) reports that students require from six months to several years to be able to understand the career impact of their study abroad experience. Engberg and Jourian (2015) point out that “intercultural wonderment encapsulates the underlying curiosity in individuals to seek out new and different experiences while studying abroad and involves a willingness and capacity to deal with discomfort and disequilibrium” (p. 1) and they argue that it thus fosters the development of a global perspective. Traits such as curiosity and dealing with discomfort translate into skills employers reportedly seek (when these are translated into skills such as adaptability, etc.). Students should also point out the development of these traits to potential employers.

To counter the notion that studying abroad is a truly transformative experience, Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) question whether international educators can fairly tout the experience as transformative, and offer three reasons why taking students’ self-reports as evidence should be done cautiously. First, it means relying solely on self-reporting, which is not practiced in other learning domains. Secondly, because developmental theorists (such as Dewey, Kolb, and Mezirow as cited above) report that transformation is deep and profound and results in frame-shifting one’s thoughts and actions. The authors explain:

When a student tells us that she has been ‘transformed,’ [by studying abroad] she may be describing or sharing experiences that are deeply meaningful to her, perhaps sharing her sense that she has, for instance, gained greater self-reliance or independence while abroad. However, unless we have good reason to believe that she is reporting on a capacity to shift her frame of cultural reference – the developmental capacity to begin to

experience events from the point of view of another person – then we should suspect that what she is describing is something other than “transformation”. . . (p. 23).

Finally, Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) make a final point of concern in noting that sometimes the person making the [self-] report may not be telling the truth. They explain that they are not suggesting students are simply lying, but that the student who says that “studying abroad has been ‘the best thing that has ever happened’ to her may, consciously or unconsciously, be exhibiting what testing experts call ‘social desirability bias’; that is, she may be telling us what she believes we want or expect to hear” (p. 24).

Self-awareness and self-efficacy theories. If self-reflection is an activity, self-awareness is a state or an ability, and often the intended result of reflection. Self-awareness is the ability to hold oneself as the object of thought. In social psychology, Objective Self-Awareness (Duvall & Wicklund, 2001) proposes that at any given moment, people have a choice to focus attention on the self or on the external environment. Focusing on the self can lead to self-evaluation by comparing oneself to others in the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions. From this comparison, satisfaction or dissatisfaction may result.

Bandura’s (1977) theory of self-efficacy proposes that the individual is part of his or her own construction of reality as the result of interacting with the surrounding environment. Individuals are considered self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting; they are not simply products of external experiences and circumstances. Bandura identifies four sources of self-efficacy:

- Performance outcomes: outcomes of past experiences are the most important source of self-efficacy. If the individual was successful in a task, he or she believes she is capable of succeeding again (and believes that past failure predicts future failure).

- Vicarious experiences: observing others performance and comparing yourself to them. Seeing others succeed leads you to believe you can too (and believe that another's failure predicts yours too).
- Verbal persuasion: whether by absorbing knowledge or receiving emotional feedback from others, encouragement or discouragement impact one's self-efficacy.
- Physiological Feedback: physical sensations that arise from certain activity – for example, sweaty palms when taking an exam – impact one's sense of self-efficacy (p. 195).

Bandura explains that self-efficacy does not refer to one's actual capabilities, but rather references one's belief in his/her capabilities; and further, it is this belief that is key to human behaviors. Self-efficacy is thus considered to explain why people with the same skill set may approach situations with very different behaviors. Of relevance to this research is a study by Milstein (2005) who found a significant increase in communication self-efficacy for U.S. students returned from studying abroad (p. 228). Milstein found that “the more respondents rate their overseas experience as challenging, the more they will report a perceived increase in communication efficacy” (p. 232).

Career Development Theory

Examining prominent career theorists is fundamental to understanding the importance of each individual realizing their unique traits and strengths as well as their interests, and how their combined influence impacts one's chosen career path. Examining the work of prominent career theorists is essential to understanding how individual study abroad learners realize their own unique traits, strengths and interests. The review also shows how those components influence a student's career path. The reflection sessions conducted as part of this study align with the first

step that campus-based career service professionals have students conduct as they embark in career exploration and/or initial job search – that is a self-assessment or inventory of one’s skills, traits, and interests. Nearly all theories and models derived over the past century involve an early-stage self-assessment on the process of career development (Gersch, 2002). This section will examine the theories that support the need for, and benefits of, this practice.

Frank Parsons’ book *Choosing a Vocation* (1909) has served as a framework for career development for over a century. This seminal work has these opening lines:

In the wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and knowledge of their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts (p. 5).

This focus on one’s traits along with external factors – which categorizes people into job sectors – was helpful as the U.S. managed its workforce through two World Wars in the first half of the 20th century (Duane Brown and Associates, 2002). Leung (2008) claims that five theorists (“The Big Five”) are considered to have established the bases for career development; it has slowly grown into a discipline that has a “strong theoretical and empirical base” and that has influenced a global audience (p. 115). These five theories are (a) Dawis’ Theory of Work-Adjustment, (b) Holland’s Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment, (c) the Self-concept Theory of Career Development formulated by Super and more recently by Savickas, (d) Gottfredson’s Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, and (e) Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, as cited in Leung, p. 115).

Dawis' Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA; as cited in Leung, 2008) views career choice and development as a "continual processes of adjustment and accommodation" (p. 116) in which the person and the environment attempt to match satisfaction and requirements (of which the most central are abilities, or skills). Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment (as cited in Leung, 2008) regards the choice of a career as an extension of one's personality into the world of work; individuals choose careers that satisfy their preferred personal orientations. Holland categorizes vocational interests into six typologies:

1. Realistic—physical activities, working with things/objects.
2. Investigative—cognitive exploring, problem-solving, scientific pursuits.
3. Artistic—free, unstructured, creative.
4. Social—teaching, serving/helping others roles.
5. Enterprising—persuade and manage people.
6. Conventional—orderly, systematic, directed by others in authority (as cited in Leung, 2008, p. 119).

A match between these and a person's skills and interests are likely to result in high congruence, or satisfaction. Leung notes that Holland's theory has had a very strong global influence on the practices used in assessing career interests (p. 119).

Super (1980) saw deciding upon a career path as a fundamental step of early adulthood. Super's self-concept theory of development "is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation" (as cited in Leung, p. 120). Super assumed there was a personal, organic impetus for this, and factored in "values" – or the qualities that people seek in their activities or situations they are in or the objects they make – which creates a sense

of purpose. Savickas (2002) furthered this into a more constructivist model in which a person builds themselves into a career by connecting their self-concepts to suitable work roles.

Super (1995) proposed a life-long developmental framework with stages titled growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance/management, and disengagement. Those between ages 15-24 [the age range in which most university undergraduates fall] are in the exploration stage in which the tasks of crystallization (understanding of one's interests, skills, and values, and to identifying career goals in alignment), specification (of career choices), and implementation (solidifying career choices through appropriate training and job positions) takes place (as cited in Leung, p. 120).

Gottfredson's initial Theory of Circumscription and Compromise called for the promotion of exploration and realism (as cited in Gersch, 2002) so that people can both see what is possible as well as what is required to achieve it (p. 6). Gottfredson stressed that a high level of cognitive complexity was required to effectively choose one's profession. More recently, she refocused her work to stress the important interplay of genetics and environment. Gottfredson claims that while an individual has only limited control of the environment, a person does have some ability to control his/her career path and process.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, 2005) also considers the relationship between the person and the environment but focuses on the thinking processes and beliefs which are considered to control a person's activities. It has three process models which attempt to explain the 1) development of academic and vocational interest; 2) how individuals make educational and career choices; and 3) the stability of both educational and career performance. Each of these has a different emphasis based upon three core variables:

- a. Self-efficacy: judgments about one's own ability to plan and take courses of action required to produce desired outcomes. For example, an honest assessment of one's skills can provide the confidence required to set and achieve a career goal.
- b. Outcome expectations: anticipation of what the result of an activity will be. For example, if an activity is believed to result in failure, the individual will lose interest in it.
- c. Personal goals: these support and maintain one's activity over time (as cited in Leung, p. 115).

Based on the theories presented, it is clear that an inventory of one's skills is required to make thoughtful career choices. With career interests stemming from a set of values, considering one's priorities is important as well. Helping students consider these factors through a process of reflection is a valuable use of time and resources in higher education internationalization.

Current practices in interviewing. A brief examination of current practices and recommendations for successful interviewing is important here, as the intervention session in this research prescribes a specific formula for responding to most interview questions. Preparing examples in advance and a willingness to share a story that reveals information about oneself is an important marker of successful interviewing (Kudisch, 2014). Current practice is also characterized by employers using "behavioral interviewing" which means posing questions like "Tell me about a time when you had to problem-solve" or "Talk about a time when you had to resolve conflict among members of a group you were in." This practice assumes that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior (McKay, 2018).

U.S. university career services offices regularly direct students to prepare stories in advance that demonstrate their skills. One example is a DePaul University career blog (Anselmo, 2014) that offers information on “The Perks to Storytelling in Interviews,” claiming that it’s “essential that you can tell a story about *everything* on your resume, including those volunteer and extracurricular experiences” (para. 3).

Job candidates are most often instructed to utilize the STAR method, for which the acronym stands for a formula for building a story (the STAR is public domain; an online search will result in numerous results stating that its origin is unknown) and is generally explained as:

Situation (S): explain what happened or what was going on that needed to be addressed

Task (T): this is what needed to get done to solve the problem

Action (A): explain what skills you used to resolve the issue

Result (R): tell about the outcome

Speaking on a panel at the 2017 IIE Summit: Generation Study Abroad conference in Washington, DC, Gina Tesla, Vice President for Corporate Citizenship Initiatives, IBM Corporate Headquarters explained that “students need to be able to tell a compelling story [in an interview] that describes their skills” (Tesla, 2017).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the main findings of the many areas of literature – primarily from the U.S. and Europe – that are required to provide the full context of this research have been examined. The range of topics of literature relevant to this project extend from higher education policies regarding internationalization to theories about how and why students describe their international experience. The literature points to a solid embrace by higher education of employability as an objective – and, increasingly, of employability as an objective of student mobility. Numerous

studies examining the impact of study abroad reveal the transferable skills reported by students, including those related to intercultural competence. Theorists as well as practitioners teach us that experiential learning followed by critical reflection sparks new knowledge and self-awareness. For students to acquire that self-awareness of and ability to articulate their skills from studying abroad to potential employers benefits not only the students themselves, but employers as well. This chapter was intended to provide a solid review of the literature, scholars, and theorists that guide this research. In the next section, the research methods used in this study will be explained.

Chapter 3: Methods

Purpose Statement

The intent of this study is to assess whether an hour-long facilitated reflection session for undergraduates positively impacts their ability to identify and articulate the transferable skills they developed as the result of studying or interning abroad. A mixed-method design converges both quantitative (numeric value Likert-scored responses) and qualitative (written responses) data collected from students in pre- and post-session surveys. The reflection session serves as a qualitative intervention in this research as well. In this approach, pre- and post-session survey data will be used to measure the change in students' self-perceived levels of skill articulation, identification, confidence, and preparedness in anticipation of job interviews upon graduation. These measures will be compared with the qualitative responses – the short stories which illustrate how the students have demonstrated their skill(s) – to help explain the quantitative results. This data will help determine the intervention's usefulness and impact.

Research Design and Rationale

This is a mixed methods project with quantitative surveys administered both before and after an intervention session attended by participants. There was also a control group to whom an initial survey was administered, followed by a second survey a five days later; the control group did not attend any sessions but the timing of sending out each of the survey links approximated the same timeframe as that of session participants. The objective was to create a survey instrument that targeted learning outcomes appropriate to a reflection session focused on career skill development, but which would be sufficiently generic to work across a wide variety of programs, study-abroad destinations, and in a diverse set of disciplines. The quantitative questions related to the impact of the session required students to rate their level of agreement

(using a 7-point Likert Scale) with statements regarding their level of reflection and identification of skills developed while studying abroad, as well as their levels of confidence and preparedness for interviews with prospective employers. There was also an open-ended question in the survey that asked students to describe an example of where and how they demonstrated a skill when abroad. The responses to this question were rated for their quality and a numeric score was assigned (see detailed discussion below).

This design, termed convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), is characterized by collecting and analyzing two independent strands of quantitative and qualitative data in a single phase. The methods have equal priority. Initially, the data analysis is independent – that is, the quantitative and the qualitative data is first analyzed independently of one another before the results are merged for an overall interpretation. This gives the opportunity to examine convergence, divergence, contradiction, or relationships of the two datasets.

This project uses convergent parallel design methodology to seek a clearer understanding of the research problem. The design involved placing a quantitative survey before and after an intervention session. Figure 3-1 offers a diagram of the design of the study and data analysis. The pre- and post-session surveys also each contained the same open-ended question prompting students to offer a (qualitative) description of learning or demonstrating their skill. Although short, the responses to this question gauge several factors. The primary reason is to assess the sophistication of the students' account of how they demonstrated a skill or skills – and in ways that employers will appreciate; in other words, helping students learn to talk about themselves and their skills, and identify strengths and weaknesses. While these stories also reveal qualitative information about undergraduates' experiences abroad and about the situations or areas where they report their skill-building (for example, is the story related to language learning, or adjusting

to a different education system?), this will not be addressed in this study but may be considered for further examination following the publication of this dissertation.

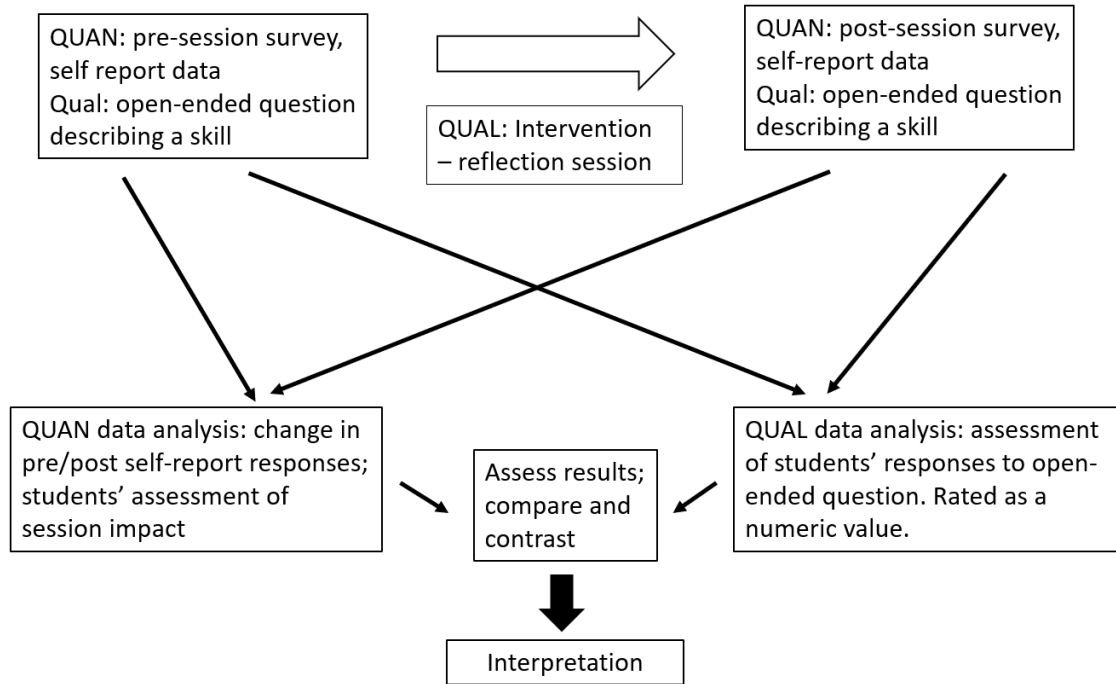


Figure 3-1. Diagram of the research design.

The raters for this study used a process of scoring the open-ended responses using a rubric based on performance descriptors, with progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment resulting in progressively higher scores (see section Rating Students' Stories in Chapter 4). This different but complementary data – these “stories” – were correlated to the self-reported survey responses of the students' level of self-awareness and confidence pre- and post-session. This serves as an opportunity to compare the students' abilities to articulate their skills with the students' claims about their possession of the skills themselves. The four quantitative (Likert Scale) questions in the survey that assess the impact of the session could stand alone and inform the main research question. As well, analyzing and comparing the pre- and post-session

open-ended responses (to the question which sought examples from the students) could serve as a unique qualitative gauge of the impact of the intervention. Including both in the study provides a much more robust analysis of this intervention process.

This research is based in the constructivist context that allows for participants to build meaning from their learning abroad, including the possibility of finding multiple meanings based on their personal and social experiences that influence their self-reflection. This pragmatic approach aligns with common practices of campus-based student programming – including both academic and extracurricular – related to both learning abroad and career development.

A small number of students were also interviewed either in person or by email after the sessions were held. They were asked to talk about the process of reflecting on their experience abroad, identifying situations that required them to demonstrate a transferable skill, and crafting a story so that they could describe the behavior in a way that employers appreciate. Relevant portions of their narratives are included in the Discussion chapter to provide insight from the point of view of the participants, and to further explain the impact of the intervention.

Population, Sample, Locations

The population of interest for this study was U.S. and European undergraduates who had studied or interned abroad for one semester (or at least 10 weeks to accommodate participation in U.S. quarter terms) as part of their bachelor's degree (or equivalent). They may have studied in any country outside of their own and were still seeking their degree at the time they attended the intervention. They were preparing for the job search upon graduation or anticipating the need to do this soon. European participants were expected to have a sufficient command of English to participate in the sessions and complete the surveys (which were all in English). Each European campus coordinator promoted the session to the students considered eligible by these criteria.

U.S. population. IIE gathers data from U.S. institutions each year and produces a report on student mobility; while institutions volunteer this information, there is a high rate of reporting and the numbers are considered a valid estimate. The *Open Doors 2017* report (IIE, 2017) shows that a total of 325,339 U.S. undergraduates and graduate students studied abroad in 2015-2016, with 87.7% of those being undergraduates (p. 82). This puts the U.S. population of interest to this study at 285,322.

European population. Determining the European population of interest looks to reports from the EC, with a published estimate that between 2014 and 2020, about 2 million students in higher education will participate in mobility programs; so that estimate means approximately 300,000 participants annually (EC, 2014).

Identifying Research Subjects and Session Facilitators

Host institutions. Participating (“host”) institutions were identified from contacts known to the researcher (thus a convenience sample) in education abroad offices. It should be noted that the reflection sessions (and the accompanying materials) were conducted in English across all locations; the session was targeted to students with sufficient English proficiency in non-English-speaking countries. A total of 146 students participated in sessions across nine institutions in the United States.

European universities were identified from among contacts known to the researcher and administrators at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) in Milan. Three of the facilitators had previously presented sessions such as the one for this project; for two others, it was their first time. It was intended that 100 European students complete the reflection process with a pre- and post-session survey. The final combined number of participants in Croatia, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, and Scotland in this study was 105, with 85 records retained for the final

analysis. With the combined number of participants in the United States and the European nations, the grand total of session participants in the final analysis was 192.

Session facilitators. The sessions were conducted by a total of eight different facilitators. All of the session facilitators work either in the field of education abroad (i.e., in the institutions' international offices) and are responsible for sending students abroad, or work in an office responsible for career or internship advising. All of the U.S. facilitators had presented this session or very similar ones in the past, and three of the five had done so in Europe. A review of the specific agenda and workbook developed for this research was conducted with all facilitators prior to the delivery of the session. Two facilitators held sessions on more than one date at their institution, and two others facilitated sessions at more than one site.

Recruiting student participants. Sessions were announced and publicized via email by each campus facilitator to students meeting the research criteria. A template for the announcement was provided; each facilitator added the information specific to the date, time and location of the session and could edit slightly if they believed it would help attract students to attend (for example, to refer specifically to business students at the business school host sites):

Title: *Making the Most of Your International Experience*
Description: *You have set yourself apart by studying abroad, but do you know how to talk about your experience in ways that employers can appreciate? Come and learn how to explain how the differences and challenges you managed abroad resulted in skills that have relevance in the workplace. Preparing for job interviews – especially in anticipation of the job search upon graduating – takes some careful thought. Learn how to set yourself apart and realize the benefits of your accomplishments.*
Date: _____ *[listed for each session]* _____
Time: _____ *[listed for each session]* _____
Location: _____ *[listed for each session]* _____

Participant criteria. The participants in this research sample involved undergraduates who fit the study's established criteria in the U.S. and in Western Europe: those who had studied

or interned in another country as part of their degree program for one semester (or at least 10 weeks). The participants were still working towards a diploma at the time the session was held and represented a variety of majors, host countries, languages and a range of institutions by type (i.e., public and private, location, and size). It is noted that all but one U.S. host university is designated as a 4-year institution; one 2-year institution also held a session for eligible students. The European students were enrolled in three-year bachelor programs or equivalent in their respective countries, except for students at the University of Glasgow, where in Scotland students do a four-year degree. The initial goal was to have a total of 200 session participants in the reflection sessions offered by trained facilitators – with about half in the U.S. and the other half in Europe (Croatia, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, and Scotland).

A power analysis was conducted in G*Power for the proposed methodology to determine a suitable sample size (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The analysis was conducted for a General Linear Model with a maximum of two repeated measurements, a maximum of two groups for each independent variable, a desired power of .80, and a significance level of .05. The power analysis revealed that, combining U.S. and European session participants, a minimum of 98 participants is needed to test the between-subjects effects, 34 participants are needed to test the within-subjects effects, and 128 participants are needed to test the interactions. Therefore, the minimum sample size needed to test all main effects and interactions is 128. While 251 students attended sessions, the final number of session participant records retained in the study was 192.

Experiment group data collection. Table 3-1 lists each institution, facilitator and group size. The total number of U.S. session participants was 146; the total of European session participants was 105. The sessions took place between the period of August 5, 2017, and March 7, 2018.

Table 3-1

Student Attendance at Sessions: U.S. and European Institutions

Session Facilitator*	U.S. Host Institution	Location (city, state)	# Session Participants	# Usable Respondents
Facilitator A	American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS Study Abroad)	Stamford, Connecticut (with students from 35 different U.S. institutions)	38	32
Facilitator A	California State University, Long Beach	Long Beach, California	43	35
Facilitator B	Chapman University	Orange, California	18	14
Facilitator C	California Lutheran University	Thousand Oaks, California	17	16
Facilitator D	University of St. Thomas	St. Paul, Minnesota	15	6
Facilitator E	Santa Barbara City College	Santa Barbara, California	6	3
Facilitator E	Hamline University	St. Paul, Minnesota	4	3
Facilitator E	Winona State University	Winona, Minnesota	4	3
Facilitator E	Bethel University	St. Paul, Minnesota	11	3
Total U.S. Session Participants:			156	107
	European Host Institution	Location (city, country)		
Facilitator E	Saxion University	The Netherlands	45	33
Facilitator E	Stenden University	The Netherlands	10	6
Facilitator F	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	Milan, Italy	14	8
Facilitator F	Zagreb School of Business	Zagreb, Croatia	14	14
Facilitator G	Ural Federal University	Yekaterinburg, Russia	5	5
Facilitator H	University of Glasgow	Glasgow, Scotland	17	14
Total European Session Participants			105	85
TOTAL Combined (U.S. and European) Session Participants			251	192

The total number of participants ($n = 261$) in sessions exceeds the number of respondents with usable data ($n = 192$) for several reasons. First, a screening mechanism was placed in the survey instrument to capture responses from potential participants who met three eligibility conditions: 1) participated in a study or intern abroad program of at least 10 weeks in length; 2) were still undergraduates seeking their degree at the time of participation, or in the case of the control group, may be surveyed at the end of the final semester of their bachelor degree.

Some institutions made the session available to students returning from short-term programs abroad (typically defined as less than eight weeks, but for the purpose of this study, was defined as less than 10 weeks) and these students were eliminated ($n = 25$). Additionally, any participants who had not completed both the pre- and post-session surveys, or whose records were substantially incomplete were eliminated from the dataset ($n = 28$). Another trait that resulted in the elimination of the participant's record from the data set was answering positively to having previously participated in a session similar to the one for this study (to learn about how to identify and articulate their skills from studying abroad) in anticipation of entering the job market. A total of 15 were thus excluded for this reason (nine U.S. and six Europe). And finally, the elimination of one U.S. record resulted from the subject reporting that his internship had been completed within the United States.

Control group data collection. Another sample of U.S. and European undergraduates served as a control group to provide a comparison of survey responses to gauge the reliability and validity of the session participants' pre- and post-session responses. The control group was composed of undergraduates who had studied abroad for one semester (or at least 10 weeks), who presented the same characteristics of the experimental group as described above (with regard to age, geographical distribution, gender) and who responded to a first survey online and then a second survey but did not participate in a reflection session.

Both the U.S. and European control group participants completed the surveys online. The initial survey contained all the same questions in the pre-session survey that were administered to session participants. By providing their email address at the end, respondents were agreeing to receive the follow-up survey five days later. At that time, they were sent the follow-up survey which, for the control group, contained the four impact questions plus the open-ended question

asking them to share an example of how and where they had developed a skill abroad. Table 3-2 displays the successive surveying stages, which produced a final response rate of 15.2 percent.

Table 3-2

Stages of the Sampling Process by Region and Response Rate at Each Stage

Stages of sampling process	U.S.	Europe	<i>n</i>	Response rate (%)
Was sent first survey	465	254	719	
Completed first survey	166	186	352	48.9
Provided email to receive follow up survey	113	94	207	28.7
Opened follow-up survey	113	34	147	20.4
Completed follow-up survey	85	25	110	15.2

The total number of usable responses from the 85 completed surveys from the U.S. control group was 76 while 22 of the 25 surveys completed by the European group remained in the study, for a grand total of 98 records. The deleted records were due either to participants reporting they had spent less than 10 weeks abroad ($n = 4$), or because they indicated that they had previously attended a reflection session ($n = 8$).

Procedure

Survey development and testing. During the summer of 2017, a small group of 14 students from two U.S. universities completed the online pre-session survey. They were asked to comment if there were any questions they did not understand, or to make recommendations for ease of completing the survey. While students reported that they understood the questions clearly, there was a very high occurrence of *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* responses to the Likert-

scale impact questions. In an attempt to diffuse this clustering of such a highly-concentrated level of agreement, the five-point Likert Scale was replaced by a seven-point scale for the four questions assessing session impact. Also, Likert responses were formatted in alternating directions across the page (so that it was not easy to just click the same responses down a column), and a preface was added to establish the context for the questionnaire which read:

When completing this survey, please give careful thought to how much effort you have put into preparing for your initial job search upon graduation. Be realistic about how much time have you taken to identify your skills, write your resumé, and prepare to talk about your study abroad experience in ways that employers will appreciate. Answer these questions as if you were going on a job interview today.

The other Likert Scale questions on the survey – regarding which skills were developed and the motivation to study abroad – remained at five points in the final survey since the clustering of these was not as extreme nor do these questions directly assess the impact of the intervention.

Four U.S. campus-based staff members (two in Career Services and two in Study Abroad offices) who routinely work directly with students also reviewed the survey questions for clarity, appropriateness and relevance. Minimal suggestions were made and incorporated into the survey. (The complete pre- and post-surveys for both U.S. and European students appear in Appendix C).

Intervention procedure: reflection session agenda. The intervention session serves as the independent variable in this project – which follows an operationalized process guided by a trained facilitator through the student workbook. Each facilitator followed the prescribed agenda that included specific activities.

The agenda for the session was detailed in the trainer guide which followed this schedule:

- An introduction by the facilitator that includes: overview of the concept of employability; how employers seek candidates who can demonstrate ‘transferable

- skills'; the importance of being able to offer specific examples of one's transferable skills; and to consider the uniqueness of an international experience in building such stories (10 minutes).
- Asking students to answer warm-up questions regarding rather broad lessons from studying abroad (the point here is to get students to begin talking about their experience, in whatever way comes to them naturally) (5 minutes).
 - Having students complete reflection questions/a skills inventory based on their experience abroad. They identified skills and qualities that they believe they developed abroad from a checklist with outcomes categorized by Intercultural Understanding & World View, Professional & Career Development and Personal Growth & Values (10 minutes).
 - Explaining the possible outcomes from studying abroad and introduces the STAR formula for telling a story about the development of a skill (Situation, Task, Action, Result – and that a complete story addresses each of these); asks students to prepare a STAR to identify how these have relevance to specific transferable skills and were asked to recall examples to support their claims (15 minutes).
 - Asking students to conduct paired mock interviews, sharing their stories. The listener is encouraged to ask questions or offer ways to help improve the example. The facilitator wraps up the session by summarizing characteristics of good examples, etc. (10 minutes).
 - Having students share their stories with the large group; the facilitator uses their examples to point out positive features and make recommendations for improvement (10 minutes).

- Students complete the post-session survey on paper and submit it to the facilitator.

The workbook acknowledges the initial descriptors students commonly offer about having studied abroad – such as “it was awesome”, “it changed my life” – and offers incrementally more sophisticated ways of speaking about the experience in ways that employers will appreciate. This most often means speaking about a situation that posed a problem, challenge, or confusion, and crafting a short but compelling story that demonstrates a specific skill or skills to resolve the issue. It is apparent in reviewing information on the best interview techniques that telling a story about oneself, making clear that a challenge was managed well, or if not, what one learned from the situation, is essential (Anselmo, 2014; UC Berkeley, 2017; Elias, 2017; Harvard Law School, 2017; Kudisch, 2014).

Student Outcomes: Dependent Variables

The outcomes self-reported by students on the items below comprise the dependent variables. The following Likert Scale questions appeared on both the pre- and post-session survey (and in control group survey) and serve as the dependent variables in this study:

Quantitative responses. Students chose a response from a seven-point Likert Scale (*Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Disagree Somewhat = 3, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 4, Agree Somewhat = 5, Agree = 6, Strongly Agree = 7*) to these four statements. These are referred to as the four dimensions of the assessment measure in this study:

- *I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace (Reflection)*
- *I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation (Identification)*

- *I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad (Confidence)*
- *I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers (Preparedness)*

Qualitative, open-ended responses. The qualitative measure that will help to inform the quantitative results is an open-ended question in both the pre- and post-session survey which asks students:

Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

The subsequent open-ended question asked of students in both the pre- and post-intervention survey was “*What name(s) would you give to the skill(s) that you just wrote about.*” This response was reviewed by the raters and for those stories that were sufficient in describing the demonstration of skill, the raters also listed the skill they identified from the student’s story. A comparison was then made to see if the skills listed by student and rater matched. This helps confirm the accuracy of the examples of skills offered by the students. The method used to rate the participants’ examples is explained below in the section on Rating Student Responses to the Open-Ended Question.

Quantitative questions to provide context about the session. Session participants were asked two questions in the post-survey to provide information to professionals in the field (note that these two questions were not asked of the control group). The first seeks to understand students’ regard for reflection sessions such as the one offered in the study; it read: “*Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained from studying abroad and been able to describe them accurately.*” A 7-point Likert Scale was offered for responses:

Strongly Agree (7), Agree (6), Agree Somewhat (5), Neither Agree nor Disagree (4), Disagree Somewhat (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

The final question on the post-session survey is intended to inform the field about the overall impact a student assigns to their study/intern abroad experience in the context of increasing their employability. It reads: *Check the answer that best describes your thoughts (read all first, then choose one).* This set of response options was offered:

- Overall, the strongest examples of skill development that I can share with potential employers are from studying abroad.*
- I have strong examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but have equally as strong examples from other experiences in my life as well.*
- I have good examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but examples from other experiences in my life are stronger.*
- I have no examples of skill development from studying abroad; all of my examples will be from other life experiences.*

Intervention session follow-up. The researcher asked for student volunteers willing to be contacted with a follow-up question after the session. Twelve students responded to this open-ended question via email: Please talk about what it is like to reflect on your experience to try to identify the skills you developed while abroad. The responses to this request, intended to prompt meta-cognitive information from the session participants, are summarized and shared in the Results section. This qualitative narrative offers insights on self-reflection as a developmental process, helps identify what is challenging, and points to how reflection may be helpful as students embark on the process of transitioning into the workplace.

Descriptive Data. The survey sought data to provide a profile regarding the subjects' demographics, motivations to study abroad and perceived skill development. The first set asked students about their motivations to study abroad.

Motivation to study abroad. Students responded to "How important was each of the following in your decision to study abroad" using a 5-point Likert Scale: *Extremely Important,*

Important, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Less Important, or Not at all important to these factors:

- Fulfilling requirements towards my degree
- Enhancing my resume
- Learning about another culture
- Learning/improving foreign language skills
- Spending time with friends who were studying abroad
- Improving my employability (by developing certain skills, etc.)
- Travel opportunities

Skill development reported as the result of studying abroad. Students responded to this question regarding skill development abroad: *Please indicate the degree to which you believe you developed any of these skills abroad using a 7-point Likert Scale – Significantly Increased, Moderately Increased, Slightly Increased, No change, Slightly Diminished, Moderately Diminished, Significantly Diminished* to these skills:

- Communication
- Confidence
- Course or major-related
- Knowledge
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Initiative
- Language Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Open-Mindedness
- Problem-Solving
- Self-Awareness
- Teamwork
- Tolerance of Ambiguity
- Work Ethic
- Other - please describe

Personal profile and program characteristics. Session and control group participants were asked to provide information to control for variance in program length and to assess the characteristics of the participants compared to available demographic and descriptive data about the population of U.S. and European students who study abroad. While sessions were targeted to students who had spent a minimum of 10 weeks studying or interning abroad, some sessions included students who had participated in shorter-term programs; their data was not included in the final analysis.

The pre-session survey (and the control group survey) asked students to indicate (or choose from) the correct descriptors for these factors:

Program characteristics

- Program city, country
- Year/Term abroad
- Program length
- Program type (with other students from home country / Mixed with other international students / Integrated into host country university system/courses)
- Language of instruction abroad
- Type of accommodation while abroad
- Engagement abroad: internship, volunteer/service learning, student club/organization

Demographic information

- Age
- Gender (Male, Female, Other)
- Academic major(s)/minor(s)
- Previous experience abroad/in another country and whether family vacation, study, etc.

- Social-economic status, using Barratt Simple Measure of Social Status (BSMSS) (Barratt, 2012). See below for description.
- Ethnicity (U.S. students only)

Barratt Simple Measure of Social Status. The Barratt Measure of Social Status (BSMSS) (Barratt, 2012) was identified to obtain socio-economic status information of both session and control group participants. This descriptive data provides information on how these samples aligned with the demographic profile of participation in study abroad. Permission was granted by Dr. Barratt for use in this study (see Appendix D). The BSMSS asks students to indicate the education level and occupational category of their parents (or guardians) – or indicate if they were raised in a single-parent household. The measure does not categorize per se, but rather is for use in correlation. The measure also allows detection of first-generation college student participants.

Facilitator Preparation

Facilitators participated in training sessions (either in person or in an online format) with the researcher to learn about the sequencing of the session, the content to be delivered, and the process of facilitating each exercise. These sessions lasted about one hour and took place several weeks before the scheduled session. Follow-up sessions were held with the researcher to address any questions or concerns of the facilitator before she offered the session to students.

The trainer guide sets forth the complete agenda (see Appendix B), with instructions for each section of the session, including what information to deliver to students and the process for each period of time. A high level of standardization for the content and process of the session was established and communicated to each of the trainers. Each facilitator has worked in higher education directly with students for many years, is knowledgeable about the typical outcomes

reported by students who studied abroad, and understands that this study aims to examine the employability benefits of learning abroad.

What remains as uncontrolled variables are the personality of each trainer, the students' perception of that trainer, his or her likeability, perceived credibility, and ability to connect with students. All the facilitators understood that, as discussed in the Literature Review section on critical reflection, a facilitator's role is not neutral; rather it is to guide and sometimes even challenge the student. For example, the facilitator may suggest that the student offer more detail to a story or consider how the example might be regarded by a potential employer or think carefully about which skill to focus on for a given situation.

Rating Students' Stories Using a Rubric to Establish Criteria

The development of a rubric containing criteria on which to rate for open-ended responses (offered by students in the pre- and post-surveys) was informed by established matrices from the areas of critical reflection and student learning outcomes. As noted in the Literature Review, learning rubrics are commonly used as a tool to assess student learning outcomes, and contain four essential features (Stevens & Levi, cited in Center for Teaching & Learning, UC Berkeley 2016):

1. A task description or a descriptive title of the task students are expected to produce or perform;
2. A scale (and scoring) that describes the level of mastery (e.g., exceed expectation, meets expectation, doesn't meet expectation);
3. Components/dimensions students are to attend to in completing the assignment/tasks (e.g., types of skills, knowledge, etc.); and
4. Description of the performance quality (performance descriptor) of the components/dimensions at each level of mastery (para. 2).

The researcher and raters addressed how to best identify the qualities that determine how a story should be assessed and found that the learning outcomes rubrics published by the AAC&U (2009) provided guidance. These rubrics “articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment” (para. 1). The sample rubrics helped guide the establishment of criteria for rating the students’ story examples for this study. The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics (Rhodes, 2010) offer a definition followed by descriptors across skill areas – for example, cultural self-awareness, problem-solving, empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication, curiosity and openness.

As an example, two categories of the four levels of the Problem-Solving from the AAC&U *Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric* (2009, p. 24) appear in Table 3-3 and another example focuses on writing in Table 3-4 (2009, p. 32). The rubric provides a framework for assessing qualitative information (oral or written work done by the student) based on the established criteria, assigning it to one of the rubric levels. The graduated levels of the rubric describe an increasingly sophisticated outcome and a higher level is considered to show greater mastery of the task or in its fulfillment of the criteria. The rubric developed for this study is holistic in nature – as described by Moskal (2000) – with one rating assigned per story, by considering the components in combination on a single scale.

Table 3-3

Descriptors from Two Categories of the AAC&U Problem-Solving Rubric

Definition: *Problem solving is the process of designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal (AAC&U, 2009, p. 24)*

	Capstone Level 4	Milestones Level 3	Level 2	Benchmark Level 1
<i>Define Problem</i>	Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement with evidence of all relevant contextual factors.	Demonstrates the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, and problem statement is adequately detailed.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, but problem statement is superficial.	Demonstrates a limited ability in identifying a problem statement or related contextual factors.
<i>Identify Strategies</i>	Identifies multiple approaches for solving	Identifies multiple approaches for solving	Identifies multiple approaches for solving	Identifies multiple approaches for solving

Table 3-4

Descriptors from Two Categories of the AAC&U Written Communication Rubric

Definition: *Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum (AAC&U, 2009, p. 32).*

	<u>Capstone</u> Level 4	<u>Milestones</u> Level 3	Level 2	<u>Benchmark</u> Level 1
<i>Context and Purpose of Writing</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<i>Content Development</i>	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.

Because students were asked an open-ended question, there were a variety of skills which they described in their examples, yet the goal was to develop criteria that could apply across any type of skill development. As recommended in the AAC&U *VALUE Rubrics* (2009), one additional level was placed at the bottom of this project's rubric for written examples that did not

meet even the minimal criteria. Thus, a five-level rubric was ultimately used to assign a level to students' responses to the open-ended question using these levels and categories:

	<u>AAC&U Category Name:</u>	<u>Category Name in this project:</u>
Level 0	Does not meet Level 1	Unacceptable
Level 1	Benchmark 1	Below Satisfactory
Level 2	Milestone 2	Satisfactory
Level 3	Milestone 3	Above Satisfactory
Level 4	Capstone 4	Exceptional

In such relatively short stories for this study, raters would not be expected to detect all of the qualities described by AAC&U in each level, but the identified rubrics serve as an essential guide, including key characteristics that helped guide which level to assign. There is also the element of “story” that the raters were seeking – typically the STAR formula requires a beginning, middle and end – or the demonstration of a specific outcome, a resolution to the problem, or an insight that shows some level of self-awareness. This was a key consideration in the assessment, and because a greater number of words are necessary to achieve a higher-level rating for this rubric, one-sentence responses were automatically assigned a Level 0.

Definition of task. The definition of the task for this study's rubric is modeled on the text of the survey question students responded to and incorporates the elements of the STAR formula: *Crafting a suitable story about a skill you developed while abroad involves explaining when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace. This means offering information about the situation, what needed to be done, and how you resolved the problem, learned new insights, and acquired new skills or abilities that potential employers can appreciate.*

Session learning objectives as foundation for rubric criteria. The learning objectives of the session (as listed in the Trainer Guide) relate directly to the rubric criteria:

- Reflect on the experience to identify skills and qualities developed in studying abroad.
- Identify situations experienced abroad to support claims of skills/qualities.
- Develop short ‘stories’ to demonstrate skills in interviews.
- Understand the importance of preparing for job interviews.

With the above as its foundation, the rubric then offers greater detail in order to assess the student’s example of skill development. For example, the session introduces specific skills (vocabulary) and reviews in-depth the elements of offering an example with an outcome that “tells a story” or demonstrates a behavior (skill).

The five rubric rating levels. The raters used these criteria as the basis to build the five levels, and incorporate the elements of the STAR formula:

- Speaks about or refers to oneself in a specific situation while abroad
- Uses content that is appropriate for a job interview
- Provides information on the situation (e.g., problem, challenge, issue, etc.)
- Identifies what was needed to do to resolve situation (task)
- Explains the action taken
- Summarizes results, citing specific outcome; may explain how the demonstrated skill has value in the workplace.
- Is succinct but of sufficient length to include a story-like quality

There was also the level of richness and sophistication to consider as examples ranged from finding a lost object to trying to understand the cultural differences at play working in a diverse group. Some descriptors were very general – for example, “*I learned to adapt to completely new situations*” which were scored lower than those that were more specific, for example, describing having gone through the process of completing a project in a group with students from several different cultures.

The levels are described here intending to point to both mechanics and richness of the content. See Appendix E for a 2-page formatted version of this rubric information

Level 0 – Unacceptable: Does Not Meet Criteria

Mastery Level: *Non-Responsive*

Characteristics:

- Lacks specificity and context in describing a skill demonstrated abroad
- Very brief (e.g., responses that only named a single skill or quality were given this rating)
- Wholly inappropriate as an interview response (student does not recognize the intended audience)

Level 1 – Below Satisfactory: Minimally Meets Criteria

Mastery level: *Fairly Competent*

Characteristics:

- Offers basic information using broad or sweeping statements to describe a skill demonstrated abroad
- May identify a skill but is very general
- Offers a vague idea of what action was taken to address the situation (e.g., “I adapted” [generally-speaking])
- Topic is not highly substantive
- Is considered barely sufficient for an interview response

Level 2 – Satisfactory: Sufficiently Meets Criteria

Mastery level: *Competent*

Characteristics:

- Shows consideration of interview context, and understands the task of describing a skill demonstrated abroad
- Provides a sufficient description context of the situation abroad, but may be vague
- Identifies (names) a skill or trait
- Refers to oneself in situation
- Explains (at least partially) how a skill was applied, but still rather broad in scope
- Rather brief, but a satisfactory interview response

Level 3 - Above Satisfactory: Fully Meets Criteria

Mastery level: *Very Competent*

Characteristics:

- Speaks about oneself in a specific situation
- Describes the context/situation with a greater degree of detail

- Explains what needed to be done (task)
- Describes the action taken, and some idea of the result, but may still have some vagueness or describe a situation in general terms
- Topic is sufficient but may be slightly lacking in substance
- References to host cultures may show sensitivity or appreciation (but do not show insensitivity)
- Story length is sufficient to offer a complete narrative (beginning/middle/end)
- A solid interview response

Level 4 - Exceptional: Exceeds Criteria

Mastery Level: Sophisticated

Characteristics:

- Speaks about oneself in a specific situation
- Provides information on substantive situation (problem, challenge, issue, etc.) with rich context
- Identifies what was needed to do to resolve issue
- Explains the action taken
- Summarizes results, citing specific outcome; may explain its value in workplace and/or show insights gained
- Respectful, may show multiple perspectives
- Story length provides full narrative and includes relevant details
- Demonstrates (and describes that) an insight was gained, a shift in thinking occurred, or an new attitude was developed that will positively impact behavior in the future based
- An exemplary interview response

Establishing interrater reliability and agreement. Before the raters began to assign scores that would be officially recorded, a preliminary Fleiss' kappa was calculated based on the ratings assigned by each of the three raters for a sampling of students' open-ended stories. A Fleiss kappa is an extension of a Cohen's kappa for use of attribute agreement when there are three or more raters and allows for raters to be randomly chosen from within the group of raters for an observation (Fleiss & Cohen, 1973). Initially, the inter-rater kappa was initially less than .70 and was considered less than acceptable to proceed with additional ratings. Thus, the rating criteria were reviewed, some revisions were made to clarify criteria at levels 1 and 2, and a discussion took place among the raters to further solidify an understanding of the review process.

Another sampling of stories was then scored by each of the three raters. This resulted in a Fleiss' kappa of .79, which was considered acceptable to proceed. In guidelines by Landis and Koch (1977), the strength of the kappa coefficients is interpreted with a value of 0.01 to 0.20 as *slight*; 0.41 to 0.60 as *moderate*; 0.61 to 0.80 as *substantial*; and 0.81 to 1.00 as *almost perfect*.

Assigning a rubric level to student stories. The researcher provided students' responses in manageable-sized batches of one or two groups' sets of stories to each rater starting in late Fall 2017 and concluding in April 2018. To calculate the level, each story was assessed by two of the three raters; a randomization of pairs for each group was used throughout, thus each rater ultimately reviewed approximately two-thirds of the stories in the study.

Raters coded students' stories based on the criteria established in the rubric. The coding was reviewed by the researcher and was referenced if there was disagreement between the raters. If the initial assigned ratings matched, that score was recorded as the final rating. If the scores assigned by the raters did not match, a discussion took place to resolve the discrepancy. It should be noted that where any differing ratings occurred, the vast majority were only one level apart.

Because the reflection sessions and surveys were administered in English across both the U.S. and Europe, there were non-native English speakers among both session and control group participants. All of the European campus-based contacts and the session facilitators were confident that students could successfully participate in English. The raters focused on the communicative aspect of any responses that contained language errors – thus overlooking grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes that did not interfere with comprehension – and rated all stories based on the degree to which they described the situation, task, action and result of demonstrating a skill.

Data Analysis

Pre-session and post-session survey responses, along with subject demographic data on region, group, and gender, will be compiled into one electronic spreadsheet for data analysis in the SPSS 25 statistical analysis program. Prior to interpreting the results of the analysis, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance of the dependent variables (the Likert responses composing the assessment measure and the story ratings) will be assessed.

In order to answer Question #1, the data will be assessed for assumptions of normality and a General Linear Model (GLM) is used to determine if there were significant differences between the Control and Experimental groups as the result of Experiment subjects' participation in the intervention session. The repeated measures General Linear Model (GLM) analysis will have two levels of *intervention* (this refers to a pre-session survey for Experiment and a first survey for Control – “PRE”; and post-session survey for Experiment and a second survey for Control – “POST”), with four dimensions of *assessment* (reflection, identification, confidence, preparation) as within-subject measures, and *group* (control, experiment), *gender* and *region* (U.S., Europe) as the between-subject measures. The dependent variables in this analysis are the participants' Likert scores obtained in the pre- and post-session surveys on the items pertaining to students' perceived reflection and identification of skills developed abroad and their confidence and preparedness for job interviews. Statistical significance will be evaluated using a significance level of .05.

In order to answer Question #2, the pre-session scores of the story ratings will be assessed for assumptions of normality. A repeated measures General Linear Model (GLM) will be used to analyze the data; the significance of the correlation coefficients will be evaluated using a significance level of .05. The variables will include a repeated measure *story rating* (PRE

and POST) as a within-subject measure, and *group* (control, experiment), *gender* and *region* (U.S., Europe) as the between-subject measures, with Bonferroni corrections applied in the process to minimize the occurrence of Type I errors due to multiple variables.

Ethical Procedures

Internal permission. A proposal for this research involving human subjects was submitted to UCSC's Ethics Committee for approval on 17 May, 2017. Approval was granted on 9 June, 2017 to proceed in administering the surveys as presented to students and to have students as participants in the facilitated reflection sessions (see Appendix F for approval letter).

Students as research subjects. The majority of study participants completed the pre- and post-session surveys and attended intervention sessions that were offered outside of a regular academic course, so were purely volunteer subjects. On two campuses however, the sessions were part of an academic course; thus attending was a course requirement while completing the pre- and post-session surveys for this study was optional and remained voluntary.

Informed consent. All participants (session and control group) were presented with this statement of informed consent at the start of the first survey and asked to state (type) their name to signal agreement to these conditions:

- *My participation in this study is voluntary.*
- *I will complete this survey and the post-session survey.*
- *Participant anonymity will be kept throughout the research by assigning an anonymous code in data files, and separating identifying details and the informed consent from the survey content.*
- *My name will not be used in any reporting of the research findings.*

- *The data will be used for the sole purposes of this present study.*
- *Each participant will have free access to their personal data throughout the project by contacting the researcher.*
- *Any audio files or the session or any interviews will be destroyed upon completion of the study.*

Additionally, these two conditions were presented to the experiment group only:

- *The length of the session will be approximately one hour.*
- *The session may be recorded and later transcribed for exclusive use by the researcher.*

Confidentiality. The Ethics Committee was informed that these steps would be taken by the researcher to maintain confidentiality of session and control group participants in this study:

- Consent forms (on completed surveys) will be held by the Principal Investigator and not shared with anyone.
- Subjects will be asked to voluntarily identify themselves for the sake of correlating the pre- and post-session data, but no names will be used in published work. All privacy will be maintained.
- The data will be analyzed in aggregate. Any example of a student's story in published research will not use proper names but may identify subject by gender, nationality, country of study abroad, academic major/course, and include examples of the stories they shared about skill development and the experience of examining one's skills.

Possible risks and benefits of participation in reflection session. There are potential benefits to subjects, as they may realize the skills they developed from studying abroad and find themselves prepared to articulate those skills to potential employers (for example, in job

interviews). Students may gain insights about themselves, their international experience and how that may relate to their career goals.

There is very little risk to students, but when asked to write in a workbook and speak about their experiences abroad, students could recall a serious challenge they faced abroad that causes them emotional duress. Several responses that the facilitator could offer include: telling the participant that they are not required to continue sharing the example, allowing the participant to leave the session with another session facilitator if deemed required, and/or encouraging the participant to obtain counseling with a qualified psychologist. The participants in this research were not compensated or financially rewarded in any other way.

Summary

This mixed methods project is designed to further knowledge of the impact of students' critical reflection of skills they identified from studying or interning abroad, and their ability to talk about them in ways that employers will appreciate. The quantitative surveying combined with the review and rating of the students' qualitative, descriptive responses to the open-ended question will make for robust analysis. The next chapter will examine the results and offer information relevant to the research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 4: Results

This study sought to assess the impact of a facilitated reflection session on students' ability to identify their transferable skills developed abroad and to speak about them in ways that employers appreciate – that is, by showing how they have demonstrated a skill that is considered valuable in the workplace. This research addresses the primary question: Does an hour-long facilitated reflection session for undergraduates positively impact their ability to identify and articulate the transferable skills they developed as the result of studying or interning abroad?

The first research sub-question of this study is intended to assess the impact of the reflection session based on a pre- and post-survey which both included the same four questions that compose the four dimensions of the assessment measure – whether the session impacted students' *Reflection* of the connection between studying abroad and transferable skill development; their *Identification* of specific skills they developed abroad; their *Confidence* in speaking accurately about their skills to potential employers, and finally, their *Preparation* of specific examples of skills developed while abroad.

The second sub-question examines whether attending the intervention results in students' ability to craft a higher quality story (or example) of their skill development from abroad. This assessment is based on the students' response to this question, which was posed in both the pre- and post-session survey:

Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

The main variables were *the intervention* – with the pre-session (PRE) survey and the post-session (POST) survey; and *group* – control vs. experiment, to examine the effect of the session on experiment subjects versus the control subject who did not participate in a session. In

addition, the variables of *region* – U.S. versus Europe, and *gender* – male versus female, were added into the analysis. These two hypotheses and predictions address the two research sub-questions:

Hypothesis 1: Participation in the reflection session impacts students' perceived reflection, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

Prediction 1: Participation in the reflection session will increase students' perceived reflection, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

Hypothesis 2: Participation in the reflection session impacts the quality of students' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Prediction 2: Participation in the reflection session will increase the quality of students' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Further inquiry on independent variables of Gender and Region: Two independent variables of gender (male, female) and region (Europe and U.S.) were added to determine whether there were any significant differences based on these traits. For example, it was expected that the impact of the reflection session on students' perceived levels of *reflection*, *perceived identification*, *confidence*, and *preparation* of skills developed abroad will not differ between women and men nor between U.S. and European students, nor in their ability to write about their skill development. The GLM provided data on the significance of any of these variables in an initial omnibus test; any α -values that met the < 0.05 value used in this study was further analyzed in post hoc tests to determine the effect.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected over a period of ten months beginning in August, 2017 and ending in June, 2018. The process of data collection involved both groups (Control and

Experiment) completing two surveys; the session participants (Experiment) attended the intervention between the completion of the two surveys, while the control group participants did not.

Experiment group (session participants). After host institutions were identified in the United States and Europe, each respective campus contact announced the session to undergraduates at their institutions who had returned from studying or interning abroad. Campus contacts set the date and time and asked students to register for the session in advance (in most cases the contact was the one facilitating the session, but other staff assisted in this organization process as well).

For the pre-session survey, the facilitators had the option of gathering responses from their students either online or at the very start of the session as students arrived; the facilitators were allowed to make this decision because they know what works best for their institutions and students. All institutions chose to request that students complete the survey online via SurveyMonkey (<http://www.SurveyMonkey.com>, 2019) in advance; the timeline for this was less than one week prior to the session, usually several days. In a few cases, intervention participants had not registered or completed the online survey in advance of arriving at the session, so were asked to do so on paper before the session began (19 in U.S. sessions; 2 in Europe). All intervention participants completed the post-session survey on paper at the end of the session, and left the form with the facilitator. The paper forms were submitted to the researcher either in person, or via email as imaged pdf documents.

Control group. The control group participants were identified by the researcher’s contacts in the United States and Europe, with the collaborating institutions agreeing to email the survey link to their eligible undergraduates returning from abroad. The control group participants completed both the first survey and follow-up survey online. Because of privacy concerns, each institution requested to initiate an email from within their own system containing the survey link (see Appendix C for complete surveys) to participants who had studied abroad anywhere in the world for an academic semester (or at least 10 weeks) and who were still undergraduates. All participating institutions reported that they strived to use current email addresses, but because the institutions sent the link directly to students in an email, the exact response rate is difficult to calculate (since undeliverable messages were not reported to the researcher). However, the estimated control group response rate(s) are shown in Table 4-1 with a completed survey response rate of 15.2%.

Table 4-1

Control Group Sampling Process by Region and Related Response Rate at Each Stage

Stages of sampling process	U.S.	Europe	<i>n</i>	Response rate (%)
Students sent first survey	465	254	719	
Completed first survey	166	186	352	48.9
Provided email to receive follow up survey	113	94	207	28.7
Opened follow-up survey	113	34	147	20.4
Completed follow-up survey	85	25	110	15.2

Data Management

The SurveyMonkey program was used for online data collection in this study – this included the pre-session survey for the experiment group and both the pre- and post-session surveys for the control group – and then migrated to Excel. It has been noted in the previous chapter that if session participants did not complete the pre-session survey online and in advance, they were asked to complete the survey in paper form upon arriving, while all of the post-session surveys were done on paper. Data from paper surveys were recorded into Excel by the researcher and once the data collection was complete, it was loaded into SPSS for analysis.

Screening for outliers, missing values and accuracy. In examining the data prior to analysis, steps were taken to be consistent with regard to outliers, missing values and unmatched pre- and post-surveys. First, records were eliminated that did not match up with both a first and second survey (in both experiment and control groups). Second, because there is always the risk that survey respondents will simply check the same response down the page for each question, the researcher had set up the four assessment measure questions in both the online and paper survey with notations to the respondents to use caution in that the scales were not all formatted in the same direction (i.e., for some questions *Strongly Agree* was on the right-hand side of the page, and sometimes on the left). This was intentional in order to avoid or reduce the likelihood of students simply checking the same response down the same column for each question. The researcher also examined records for any non-responses to questions or indications that the student did not take the survey with sufficient seriousness

Nearly all of the records were 100% complete, although there were records eliminated for being insufficiently complete as to be unusable. There were several optional questions on the survey and a record was not eliminated if an optional response was missing. These included the

gender question, the ethnicity question for U.S. participants and the four questions about parents' level of education and field of employment (in order to derive Barratt's Simplified Measure of Social Status as descriptive data of this sample). The final combined total of control and experiment participants in this study is 290; any descriptive plots or analyses done with fewer participants are noted.

Process of recording students' responses to open-ended question. The control group completed both surveys online using the SurveyMonkey program with the responses then loaded into Excel. The session participants' written pre-session story examples were downloaded from the online survey program (or were manually entered if student completed a paper survey) into the Excel spreadsheet. The post-session story examples were all hand-written by students in the post-session survey and they were manually entered in Excel, then sent to the raters in batches by group. The raters documented their scores and sent written recordings to the researcher by the requested deadline. The pre- and post-session records were matched up by using the students' emails and the pre- and post-story scores were recorded in each student record before importing the complete data set into the software for analysis.

Treatment fidelity. The intervention in this study involved a reflection session of approximately one hour, led by trained facilitators. All had experience working directly with students; all except one had experience working with students on the topic of skill identification and delivering sessions such as this one prior to their involvement in this study. The researcher reviewed the agenda, process and protocol of the session with each facilitator, which was detailed in the trainer guide and student workbook. Training sessions between the research and each facilitator took place either in person (with 4), or in online meetings (with 3). The trainers understood that they had an active role in formulating comments and questions as to help

students improve the content of their examples and the accuracy of messages intended for use in future a job interview.

To achieve a high level of consistency across sessions, an agenda was detailed in its specifications of timing and process, yet minor variances were unavoidable in the deliveries among facilitators given different personalities and styles.

Demographics

It is important to note that the descriptive data will often be shown both by region (U.S. and Europe) and by group (experiment and control) in order to provide a comparison of the profile for each trait. Because some categories are more complex than others, the researcher decided which combinations were relevant for each descriptive factor.

This study had a final total of 290 records, with 107 (37%) undergraduates from Europe and 183 (63%) from the United States. Table 4-2 shows a breakdown by group and region.

Table 4-2

Number of Participants by Group and by Region

Group	Europe	United States	TOTAL
Control	22 (20%)	76 (42%)	98
Experiment	85 (80%)	107 (58%)	192
TOTAL	107	183	290

Gender. The survey asked students to indicate their gender for which three options were offered: *female*, *male*, *other*. Three participants did indicate *other* as their response, however one was incomplete, and it was determined the other two would need to be eliminated since the resulting cell size was too small for an analysis including *other* as a gender category throughout

the study. As shown in Table 4-3 for European participants, 67% ($n = 74$) were female; this aligns very closely with the figure of 65% for female participation reported in the *EIS* (2014, p. 33). For U.S. participants, females comprised a higher percentage at 87%, ($n = 159$). This is a larger percentage than the U.S. average for women studying abroad, which as reported in *Open Doors 2017* (IIE, 2017, p. 81), was 66.5%. Table 4-4 adds the group percentages to show the gender breakdown for Control and Experiment.

Table 4-3

Frequency Table of Gender by Region

Gender	European	U.S.
Female	74 (67%)	159 (87%)
Male	33 (31%)	24 (13%)
Other	0	0
TOTAL	107	183

Table 4-4

Frequency Table of Gender by Group

Gender	European Experiment	European Control	U.S. Experiment	U.S. Control	Total
Female	58	16	92	67	233 (80%)
Male	27	6	15	9	57 (20%)
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	85	22	107	76	290

Race/Ethnicity. A survey of race/ethnicity U.S. participants was included for the purpose of comparing the study sample to the national profile of U.S. students in the *Open Doors*

report published annually by IIE (2017). The question was not asked of European students since data on the ethnic composition of European students studying abroad does not appear to be available. Answering this question was optional with seven students declining to provide information. Figure 4-1 shows a breakdown of percentages by ethnicity; Table 4-5 displays the data by group: control and experiment.

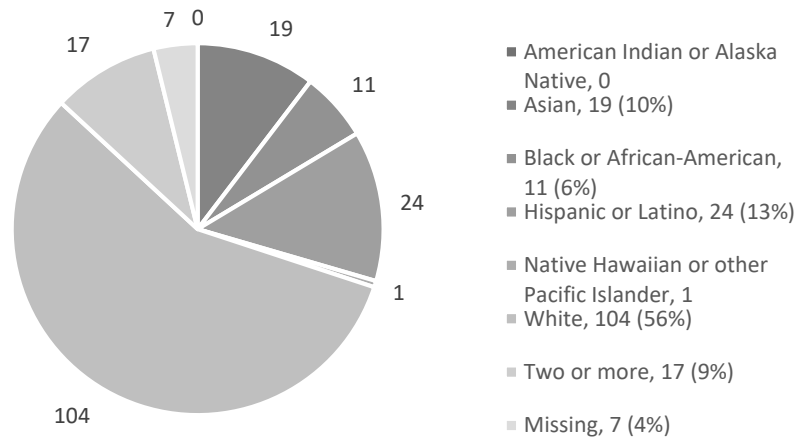


Figure 4-1. Pie chart showing percentages of ethnicities of U.S. participants

Table 4-5

Ethnicities of U.S. Students, by Group (Control v. Experiment)

Ethnicity	U.S. Control	U.S. Experiment	<i>n</i>	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0
Asian	4	15	19	10
Black or African-American	4	7	11	6
Hispanic or Latino	4	20	24	13
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	1	1	.5
White	54	50	104	56
Two or more	7	10	17	9
Missing	3	4	7	4
TOTAL	76	107	183	100%

Comparison of ethnicities of sample to U.S. population. In Table 4-6 the ethnicity of U.S. students in this study is compared to the national data reported in the annual survey, *Open Doors 2017* (IIE, 2017). The percentage of students of color in this study was 44% versus the 29% reported as a U.S. average; the percentage of white U.S. students in this study was 56%, versus 71% reported as a U.S. national average in 2017 (see Figure 4-2).

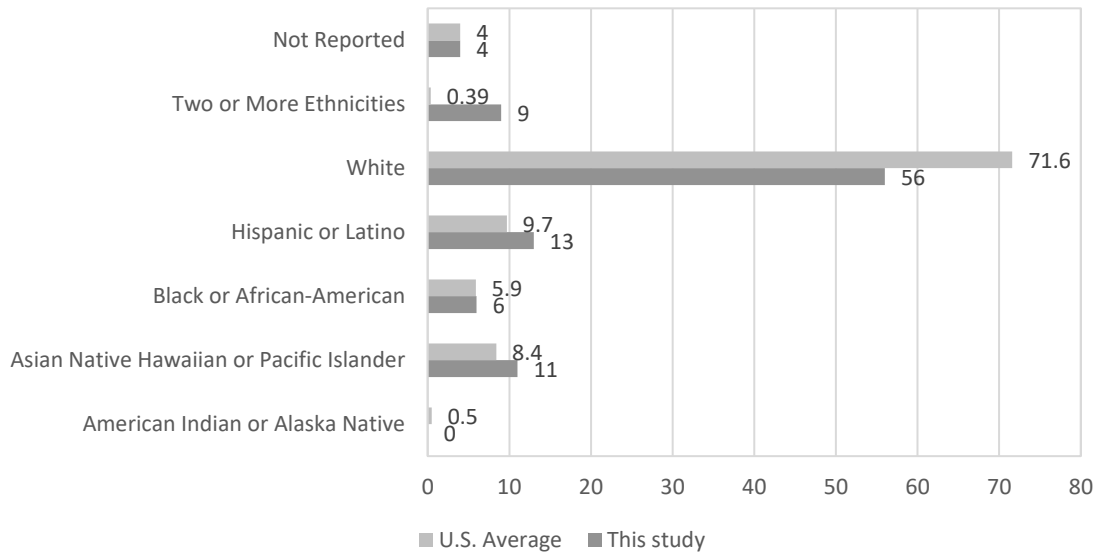


Figure 4-2. Comparison of percentage by ethnicity of U.S. participant sample in this study compared to reported percentages by ethnicity in U.S. population who study abroad. (IIE, 2017)

Descriptive Information About Program Participation Abroad

The descriptive information sought from participants in the pre-session survey about academic program, accommodation, program length and involvement abroad add to the profile of the study sample. Just as with the demographic information presented above, determinations have been made for each section about whether to display the data according to group or region, or both in order to best be able to compare and contrast the sample by trait.

Frequency and length of time abroad. In order to screen participants to ensure that they had spent at least one academic semester (or at least 10 weeks total, in order to allow for students who may have participated in a U.S. quarter term) abroad, students were asked several questions. The first was to determine whether they had spent at least 10 weeks abroad; those who had spent less were eliminated from the data set. The frequency data in Table 4-6 indicates the total number of weeks that participants had studied or interned abroad; the minimum number of weeks abroad

was 10, with the maximum being 112. Several participants reporting long periods of time abroad pushed the mean upwards to 24 weeks ($M = 23.90$, $SD = 15.03$, $SE = 0.88$); the European average of 31 weeks was considerably higher than the average of 19 weeks for U.S. students (see Table 4-7). The mode – perhaps an important measure given the large range of reported time spent abroad – was 14 weeks.

Table 4-6

Participation by Number of Weeks Studied or Interned Abroad

Total # Weeks Abroad	European Students		U.S. Students	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
10-13	7	6.4	20	11
14-16	10	9	9	50
17-20	19	17.4	37	20
21-30	2	25	1	7.6
31-40	2	23	9	5
41-50	8	7	5	3
More than 50	12	11	6	3
TOTAL	107		183	

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Table 4-7

Mean Number of Weeks Abroad, by Region

Region	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
European	31.12	17.39	107	1.67	1.97	5.46
U.S.	19.65	11.54	183	0.85	3.28	12.65

Age of participants. The vast majority (90%) of participants ($n = 261$) in this study were traditional university-age students while abroad, ranging in age from 18 to 23 ($M = 21.43$, $SD = 1.99$, $SE = 0.12$, $Min = 18$, $Max = 31$). Table 4-8 provides a breakdown by age for each region.

Table 4-8

Frequency Table for Age of Participants

Age	European Students		U.S. Students		TOTAL	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	N	%
18	2	2	0	0	2	1
19	7	7	3	4	10	.5
20	14	13	55	19	69	24
21	32	30	82	45	114	39
22	28	26	16	9	44	15
23	10	9	12	7	22	8
24	8	7	4	3	12	4.1
25	2	2	4	3	6	2
26	2	2	1	1	3	1
27	2	2	1	1	3	1
30	0	0	2	3	2	1
31	0	0	1	1	1	.05
Missing			2	3	2	2
TOTAL	107		183		290	

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Destination countries of the participants. Participants in this research studied and/or interned on six continents. The European students reporting studying within the Erasmus

scheme member countries and beyond. The highest number of European students reported having studied in multiple countries ($n = 13$). This likely occurred due to the practice of students splitting their internship period between two countries.

The United Kingdom was the second most frequent destination ($n = 10$) of European students, followed by Spain ($n = 8$) and the United States ($n = 8$). Spain was the most frequent destination reported by U.S. students ($n = 30$), followed by the United Kingdom ($n = 29$), then Italy ($n = 22$). This aligns closely with the top three destinations of U.S. students as reported in *Open Doors* (IIE, 2017, p. 84) with the percentage of U.S. students the highest in the United Kingdom (12.2%), followed by Italy (10.8%) then Spain (9%). Table 4-9 offers a breakdown of host countries for all participants, by region (U.S. and Europe).

Table 4-9

Host Countries of European and U.S. Students While Abroad

Host Country	European Students	U.S. Students	Host Country	European Students	U.S. Students
Argentina	0	1	Denmark	0	2
Australia	6	7	Estonia	1	0
Austria	2	4	France	7	13
Bangladesh	0	1	Germany	9	5
Belgium	1	0	Greece	0	1
Bhutan	0	1	Hong Kong	1	1
Bonaire	1	0	Hungary	0	1
Canada	4	0	Iceland	1	0
Chile	1	0	India	0	3
China	4	0	Ireland	2	4
Costa Rica	0	9	Israel	0	2
Czech Republic	1	10	Italy	1	22

Host Country	European Students	U.S. Students	Host Country	European Students	U.S. Students
Japan	1	5	South Africa	4	3
Jordan	0	1	South Korea	2	2
Kenya	0	1	Spain	8	30
Lithuania	2	0	Sweden	0	2
Mexico	1	2	Taiwan	1	1
Multiple	13	14	Tanzania	1	0
New Zealand	0	2	Thailand	5	0
Portugal	4	0	The Netherlands	3	0
Qatar	1	0	United Kingdom	10	29
Russia	0	1	United States	8	*2
Senegal	0	1	TOTAL	107	183
Slovenia	1	0	*Resulted due to international students participating in the session		

Year of undergraduate study while abroad.

U.S. Students. The Open Doors 2017 report (IIE, 2017) indicates that most U.S. undergraduates study abroad in their third year (as juniors), which was the largest single percentage (52%) reported in this sample for the U.S. region participants (see Table 4-10). The percentage of U.S. students who spent a semester abroad was 31.9%, while 2.3% spent an academic year abroad in 2015-16 (IIE, 2017, p. 90); participants of these program lengths were the focus of this study.

Table 4-10

Year of Undergraduate Study While Abroad for U.S. Participants, by Group

Year of Undergraduate Study While Abroad, U.S. Participants	Control	Experiment
First	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Second	26 (35%)	22 (21%)
Third	42 (56%)	52 (49%)
Fourth	7 (9%)	25 (24%)
Fifth	0 (0%)	5 (5%)
Other	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Missing	3	1
TOTAL	76	107

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

European Students. Table 4-11 shows that the highest percentage (50%, $n = 48$) of European participants also reported studying or interning abroad in their third year of study.

Table 4-11

Year of Undergraduate Study While Abroad for European Participants, by Group

Year of Undergraduate Study While Abroad, European Participants	Control	Experiment
First	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Second	1 (5%)	32 (39%)
Third	11 (50%)	37 (44%)
Fourth	2 (9%)	7 (8%)
Fifth	8 (36%)	3 (4%)
Other	0 (0%)	3 (4%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Academic Information: Program Type/Course of Study

The survey collected data on the type of academic program students participated in abroad. European campus facilitators advised that the wording of the responses appearing on the U.S. survey should be modified on the European survey for students to best describe their most common practices. Many U.S. students participate either in programs designed only for U.S. students, or in programs offered in English in which host country students are not allowed to enroll, while it appears fewer European students are enrolled in these specially-designed programs. Thus, the descriptive data for this category is shown separately for U.S. and European students while allowing a visual comparison of the regions. Table 4-12 shows the frequencies and percentages of type of academic course of study for the U.S. students. Table 4-13 shows that 29% of European students reported doing internships; this compares to the reported U.S. percentage of 4%. The most frequently observed category for U.S. students was the same for both control ($n = 40$, 54%) and experiment ($n = 46$, 43%) groups, and that is [that they took] *Courses with U.S. and other international students*. The largest percentage of European students were in the regular university system of their host institution ($n = 48$, 44%) as shown in Table 4-13. In addition, 15% ($n = 27$) of U.S. students had participated on a faculty-led program (that is, with faculty from their home institution traveling with and teaching them abroad).

Table 4-12

Reported Type of Academic Course of Study by U.S. Students

Type of academic course of study for U.S. Participants	U.S. Control	U.S. Experiment
<i>Course type</i>		
With only U.S. students	20 (27%)	22 (21%)
U.S. and other international	40 (54%)	46 (43%)
In regular university system	13 (18%)	30 (28%)
Not applicable e.g., did an internship	0 (0%)	4 (4%)
Other	1 (1%)	5 (5%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Table 4-13

Reported Type of Academic Course of Study by European Students

Type of academic course of study for European Participants	Control	Experiment
<i>While abroad, I took courses:</i>		
Which enrolled international students	6 (27%)	20 (24%)
In the regular university system	15 (68%)	33 (38%)
Not applicable, did only an internship	0 (0%)	24 (29%)
Other	1 (5%)	8 (10%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Academic major of participants. Participants were asked to indicate the discipline of their academic major or course of study by choosing from one of ten options in addition to a choice of *Other* (and for which students were thus asked to name their major/course of study) along with the option of *undeclared*. All responses of *Other* were placed into a suitable discipline category; for example, environmental science was placed under natural sciences. The results below show the breakdown by discipline. Note that the total number of responses ($n = 333$) in Table 4-14 exceeds the total number of participants in the study ($n = 290$) because students could indicate more than one discipline if they had more than one major ($n = 43$). The number of business/management majors is the highest discipline represented in the study at 41%; this aligns with the fact that several sessions in Europe took place at business schools. The second most frequently reported discipline is foreign language/international studies at 21%, and the third most frequently reported is the social sciences at 16.5%.

Table 4-14

Academic Major by Discipline

Discipline	<i>n</i>
Business/Management	119
Communication/Journalism	29
Education	7
Engineering	2
Fine & Applied Arts	5
Foreign Language or International Studies	61
Humanities	26
Legal Studies/Law Enforcement	8
Math	2
Natural Sciences	14
Social Sciences	48
Undeclared	4

Reported Motivations to Study Abroad

Mean and placement rankings were calculated for the motivations for having studied or interned abroad that were offered as choices in the survey. They included: *Fulfilling degree requirements, Enhancing my resume, Learning about another culture, Learning a foreign language, Spending time with friends who were studying abroad, Improving my employability, and Travel opportunities*. A five-point Likert scale was offered for each motivation: 5 = *Extremely Important*, 4 = *Important*, 3 = *Neither important nor unimportant*, 2 = *Less important*, 1 = *Not at all important*.

Motivation factor rankings. Table 4-15 shows the mean scores and Figure 4-3 through Figure 4-9 offer the frequency of Likert responses for each motivation to study abroad. The highest mean (see Figure 4-3) was *Learning about another culture* ($M = 4.53, SD = 0.70$); this includes all participants across both groups and regions. The second-highest ranked motivation (see Figure 4-4) was *Travel opportunities* ($M = 4.49, SD = 0.81$), followed by *Learning a foreign language* (Figure 4-5). The two career-related responses ranked fourth and sixth, respectively -- Figure 4-6, *Improving my employability* ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.06$) and Figure 4-8, *Enhancing my resume* ($M = 3.76, SD = 0.99$). Figure 4-7 plots the frequency of responses for *Fulfilling degree requirements* as a motivation. The lowest mean score (see Figure 4-9) was for the motivation *Spending time with friends* ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.45$)

Skewness and kurtosis were also calculated for the motivation means in Table 4-15. When the skewness is greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The factors *Learning about another culture* and *Travel opportunities* show the highest degree of this asymmetrical distribution with a negative skew – resulting from a disproportionately large number of students rating them very highly.

Table 4-15

Mean, Standard Deviation and Skewness of Motivation Factor Responses

Motivation Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Learning about another culture	4.53	0.70	289	0.04	-1.63	2.83
Travel opportunities	4.49	0.81	287	0.05	-1.67	2.41
Learning foreign language	3.87	1.24	288	0.07	-0.89	-0.29
Improving my employability	3.85	1.06	288	0.06	-0.84	0.14
Fulfilling degree requirements	3.78	1.24	288	0.07	-0.86	-0.32
Enhancing my resume	3.76	0.99	286	0.06	-0.82	0.18
Spending time with friends	2.67	1.45	289	0.09	0.18	-1.39

Figure 4-3 through Figure 4-9 show plots of the frequency of responses for each motivation listed in Table 4-16.

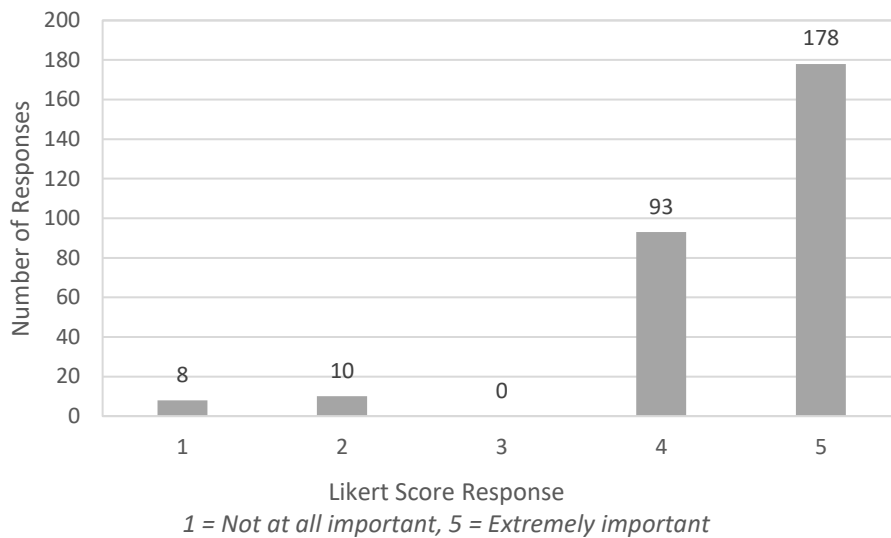


Figure 4-3. Likert responses to *Learning About Another Culture* as a motivation to study abroad.

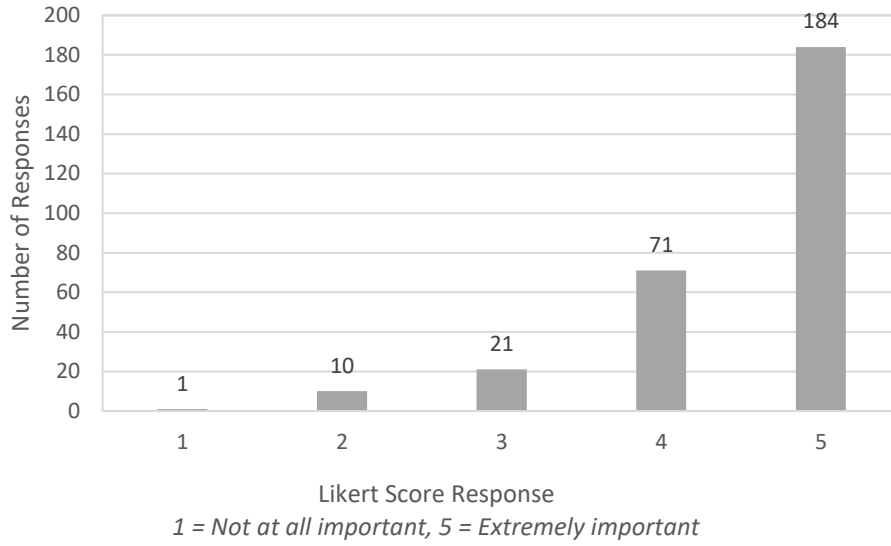


Figure 4-4. Likert responses to *Travel Opportunities* as a motivation to study abroad

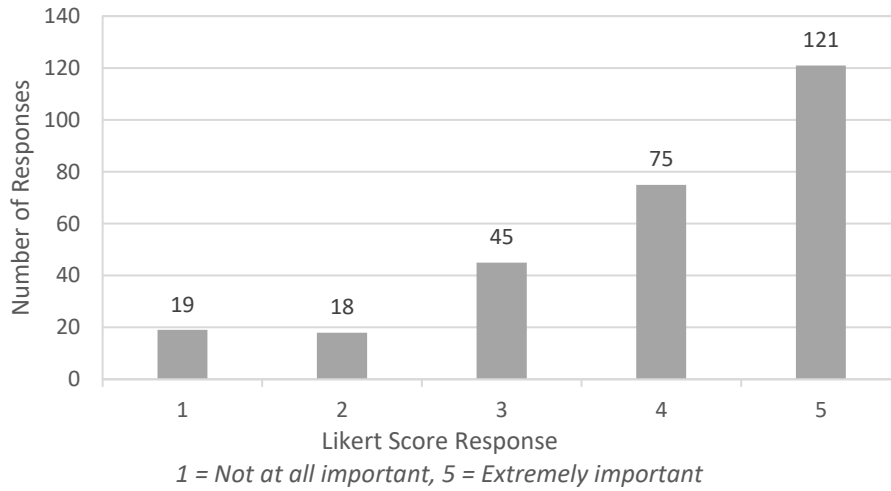


Figure 4-5. Likert responses to *Learning a Foreign Language* as motivation to study abroad

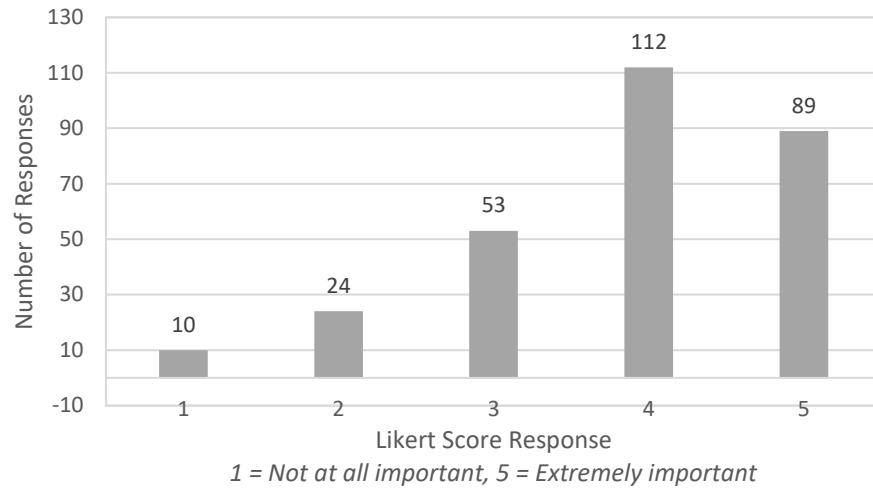


Figure 4-6. Likert responses to *Improving My Employability* as motivation to study abroad

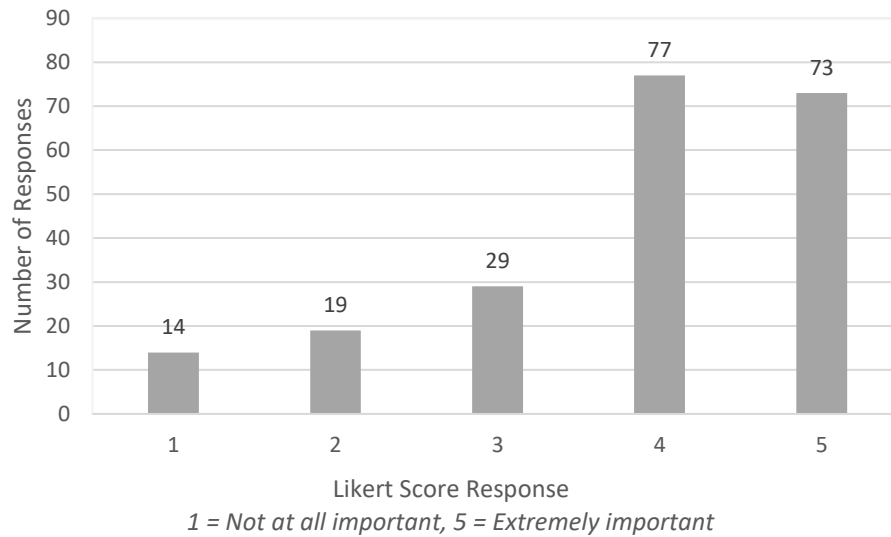


Figure 4-7. Likert responses to *Fulfilling Degree Requirements* as motivation to study abroad.

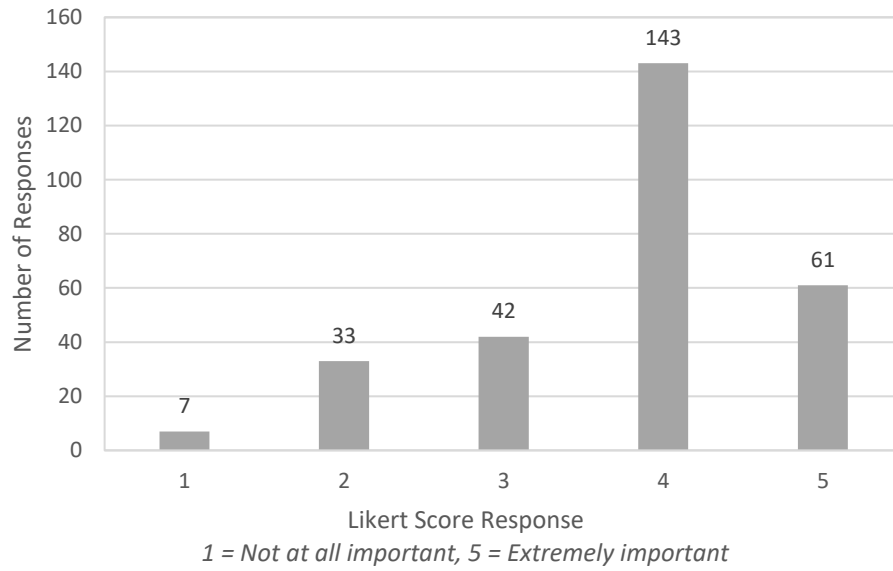


Figure 4-8. Likert responses to *Enhancing My Resume* as motivation to study abroad

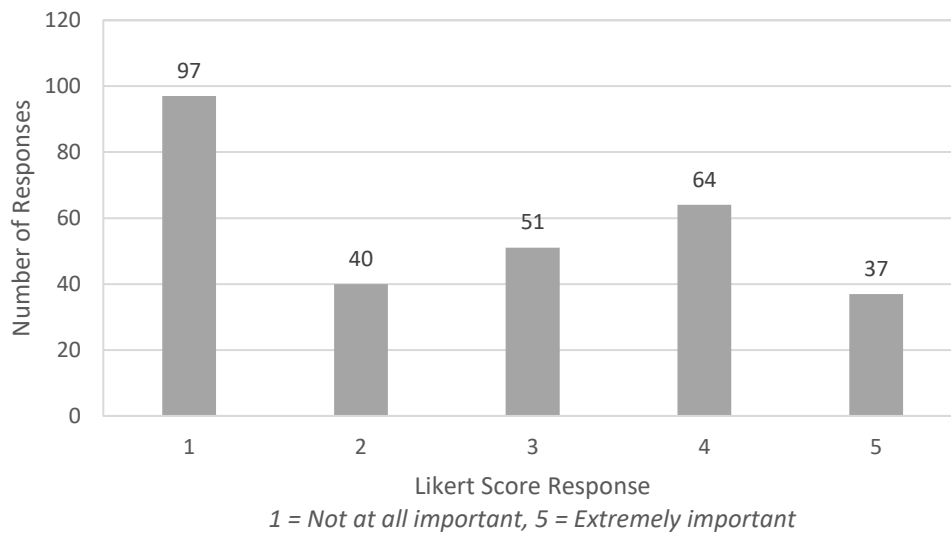


Figure 4-9. Likert responses to *Spending Time with Friends* as motivation to study abroad

Motivation factor breakdown by region: U.S. and European students. Overall the results were very similar by region, but there were some differences in the students' rank order of motivations. For both U.S. and European participants, the top motivation reported for studying abroad was *Learning About Another Culture* as shown in Figure 4-3 (U.S. Mean = 4.62, European Mean = 4.37). Both groups had the same second-highest reported motivation as well: *Travel Opportunities* (see Figure 4-4). The average for the European students was 4.36 ($SD = 0.85$, $SE = 0.08$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00); while the mean for the U.S. group was slightly higher at 4.56 ($SD = 0.77$, $SE = 0.06$, Min = 2.00, Max = 5.00).

The career-related response in Figure 4-6 for *Improving my Employability* was the third-highest rated motivation of European students ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.87$, $SE = -1.15$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00). The European response to follow next in Figure 4-5 was *Learning a Foreign Language* ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.20$, $SE = -1.31$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00). U.S. students' third-highest rated motivation (see Figure 4-7) was *Fulfilling Degree Requirements* ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.30$, $SE = 0.10$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) followed by *Learning Another Language* ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.25$, $SE = 0.09$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) as shown in Figure 4-5. See Table 4-16 where skewness and kurtosis were also calculated and indicate that students respond a high level of development across these skills.

Table 4-16

Likert Score Means for Motivations to Study Abroad, Split by Region

Motivation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Fulfilling Degree Requirements						
European	3.70	1.13	105	0.11	-0.91	0.27
U.S.	3.82	1.30	183	0.10	-0.85	-0.54
Enhancing My Resume						
European	4.07	0.78	104	0.08	-1.11	2.21
U.S.	3.59	1.06	182	0.05	-0.59	-0.42
Learning About Another Culture						
European	4.37	0.78	106	0.08	-1.32	1.48
U.S.	4.62	0.62	183	0.05	-1.79	3.82
Learning Foreign Language						
European	4.13	1.20	106	0.12	-1.31	0.63
U.S.	3.72	1.25	182	0.09	-0.70	-0.54
Spending Time with Friends						
European	2.57	1.43	106	0.14	0.30	-1.32
U.S.	2.73	1.46	183	0.11	0.12	-1.42
Improving My Employability						
European	4.19	0.87	106	0.08	-1.15	1.27
U.S.	3.66	1.11	182	0.08	-0.64	-0.26
Travel Opportunities						
European	4.36	0.85	106	0.08	-1.40	1.87
U.S.	4.56	0.77	181	0.06	-1.87	2.91

Motivation factor breakdown by group: Control vs. Experiment. For both the control group and the experiment group, the top motivations reported for having studied abroad were abroad *Learning about another culture* (Control Mean = 4.59, Experiment Mean = 4.49). Both groups had the same second-highest reported motivation as *Travel Opportunities*. The mean for the control group was 4.56 ($SD = 0.79$, $SE = 0.08$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00). The mean for the experiment group was 4.45 ($SD = 0.81$, $SE = 0.06$, Min = 2.00, Max = 5.00). The career-related response *Enhancing my resume* was the third-highest rated motivation for Control ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.00$, $SE = 0.10$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) and was ranked sixth by Experiment ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.00$, Min = 2.00, Max = 5.00). For the control group, the motivation of *Improving my employability* had an average of 3.77 ($SD = 1.12$, $SE = 0.11$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) while for the experiment group, the motivation *Improving my employability* had an average of 3.90 ($SD = 1.03$, $SE = 0.07$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00). Skewness and kurtosis were also calculated in Table 4-17.

Table 4-17

Likert Score Means for Motivations to Study Abroad, Split by Group

Motivation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Fulfilling Degree Requirements						
Control	3.67	1.38	98	0.14	-0.69	-0.88
Experiment	3.83	1.16	190	0.08	-0.93	0.05
Enhancing My Resume						
Control	3.83	1.00	98	0.10	-0.91	0.29
Experiment	3.73	1.00	188	0.07	-0.78	0.14
Learning About Another Culture						
Control	4.59	0.64	98	0.06	-1.77	3.76
Experiment	4.49	0.72	191	0.05	-1.55	2.42
Learning Foreign Language						
Control	3.75	1.27	97	0.13	-0.73	-0.55
Experiment	3.93	1.23	191	0.09	-0.97	-0.11
Spending Time with Friends						
Control	2.54	1.42	98	0.14	0.31	-1.26
Experiment	2.73	1.47	191	0.11	0.12	-1.44
Improving My Employability						
Control	3.77	1.12	98	0.11	-0.77	-0.05
Experiment	3.90	1.03	190	0.07	-0.86	0.22
Travel Opportunities						
Control	4.56	0.79	98	0.08	-2.24	5.47
Experiment	4.45	0.81	189	0.06	-1.41	1.18

Reported Skills Developed While Studying Abroad

The survey contained a section asking students to identify the skills they believed they had developed abroad by using a Likert Scale response. The question read: *Please indicate the degree to which you believe you developed any of these skills abroad.* These Likert Scale options were offered: 7 = *Significantly Increased*; 6 = *Moderately Increased*, 5 = *Slightly Increased*, 4 = *No Change*, 3 = *Slightly Decreased*, 2 = *Moderately Decreased*, 1 = *Significantly Decreased*.

Table 4-18 provides a summary of mean scores and standard deviations along with skewness and kurtosis for each skill factor. The skills with a high kurtosis are all skewed left (negative) which indicates that responses to those questions received a high Likert score by many respondents. The option of *Other* was offered, where students could write-in their own skill. While 30 students did so – for example, *non-verbal communication, independence* – those are not charted in the tables below.

The skill *Flexibility/Adaptability* (Figure 4-15) had the highest mean ($M = 6.43$, $SD = 0.86$, $SE = 0.05$). Other reported skills with means above 6.00 were *Confidence* ($M = 6.34$, $SD = 0.96$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in Figure 4-11; *Curiosity* ($M = 6.30$, $SD = 1.03$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in Figure 4-13; *Self-Awareness* ($M = 6.29$, $SD = 0.91$, $SE = 0.05$) shown in Figure 4-21; *Communication Skills* ($M = 6.28$, $SD = 0.87$, $SE = 0.05$) shown in Figure 4-10; *Open-Mindedness* ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 1.07$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in Figure 4-19; *Initiative* ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 1.01$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in Figure 4-16; and *Problem-Solving* ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 1.00$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in Figure 4-20.

Those reported skills that had a mean below 6.00 are: *Tolerance of Ambiguity* ($M = 5.91$, $SD = 1.12$, $SE = 0.07$) shown in Figure 4-23; *Empathy* ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.14$, $SE = 0.07$) shown

in *Figure 4-14*; *Teamwork* ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.16$, $SE = 0.07$) shown in *Figure 4-22*; *Language Skills* ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.17$, $SE = 0.07$) shown in *Figure 4-17*; *Course or major-related knowledge* ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.13$, $SE = 0.07$) shown in *Figure 4-12*; *Leadership Skills* ($M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.08$, $SE = 0.06$) shown in *Figure 4-18*; and *Work Ethic* ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.30$, $SE = 0.08$) shown in *Figure 4-24*. A graph with frequency of responses follows for each skill (see *Figure 4-9* to *Figure 4-24*) to provide a visual of the frequency and distribution of responses which indicate students report a high level of perceived skill development across all of the responses offered. The survey collected data on the type of academic program students participated in abroad.

Table 4-18

Summary of Skill Development Means, Reported Across all Participants

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communication Skills	6.28	0.87	289	0.05	-1.73	5.11
Confidence	6.34	0.96	288	0.06	-1.95	4.86
Course or major-related knowledge	5.71	1.13	287	0.07	-0.87	0.87
Curiosity	6.30	1.03	289	0.06	-1.68	3.04
Empathy	5.83	1.14	288	0.07	-0.86	0.56
Flexibility/Adaptability	6.43	0.86	289	0.05	-1.87	5.31
Initiative	6.11	1.01	288	0.06	-1.43	2.79
Language Skills	5.74	1.17	289	0.07	-0.73	0.42
Leadership Skills	5.70	1.08	289	0.06	-0.65	0.38
Open Mindedness	6.26	1.07	289	0.06	-1.45	1.98
Problem Solving	6.09	1.00	288	0.06	-1.11	1.58
Self-Awareness	6.29	0.91	289	0.05	-1.49	3.35
Teamwork	5.75	1.16	289	0.07	-0.62	-0.16
Tolerance for Ambiguity	5.91	1.12	289	0.07	-0.91	0.62
Work Ethic	5.43	1.30	289	0.08	-0.62	-0.02

Figure 4-10 through Figure 4-24 display the frequency of Likert scores reported across all students (both groups –Control and Experiment, and regions – U.S. and Europe) for each skill.

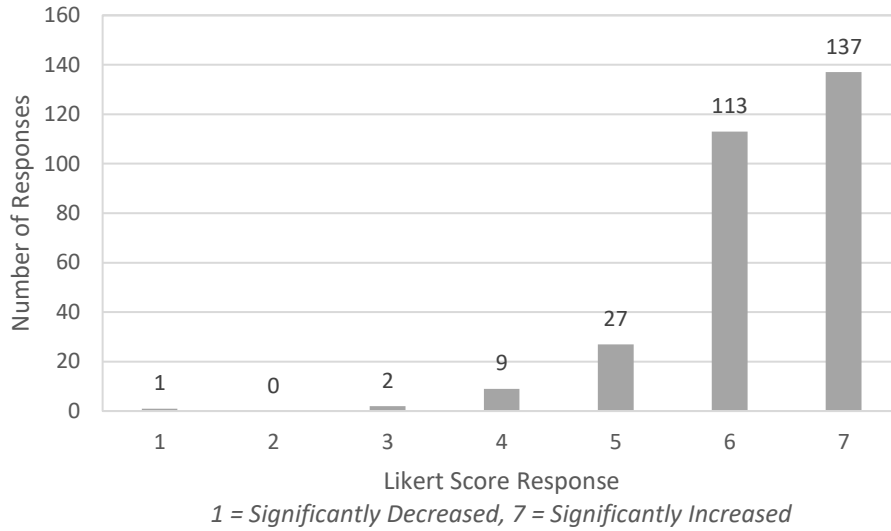


Figure 4-10. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Communication Skills*

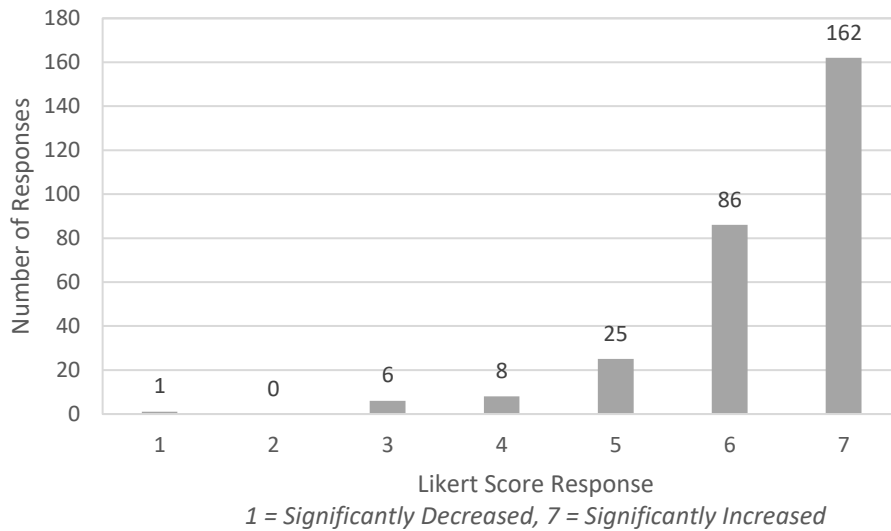


Figure 4-11. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Confidence*

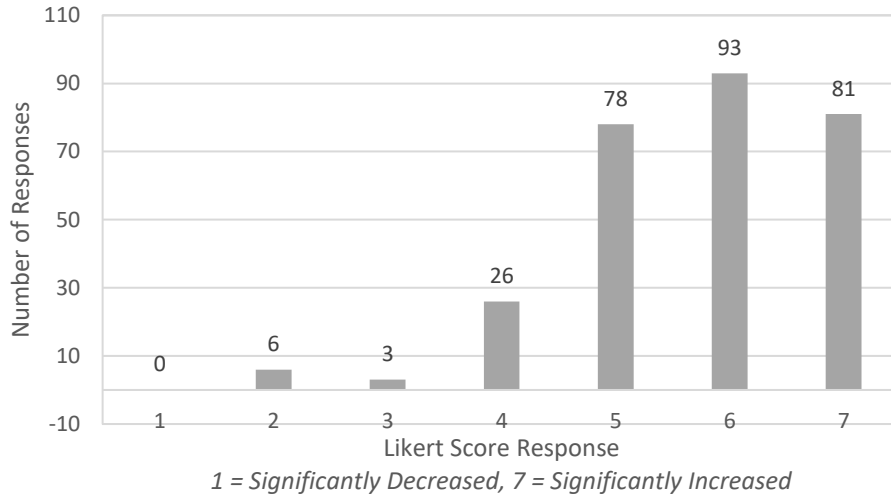


Figure 4-12. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Course or Major-Related Knowledge*

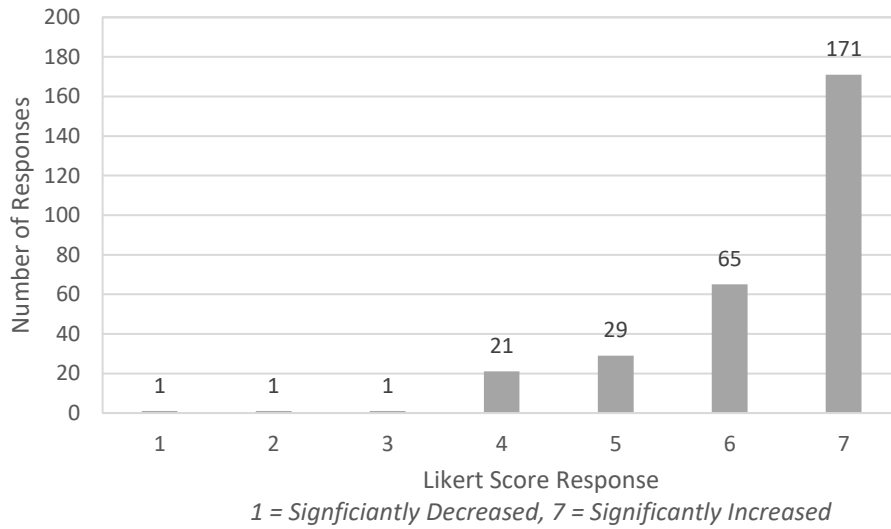


Figure 4-13. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Curiosity*

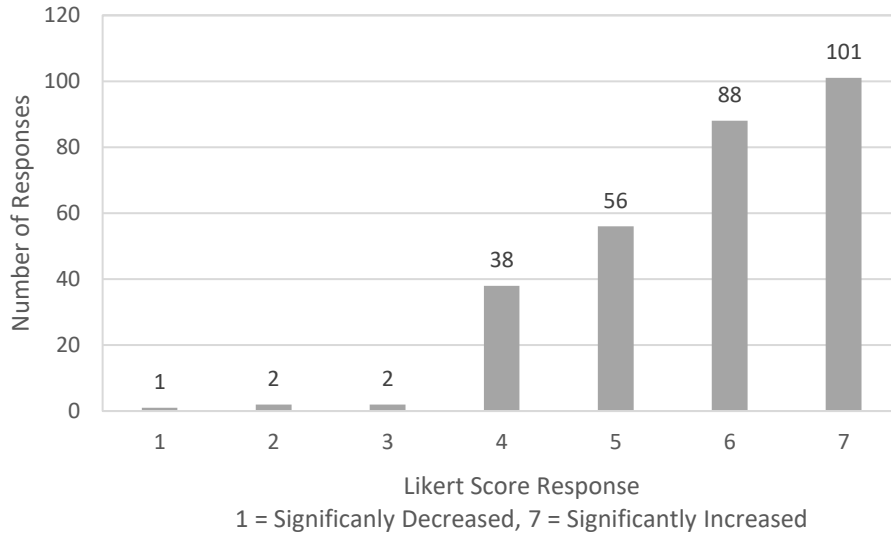


Figure 4-14. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Empathy*

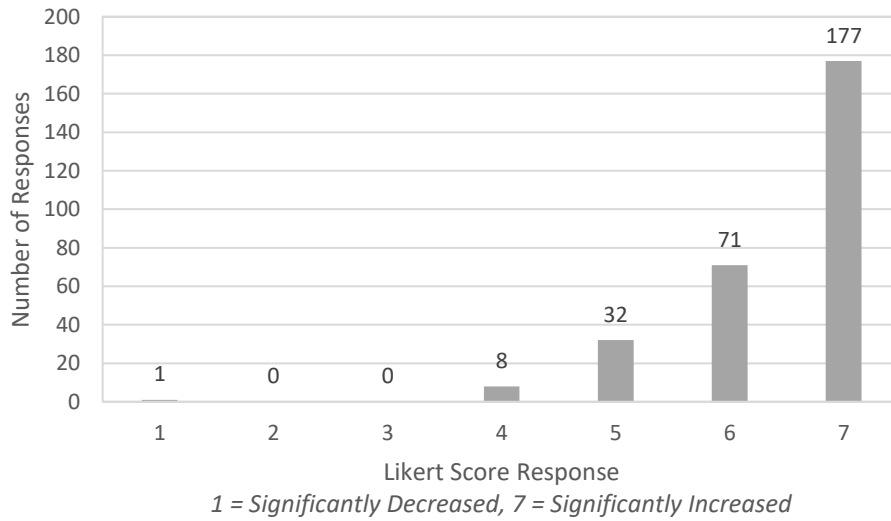


Figure 4-15. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Flexibility/Adaptability*

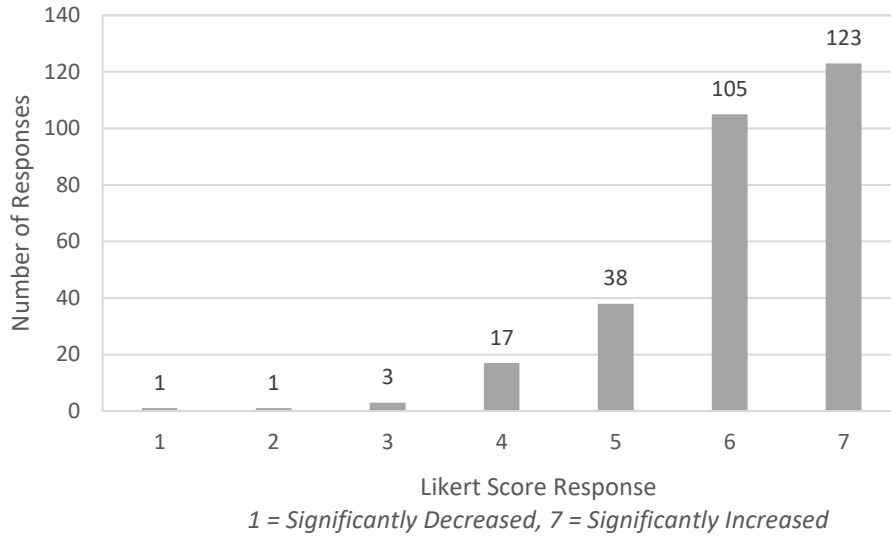


Figure 4-16. Frequency of responses of reported skill development: *Initiative*

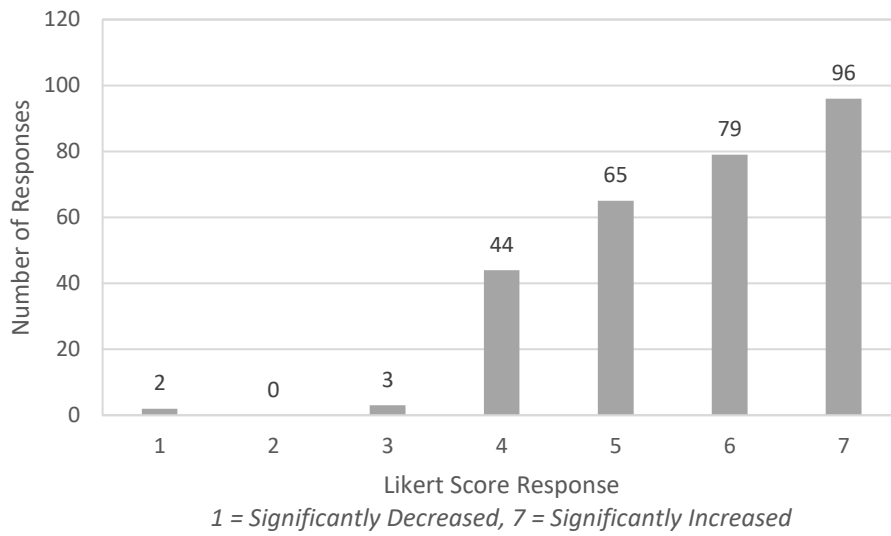


Figure 4-17. Frequency of responses: *Foreign Language Skills*

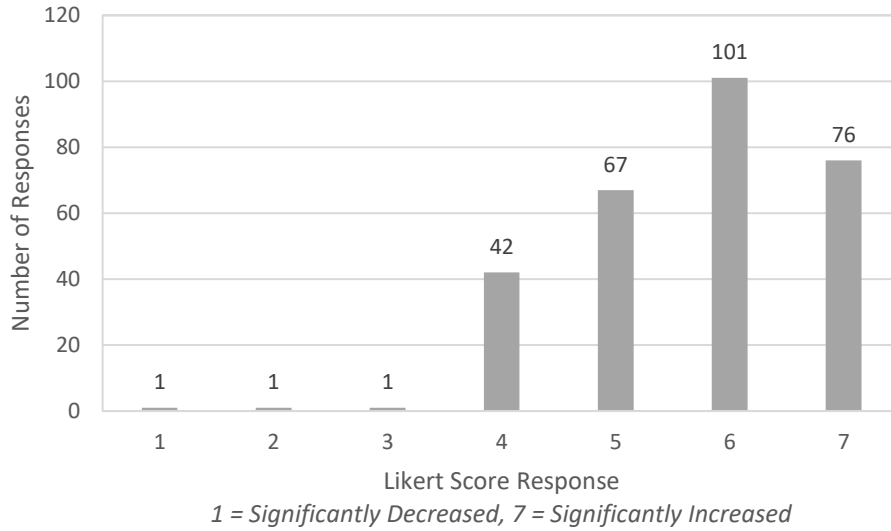


Figure 4-18. Frequency of responses of reported skill development: *Leadership Skills*

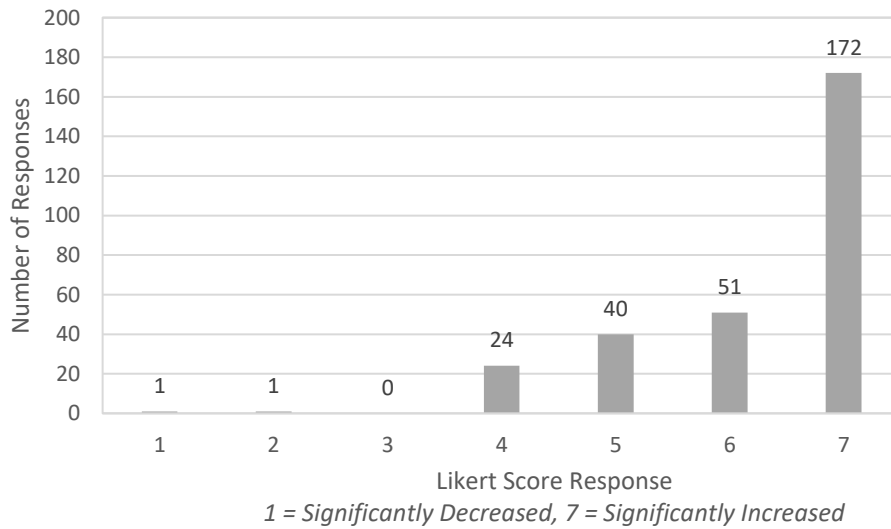


Figure 4-19. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Open-Mindedness*

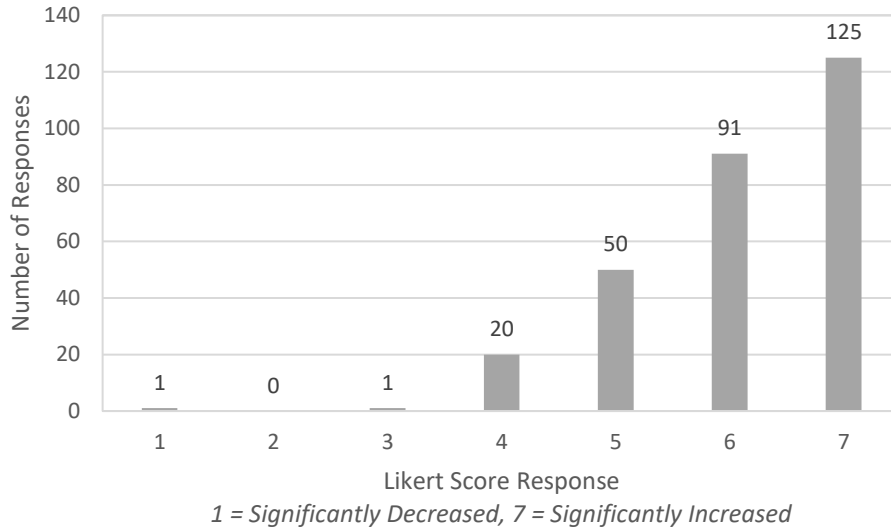


Figure 4-20. Frequency of responses of reported skill development: *Problem-Solving*

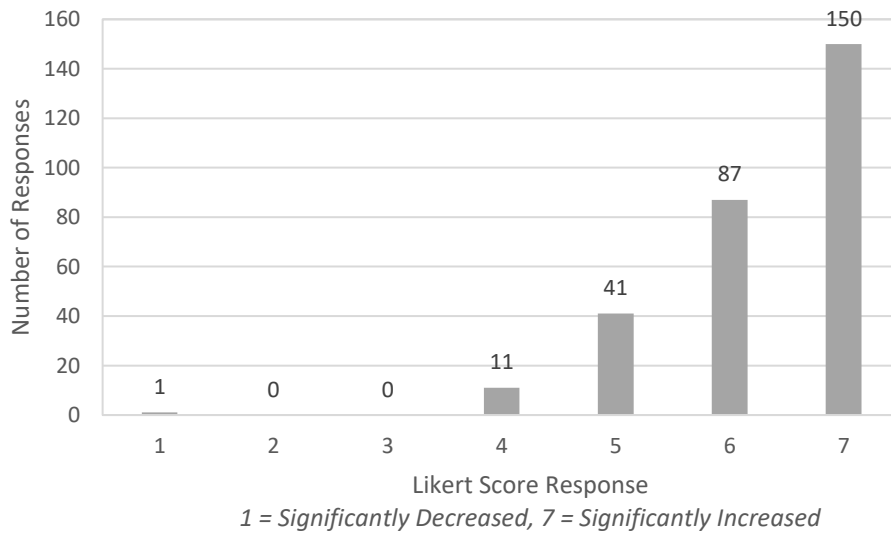


Figure 4-21. Frequency of responses of reported skill development: *Self-Awareness*

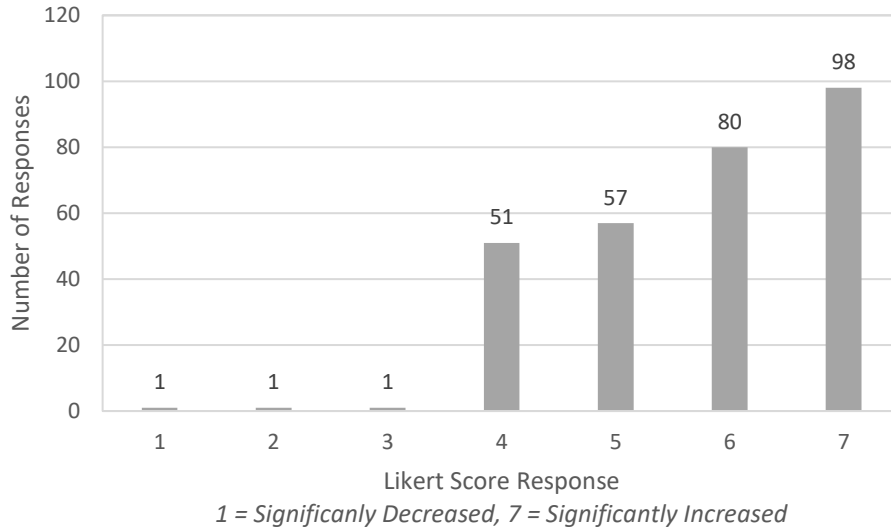


Figure 4-22. Likert responses of reported skill development: *Teamwork*

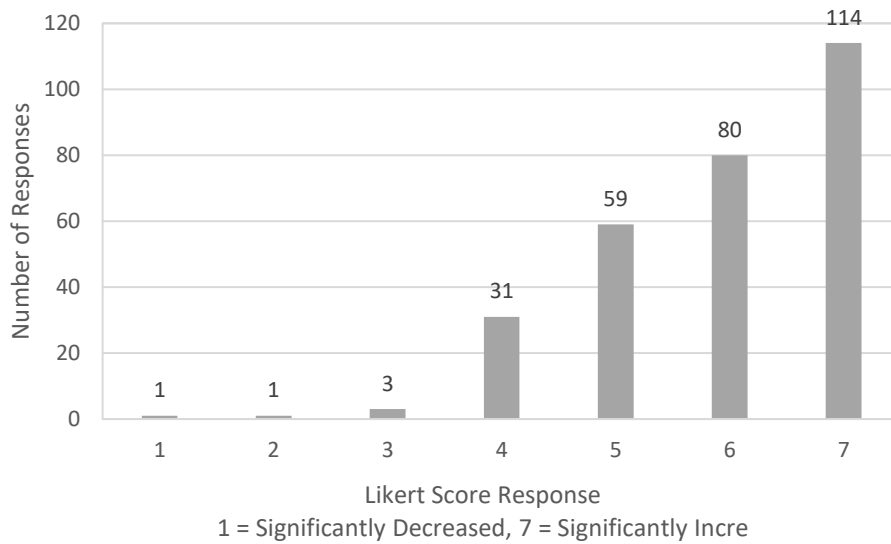


Figure 4-23. Likert response of reported skill development: *Tolerance of Ambiguity*

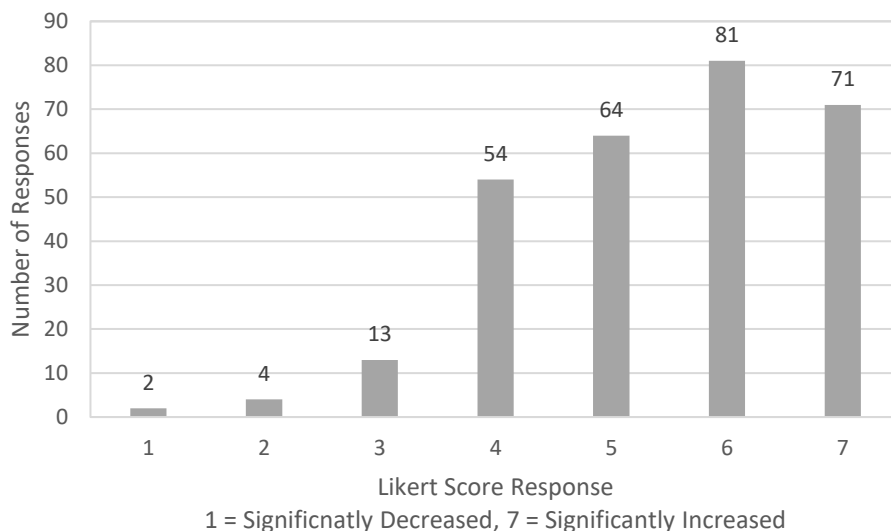


Figure 4-24. Frequency of responses of reported skill development: *Work Ethic*

Summary of reported skill development. Students reported a high degree of developing the skills listed in the survey in response to this question: *Please indicate the degree to which you believe you developed any of these skills abroad* and for all of the choices offered. The skill with the highest mean was Flexibility/Adaptability ($M = 6.43$). Confidence was second ($M = 6.34$, $SD = 0.96$), followed by Curiosity with the third-highest mean score ($M = 6.30$). The skill with the lowest mean was Work Ethic ($M = 5.43$), yet even this lower mean appears to be high on this 7-point Likert scale.

The highest number of students also cited Adaptability/Flexibility as the skill they described in their open-ended stories (see section Research Question #2: Results of Story Ratings). The mean score of all skills combined was 6.01 (*Moderately Increased*). The mean scores by group and region appear in Appendix G. The skill development results will be addressed further in the Discussion chapter.

Skill Development Reported in Students' Stories. In both the pre- and post-surveys, students were asked to name the skill they had just described in their response to the open-ended question (or their story). Referring to Adaptability/Flexibility was the most frequent response ($n = 87$), which aligns with this being the skill with the highest mean of reported skill development above. The skills described in students' stories are listed in descending order of reported frequency in Figure 4-25.

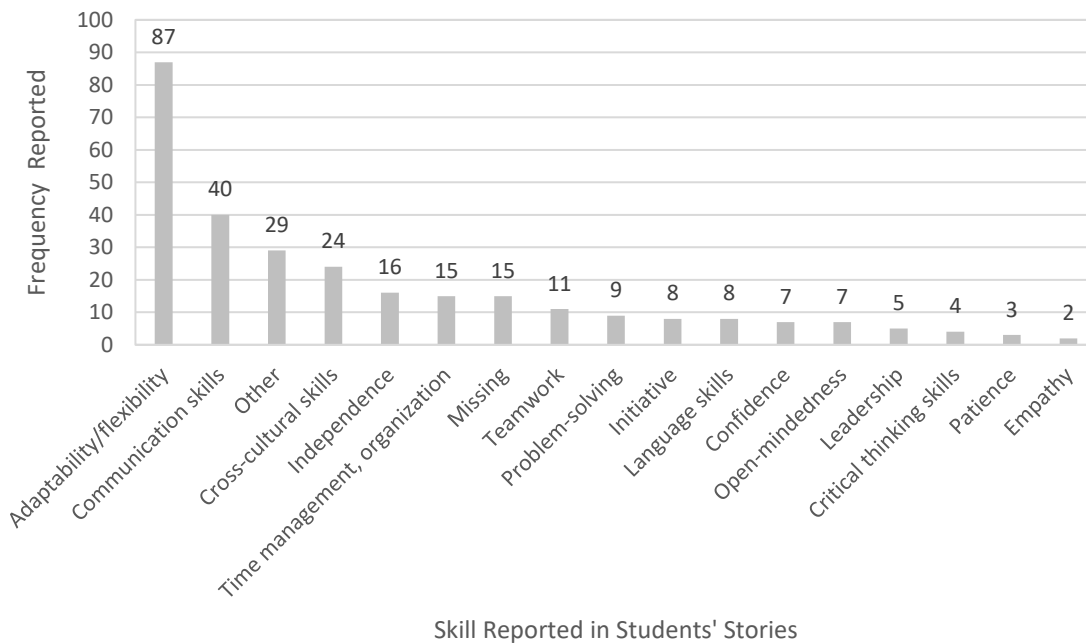


Figure 4-25. Skills reported in students' stories

Student Responses Regarding Value of the Session to Prompt Reflection

A statement on the post-session survey (for Experiment only) read *Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained from studying abroad and been able to describe them accurately.* A 7-point Likert Scale was offered with these responses: 7 = *Strongly Agree*, 6 = *Agree*, 5 = *Agree Somewhat*, 4 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 3 = *Disagree*

Somewhat, 2 = *Disagree*, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*. The overall average of the entire data set was 5.00 (see Table 4-19). The European students had an average of 5.15 ($SD = 1.25$, $SE = 0.15$) while the U.S. students had an average of 4.88 ($SD = 1.61$, $SE = 0.17$). This question was included in order to assess student perception of the value of the reflection process. The findings will be addressed in the Discussion chapter.

Table 4-19

Summary Statistics of Likert Scale responses to “Without attending this Session” question

“Without Attending” factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Combined regions	5.00	1.47	167	0.11	-0.69	0.12
European	5.15	1.25	72	0.15	-0.59	0.02
U.S.	4.88	1.61	95	0.17	-0.63	-0.15

Perception of Impact of Study Abroad to Provide Transferable Skill Development

Another question on the post-session survey (for Experiment participants only) sought to assess students’ perception of the impact of studying abroad on the development of their skills relative to other life experiences. The statement read:

Check the answer that best describes your thoughts (read all first, then choose one):

- Overall, the strongest examples of skill development that I can share with potential employers are from studying abroad.*
- I have strong examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but have equally as strong examples from other experiences in my life as well.*
- I have good examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but examples from other experiences in my life are stronger.*
- I have no examples of skill development from studying abroad; all of my examples will be from other life experiences.*

Summary statistics of the impact of study abroad on transferable skills. The observations in Table 4-20 for this question had an average of 3.06 ($SD = 0.65$, $SE = 0.05$, Min = 1.00, Max = 4.00). The European participants had an average of 3.06 ($SD = 0.59$, $SE = 0.07$, Min = 2.00, Max = 4.00). The U.S. participants had the exact same mean ($M = 3.06$), but with a greater distribution of responses ($SD = 0.70$, $SE = 0.07$, Min = 0.00, Max = 4.00) as indicated by the kurtosis measure of 3.88.

Table 4-20

Mean of Likert Scale responses for “Strongest Examples of Skill Development” factor

“Strongest Examples” factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Combined regions	3.06	0.65	164	0.05	-0.86	2.92
Europe	3.06	0.59	69	0.07	-0.01	-0.12
U.S.	3.06	0.70	95	0.07	-1.22	3.88

Academic Program Type of U.S. Participants

For the U.S. control group, the most frequently observed category of program type for students was *Courses which enrolled U.S. and international students* ($n = 40$, 54%). This was the most frequently reported category for the U.S. experiment group as well ($n = 46$, 43%). Only 13 percent of U.S. students ($n = 24$) did an internship, and in analyzing the screening features of this question combined with the question on *Involvement in Activities While Abroad* (See Table 4-21) it appears no U.S. student did *only* an internship – rather, they did a part-time internship and also took courses for academic credit.

Table 4-21

Frequency Table for Academic Program Type

Academic Program Type for U.S. Participants	Control	Experiment	Total
<i>While abroad, I took courses:</i>			
Which only enrolled U.S. students	20	22	42
Which enrolled U.S. & international students	40	46	86
In regular university system of host country	13	30	43
Did an internship	4	14	24
Other	1	5	6
Missing	2	0	2

Note. Because students could check more than one response, total numbers exceed actual number of subjects reporting.

Academic Program Type for European Participants

For the European control group, the most frequently observed category of program type for students was *In the regular university system* ($n = 15$, 68%). This was the most frequently reported category for the European experiment group as well ($n = 30$, 37%). Twenty-nine percent of European students ($n = 24$) did an internship abroad (with no accompanying academic coursework). Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 4-22.

Table 4-22

Frequency Table for Academic Program Type for European Students

Academic Program Type for European Participants	Control	Experiment
<i>While abroad, I took courses:</i>		
Which enrolled international students	6 (27%)	20 (24%)
In the regular university system	15 (68%)	30 (37%)
Did an internship	0 (0%)	24 (29%)
Other	1 (5%)	8 (10%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Host Country Language & Language Study Abroad of Students, by Group

Table 4-23, Table 4-24, and Table 4-25 present the data of host country language study, broken down first by group (Control/Experiment), then European students by group, then U.S. students by group.

Table 4-23

Frequency of Host Country Language and Language Study Abroad by Group

Host Country Language/Language Study	Control	Experiment	Total (%)
English-Speaking Country			
No language study	21 (28%)	33 (30.8%)	54 (29.5%)
Studied indigenous language	2 (2%)	4 (3.7%)	6 (3.2%)
Non-English-Speaking			
No language study	9 (12%)	18 (16.8%)	27 (14.7%)
Beginning language study	26 (34%)	16 (15%)	42 (23%)
Int/Adv language study, coursework in English	12 (16%)	20 (18.7%)	32 (17.4%)
Advance lang., all coursework in host lang.	6 (8%)	16 (15%)	22 (12%)
Total	76 (100%)	107 (100%)	183 (100%)

Table 4-24

Frequency of Host Country Language and Language Study Abroad by European Students

Host Country Language/Language Study	Control	Experiment	Total (%)
Host Country Language Same as my Own Foreign-Speaking Host Country	4 (18%)	15 (16%)	24 (22%)
Studied host country language	5 (23%)	26 (33%)	31 (29%)
Did regular Univ. courses or internship	11 (50%)	33 (41%)	44 (41%)
Other	2 (9%)	7 (8%)	9 (8%)
Missing	0	4	1
Total	22 (100%)	85 (100%)	107 (100%)

Table 4-25

Frequency of Host Country Language and Language Study Abroad by U.S. Students

Host Country Language/Language Study	Control	Experiment	Total
English-speaking country	20 (27%)	33 (31%)	53 (29%)
English-speaking, studied indigenous language	2 (3%)	4 (4%)	6 (3%)
Non-English-speaking, no language study	9 (12%)	18 (17%)	27 (15%)
Non-English-speaking, beginning foreign lang.	26 (35%)	16 (15%)	42 (23%)
Non-English-speaking, Int/Adv foreign lang., but coursework in English	12 (16%)	20 (19%)	32 (17%)
Non-English-speaking, advance foreign lang, all coursework in host language	6 (8%)	16 (15%)	22 (12%)
Missing	1	0	1 (.05%)
Total	76	107	183

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Primary Living Accommodation while Abroad

Participants had six options to choose which best describe their living accommodations while abroad (see Table 4-26). The most common accommodation for both U.S. and European students was *Mix of students of different nationalities*. The most common descriptor for the response of *Other* was “Lived with relatives” ($n = 12$), while several resided in the hotel where they were doing their internship ($n = 6$), and the remaining responses of *Other* involved more than one type of accommodation during the time abroad ($n = 8$). Table 4-26 summarizes the accommodation type by region; Table 4-27 summarizes by group (Control/Experiment).

Table 4-26

Frequency Table for Primary Living Accommodation by Region

Primary Living Accommodation	European	U.S.
Homestay	2 (2%)	36 (20%)
With students from my own country	9 (8%)	45 (25%)
Mix of students of different nationalities	38 (35%)	69 (38%)
With students of host country	21 (19%)	15 (8%)
Apartment on my own	20 (19%)	9 (5%)
Other	17 (16%)	9 (5%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

When accommodation was examined by group (see Table 4-27), the control and the experiment groups reported the largest percentage as [*living with*] *Mix of Students of Different Nationalities* (Control: $n = 44$, 45%; Experiment: $n = 64$, 33%) to best describe their accommodation.

Table 4-27

Frequency Table for Primary Living Accommodation by Group (Control/Experiment)

Primary Living Accommodation by Group	Control	Experiment
Homestay	17 (17%)	21 (1%)
With students from my own country	23 (23%)	31 (16%)
Mix of students of different nationalities	44 (45%)	64 (33%)
With students of host country	8 (8%)	28 (15%)
Apartment on my own	3 (3%)	26 (13%)
Other	3 (3%)	23 (12%)

Note. Due to rounding errors, column wise percentages may not equal 100%.

Student Involvement in Activities and Travel While Abroad

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for factors describing the type of involvement students engaged in while abroad. The survey asked students to respond “yes” if they had been involved in any of these activities while abroad:

I did volunteer work or community service.

I did an internship.

I was involved in a campus or student club/organization.

I traveled within my host country to other cities or regions.

I traveled outside of my host country to others nearby.

In order to facilitate viewing this descriptive data, it is broken down for each region’s Control and Experiment groups.

Activities while abroad of U.S. students. One-third of U.S. students in the experiment group were involved in volunteering or community service while abroad versus 27 percent for Control ($n = 21$); 13 percent ($n = 14$) of Experiment subjects did an internship, while only 5

percent of Control subjects did so ($n = 4$). Frequencies and percentages for all activity types abroad by group are shown in Table 4-28.

Table 4-28

Frequency Table for Student Involvement of U.S. Students, by Group

Involvement while abroad factor	U.S. Experiment (n)	Experiment %	U.S. Control (n)	Control %
<i>I did volunteer work or community service</i>				
Yes	36	33	21	28
No	71	66	55	72
<i>I did an internship</i>				
Yes	14	13	4	5
No	93	87	72	95
<i>I was involved in a campus club or student organization</i>				
Yes	29	27	19	25
No	78	73	57	75
<i>I traveled within my host country to other cities or regions</i>				
Yes	96	90	69	91
No	11	10	7	9
<i>I traveled outside my host country to others nearby</i>				
Yes	82	77	68	89
No	25	23	8	11

Note. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not equal 100%.

Activities while abroad of European students. A significant number of European experiment participants reported doing an internship abroad ($n = 37$, 43%). This was considerably higher than the percentage of U.S. students ($n = 14$, 13%). The largest activity type reported by European students was *Traveled within my host country to other regions or cities* ($n = 56$, 66.6%). Just over forty percent ($n = 35$, 41%) indicated they had *Traveled outside of my*

host country and 23% ($n = 18$) were *Involved in a student club or organization*. All frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 4-29 for European students, by group.

Table 4-29

Frequency Table for Involvement While Abroad of European Students, by Group

Involvement factor while abroad	European Experiment (<i>n</i>)	Experiment %	European Control (<i>n</i>)	Control %
<i>I did volunteer work or community service</i>				
Yes	11	13	3	14
No	74	86	19	86
<i>I did an internship</i>				
Yes	37	43	2	9
No	48	56	20	90
<i>I was involved in a student club or organization</i>				
Yes	18	23	9	41
No	67	77	13	59
<i>I traveled within my host country to other regions or cities</i>				
Yes	56	67	20	91
No	29	33	2	9
<i>I traveled outside my host country others nearby</i>				
Yes	35	41	18	82
No	50	59	4	18

Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (BSMSS)

All study participants were asked to voluntarily answer four questions on the survey to derive a score using Barratt’s Simplified Measure of Social Status (BSMSS) (Barratt, 2012).

The author of this measure granted permission for use of the measure in this study (see Appendix D). Barratt considers it a proxy for socio-economic status, and states “Social class, especially

social class of origin identity, stays with each person throughout their life similar to gender identity and ethnic identity” (para. 1). Based on the education level attained by each parent (or indicating that there was only one parent in the household), and on a category of job type for each parent (or indicating again if there was only one parent in the household), the BSMSS then awards points to each response and ultimately allows a calculation “that results in an ordinal measure sufficient for regression analysis, but not assigning any individual or group as belonging to any particular social class, or socio-economic status, or social status” (Barratt, 2012, para. 6). The BSMSS data was not ultimately utilized for any empirical analysis in this study but is recorded here as a measure of the demographic profile of participants. Further analysis of study data in the future may utilize this information. Note that the BSMSS derives a final score ranging between 8 and 66. The overall mean of all participants was 42.02 (*Mdn* = 42, *Max* = 66, *Min* = 8) with a breakdown of mean by group and region shown in Figure 4-26. The voluntary response totals by group were: European Control, *n* = 23; European Experiment, *n* = 73; U.S. Control, *n* = 72; U.S. Experiment, *n* = 106. Total missing: *n* = 16.

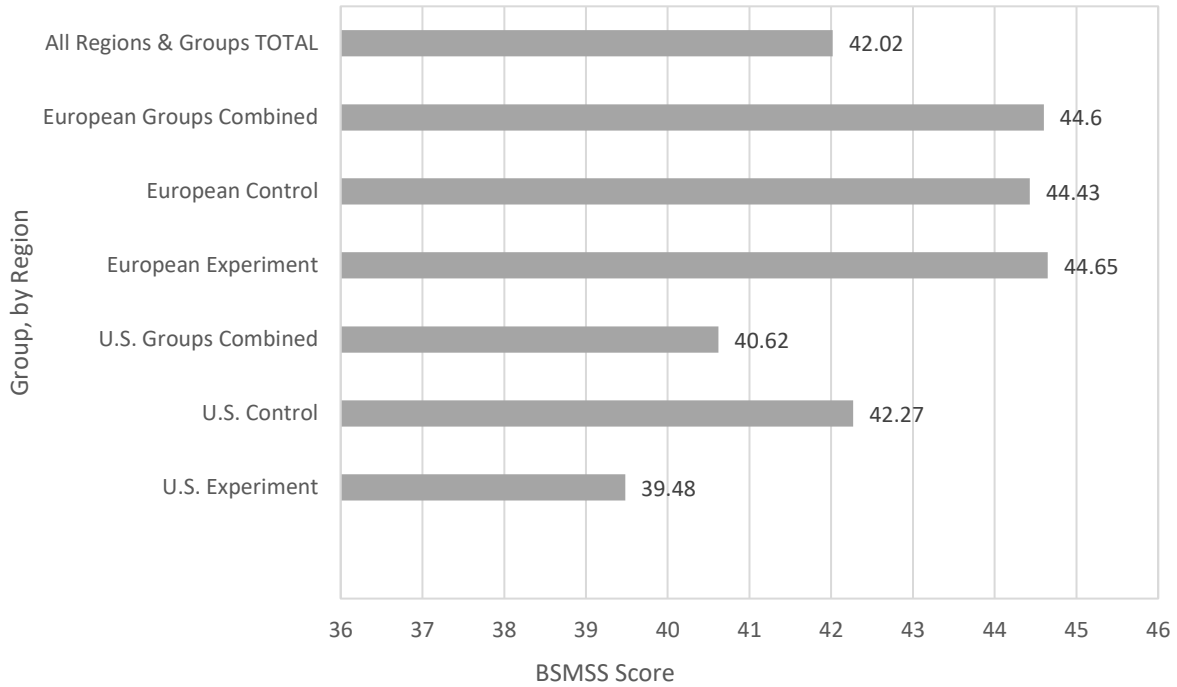


Figure 4-26. Barratt Simple Measure of Socio-Economic Status (BSMSS) scores, by region and group.

Summary of Biographic and Descriptive Participation Data

The above descriptive information – including biographic data on the subjects, program features, participation/activity details, motivations and reported skill development – offer a detailed profile of the sample for this study. This overview of the sample provides a solid context for examining students’ responses about the impact of the intervention and the stories that they offer about skill development.

Data Analysis: Research Question #1

The first research sub-question asks: Does participation in the reflection session impact students' perceived level of reflection, identification, confidence (to speak about) and preparation (to offer a specific example) of skills they developed abroad? The prediction is that participation in the session will increase students' responses to these four dimensions of what will be called the assessment measure of the session. The survey statements that compose the assessment measure are:

1. *I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace.* (Reflection)

2. *I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation.* (Identification)

3. *I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad.* (Confidence)

4. *I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers.* (Preparation)

The Likert scale offered these choices for a response: *7-Strongly Agree, 6-Agree, 5-Somewhat Agree, 4-Neither agree nor disagree, 3-Disagree Somewhat, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree.* (A table of the raw means by region, group and gender along with a table of the logged means by region, group and gender appear in Appendix H).

Assessment of Data Normality and Outliers

The assessment measure was examined for evidence of outliers and lack of normality, conditions that could impact subsequent data analysis. As reported below, all four components of the assessment measure, pre- and post-intervention (“PRE” and “POST,”) were negatively skewed but there is insufficient evidence to support excluding potential outliers. Mindful of the degree of negative skew, the scores were normal logged as shown in Table 4-30 and the analysis

was conducted using the new re-reflected mean value(s), reducing the degree of skewness in the data. The prescribed logarithmic formula (Garson, 2012) first subtracts all dependent variable raw scores from the highest DV score – a value of 7 in this Likert scale – while adding 1:

$$[7 + 1] - [\text{raw score}] = \text{reflected variable}$$

Then a logarithm of the reflected variable is performed and the re-reflected value is used in the analysis.

The results for this research question was first obtained using the raw data, then the squared data, and then the logged data (and as this had the least degree of skewness, the logged data is what is used in the analysis below). Table 4- compares the mean, standard deviation, skew and kurtosis of the raw mean, the mean squared and the logged mean, showing that the logarithmic option produced the highest level of data normality.

Table 4-30

Mean, Mean Squared and Logged Mean Values of Assessment Dimensions

Dimension	Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reflection1 _(PRE)	Mean	5.57	1.29	-1.42	2.39
	Mean Squared	2.14	.386	-.683	.496
	Mean Logged	2.19	.510	-.026	-.428
Reflection2 _(POST)	Mean	5.68	1.26	-1.30	1.87
	Mean Squared	2.18	.391	-.643	.137
	Mean Logged	2.24	.522	-.084	-.736
Identification1 _(PRE)	Mean	5.88	1.24	-2.04	5.09
	Mean Squared	2.24	.375	-1.17	1.84
	Mean Logged	2.33	.506	-.416	-.079
Identification _(POST)	Mean	6.15	1.00	-1.82	4.81
	Mean Squared	2.33	.333	-1.01	1.21
	Mean Logged	2.45	.477	-.451	-.561
Confidence1 _(PRE)	Mean	5.34	1.39	-1.11	1.17
	Mean Squared	2.07	.410	-.459	-.042
	Mean Logged	2.10	.528	.150	-.547
Confidence2 _(POST)	Mean	5.73	1.03	-1.18	2.58
	Mean Squared	2.18	.332	-.417	.381
	Mean Logged	2.24	.460	-.182	-.475
Preparation1 _(PRE)	Mean	5.24	1.49	-1.11	.761
	Mean Squared	2.11	.363	-1.02	1.79
	Mean Logged	2.07	.521	-.440	.290
Preparation2 _(POST)	Mean	5.52	1.27	-1.88	4.30
	Mean Squared	2.12	.363	-1.02	1.79
	Mean Logged	2.15	.457	-.156	.457

Reflection Dimension. The Reflection dimension was measured by the level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale for the question: *I have thought hard about how studying*

abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace. The raw mean for the Reflection1 (PRE) score was 5.57 ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.29$), with a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.42$) and with a median ($Mdn = 6.00$) slightly higher than the mean. Figure 4-27 displays the distribution of the logged values producing a new Reflection1 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.19$; $SD = 0.510$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = -0.026$).

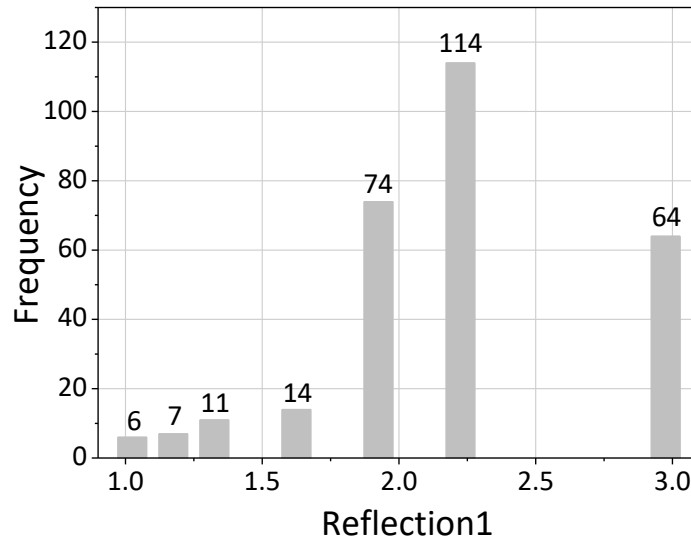


Figure 4-27. Frequency of squared response values for Reflection1 (PRE)

The Likert score mean for the Reflection2 (POST) was 5.68 ($M = 5.68$, $SD, 1.26$), with a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.30$), and a median ($Mdn = 6.00$) slightly higher than the mean. Figure 4-28 displays the frequency of the squared values producing a new Reflection2 mean ($M = 2.24$; $SD = 0.522$), and a decrease in the distribution's skewness ($\gamma_1 = -0.084$).

Figure 4-28. Frequency of squared response values for Reflection2 (POST).

Identification Dimension. The Identification dimension was assessed by the level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale to the statement: *I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation.* The mean response for Identification1 (PRE) was a score of 5.88 ($SD = 1.24$, $Mdn = 6.00$), and a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -2.04$). Figure 4-29 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Identification1 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.506$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = -0.416$).

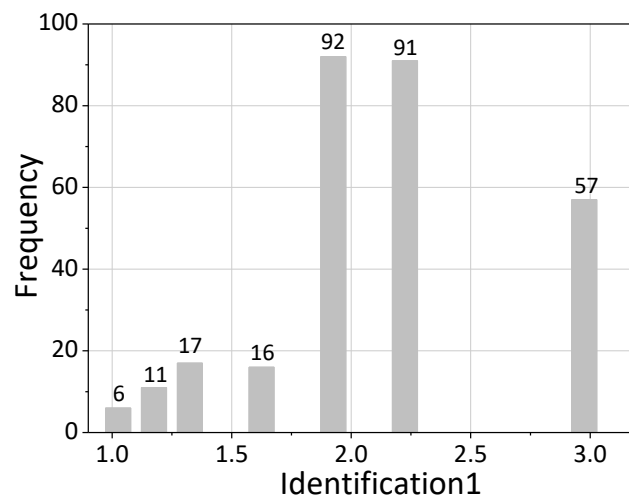


Figure 4-29. Frequency of squared response values for Identification1 (PRE).

The Identification2 (POST) Likert response mean of 6.15 ($SD = 1.00$, $Mdn = 6.00$) has a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.82$). Figure 4-30 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Identification2 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.477$), which resulted in a decreased skewness ($\gamma_1 = -0.451$).

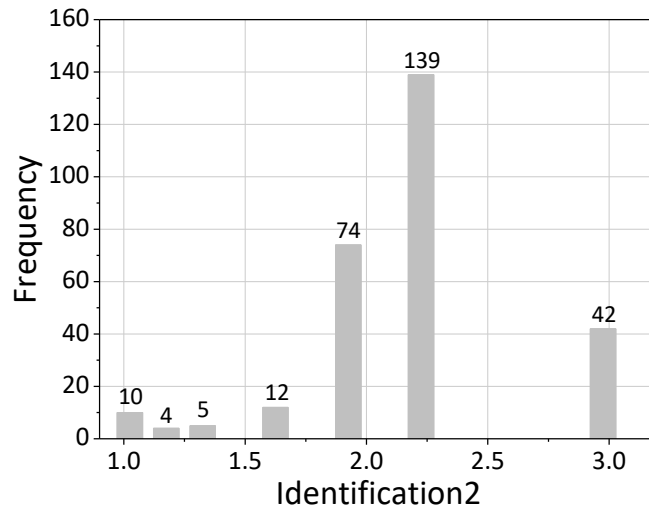


Figure 4-30. Frequency of squared response values for Identification2 (POST)

Confidence Dimension. The Confidence dimension was assessed by the level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale to the statement: *I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad.* The mean for the Confidence1 (PRE) score was 5.34 ($SD = 1.39$, $Mdn = 6.00$), and indicates a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.11$). Figure 4-31 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Confidence1 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 0.528$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = 0.150$).

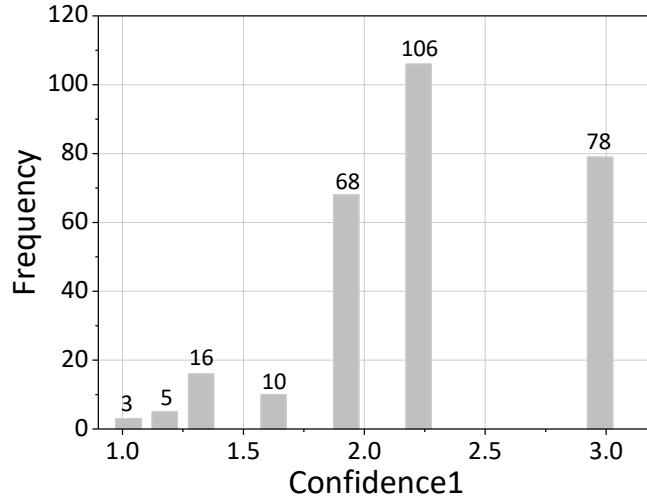


Figure 4-31. Frequency of squared response values for Confidence1 (PRE)

The Confidence2 (POST) Likert scores ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.03$, $Mdn = 6.00$) showed a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.18$). Figure 4-32 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Confidence2 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 0.460$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = -0.182$).

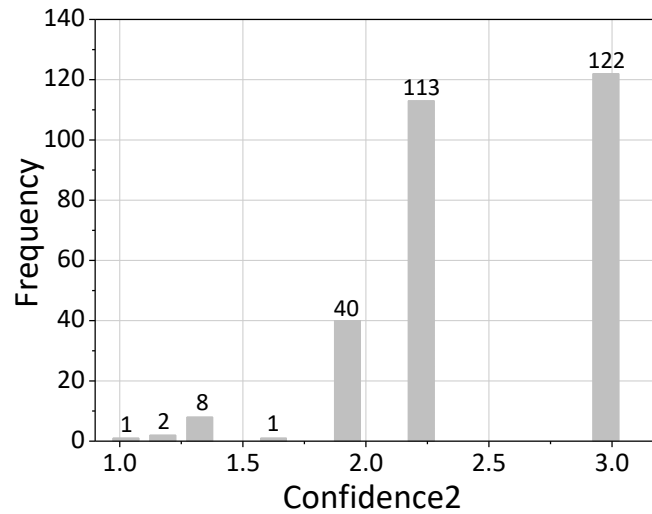


Figure 4-32. Frequency of squared response values for Confidence2 (POST)

Preparation Dimension. The Preparation dimension was assessed by the level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale to the statement: *I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers.* The mean response for the Preparation1 (PRE) score at was 5.23 ($SD = 1.49$, $Mdn = 6.00$), with a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.11$). Figure 4-33 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Preparation1 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.521$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = -0.440$).

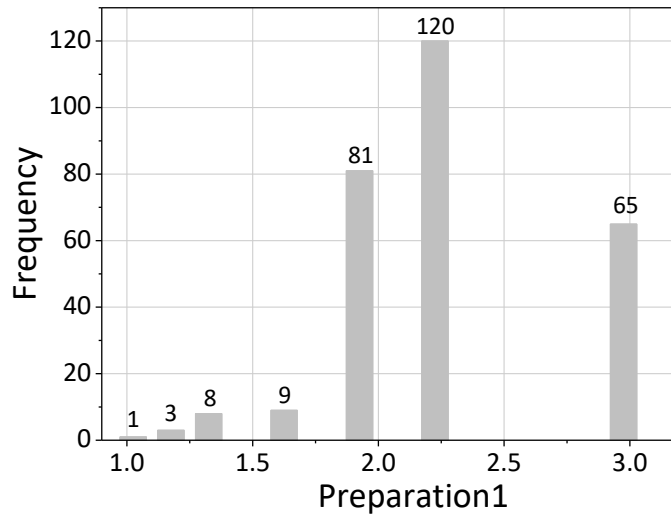


Figure 4-33. Frequency of squared response values for Preparation1 (PRE)

The Preparation2 (POST) Likert frequencies ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.27$, $Mdn = 6.00$), revealed a negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -1.88$). Figure 4-34 displays the frequency of the logged values producing a new Preparation2 mean and standard deviation ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.457$), resulting in a decreased skewness of the distribution ($\gamma_1 = -0.156$).

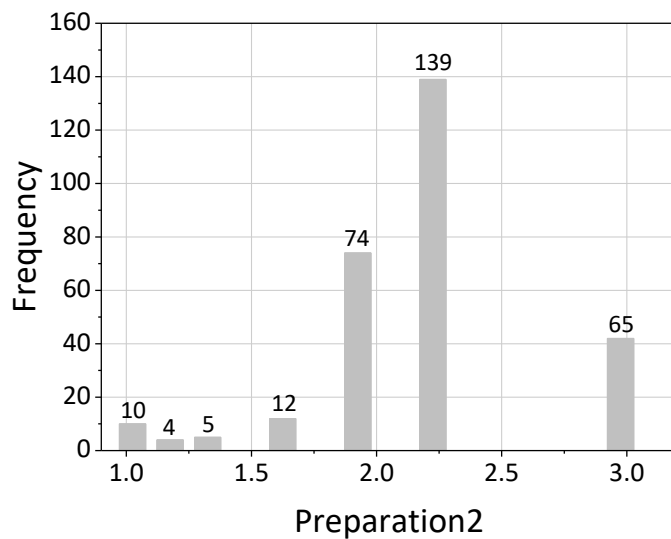


Figure 4-34. Frequency of squared response values for Preparation2 (POST)

Mahalanobis' Distances. Next, the data were analyzed by computing Mahalanobis' Distances shown in Figure 4-35 to examine multidimensional outliers for the four assessment dimensions. Testing significance at $\alpha = .05$ with a total sample size of 290, the expected number of outliers would be approximately 15 (5% of 290). Since Mahalanobis' Distances is a rather conservative test, the number of outliers seen here is not extraordinary, and did not alter the associations or assumptions of the distribution. Also, since the data was logged to normalize the distribution, it was determined that there is no need to delete cases from the data set (Grace-Martin, 2019, sec. 4).

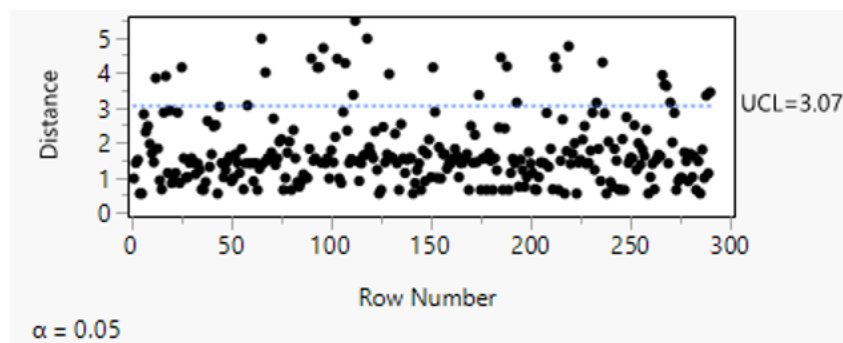


Figure 4-35. Plot of Mahalanobis distances.

General Linear Model: Tests of Effects Within- and Between-Subjects by Intervention and Assessment Measure

The data were entered in a repeated measures General Linear Model (GLM) analysis with two levels of *intervention* (this refers to a pre-session survey for Experiment and a first survey for Control – “PRE”; and post-session survey for Experiment and a second survey for Control – “POST”), with four dimensions of *assessment* (reflection, identification, confidence, preparation)

as within-subject measures, and *group* (control, experiment), *gender* and *region* (U.S., Europe) as the between-subject measures.

In the analysis of this research question, the Greenhouse-Geisser values were used to control for violations of sphericity of the multiple variables. As well, throughout this analysis, the significance values were derived using a Bonferroni correction; this adjusts the significance values in pairwise comparisons to account for the multiple variables present in the analysis – intervention (PRE, POST), group, region, and gender. It should be noted that the Bonferroni correction is considered a conservative test to account for multiple analyses within the same data set in order to reduce Type I errors (Nakagawa, 2004; Perneger, 1998).

The results showed a main effect of *assessment* (POST > PRE) $F(3, 276) = 16.02, p < .001, n_p^2 = .055, \delta = 1.00$, with the Identification measure scoring significantly higher than the other measures overall ($M = 2.34$). There was also a significant interaction between *assessment* and *group*, (Experiment > Control) $F(3, 276) = 6.66, p < .001, n_p^2 = .023, \delta = .969$. The results indicate that independent of any other factors, the experiment group exceeded the control group in the Reflection dimension (Experiment > Control) $F(1, 278) = 9.37, p = .002, n_p^2 = .033, \delta = .862$. Most importantly, there was a significant effect of *intervention* as a function of *group* (Experiment > Control) $F(1, 278) = 9.97, p = .002, n_p^2 = .035, \delta = .882$, showing a substantial increase of the assessment measure post-intervention *only* for the experiment group ($p < .001$), whereas no differences were observed between the pre- and post- assessment score for the control group ($p = .359$).

With regard to the between-subject findings, there were no differences found by region (U.S. and Europe), $p = .059$, or gender, $p = .635$. This supports that there was homogeneity

between the U.S. and the European subjects, and that there was no difference in the impact of the session between the regions.

An analysis of the interactions indicating a significance of .05 or less are presented in sections that follow, namely: the interaction of *intervention* and *group* ($p = .002$) which supports the prediction that the intervention positively impacted the experiment group, along with two significance findings that are neutral with regard to the hypothesis: first is the main effect of *assessment* ($p < .001$), and second is the interaction of *assessment* and *group* ($p < .001$). [Note that “PRE” and “POST” designations are used for both groups throughout the study for the sake of facilitating the terminology despite Control having no intervention; rather the control group had two different times at which they completed the survey, about one week apart so as to follow the same timeline as Experiment for completing surveys].

Interaction of Intervention and Group (Control v. Experiment). A key finding with statistical significance is the interaction of *intervention* (PRE and POST) as a function of *group*, showing that only the experiment group revealed a significant increase of the assessment measure (that is, across the four dimensions) post-intervention $F(1, 278) = 9.96, p = .002, n_p^2 = .035, \delta = .882$. This result supports the prediction that the intervention would lead to an increase in the mean scores of the experiment group.

The change in the control group’s mean was not significant (PRE > POST) $F(1, 278) = .845, p = .359, n_p^2 = .003, \delta = .150$. The change in the experiment group’s mean was significant (POST > PRE) $F(1, 278) = 20.72, p < .001, n_p^2 = .069, \delta = .995$. Table 4-31 displays the mean scores at PRE and POST for each group; Table 4-32 displays the change in means and significance values for each group. The bar graph in Figure 4-36 provides a visual depiction of the mean and SEM (standard error of the mean).

Table 4-31

Mean of Assessment Measure at PRE and POST, by Group

Group	Intervention	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>
Control	PRE	2.19	.056
	POST	2.14	.052
Experiment	PRE	2.13	.034
	POST	2.30	.032

Table 4-32

PRE/POST Change in Assessment Measure Mean, by Group

Group	(I) PRE	(J) POST	<i>M_{Diff}</i>		
			(I-J)	<i>SE</i>	Sig.
Control	2.19	2.14	0.054	.059	.359
Experiment	2.13	2.30	-0.163	.036	.000

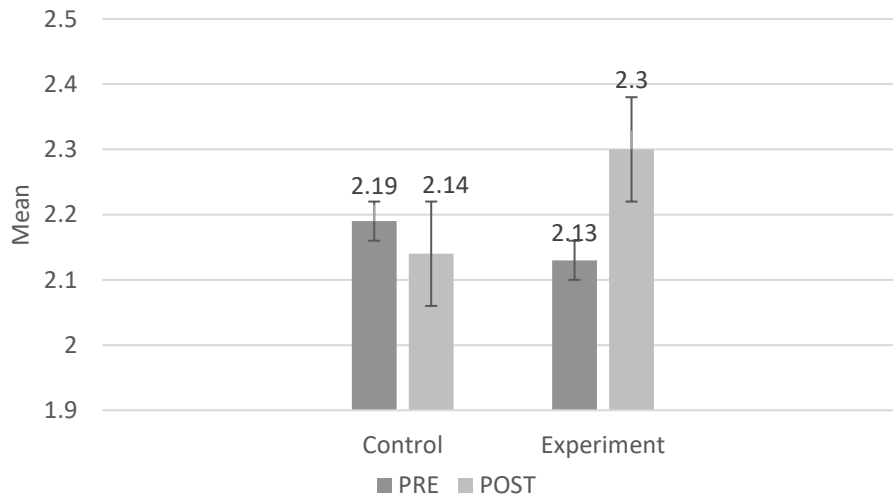


Figure 4-36. Effect of intervention as a function of group; plot of the mean and SEM scores of the assessment measure for each group at PRE and POST.

Furthermore, a post hoc analysis of the results across groups indicates that there was no significant difference in the pre-survey means between Control ($M = 2.19$) and Experiment ($M = 2.14$), thus supporting the two groups' homogeneity (Control > Experiment) $M_{diff} = 0.060$, $SE = 0.066$, $p = 0.364$. However, in the post-survey, the increase by Experiment ($M = 2.30$) contrasted with the decrease by Control ($M = 2.14$) was significant (Experiment > Control) $M_{diff} = 0.157$, $SE = 0.061$, $p = .011$. This finding supports the hypothesis that the intervention had a positive impact on the assessment measure of the experiment group over that of the control group.

Main effect of Assessment Measure: Reflection, Identification, Confidence,

Preparation Dimensions. Initial test results indicated that there was a main effect of *assessment* $F(3, 276) = 16.02$, $p < .001$, $n_p^2 = .155$, $\delta = 1.00$. In post hoc tests, Identification ($M = 2.15$, $SE = 0.037$) was higher than the other dimensions (Reflection, Confidence, Preparation), independent of PRE/POST and *group* $F(3, 276) = 16.17$, $p < .001$, $n_p^2 = .150$, $\delta = 1.00$. The overall mean scores for each of the assessment dimensions – Reflection, Identification, Confidence, Preparation – are displayed in Table 4-33.

Table 4-33

Overall Mean Scores for Each Assessment Dimension

Assessment Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>
Reflection	2.15	.037
Identification	2.34	.034
Confidence	2.17	.035
Preparation	2.11	.032

Table 4-34 displays the differences in each of the assessment dimension's mean scores compared with the others; Figure 4-37 plots each dimension's mean and SEM, which is displayed on each bar. The Identification dimension refers to naming specific skills, and perhaps because of its concreteness, participants responded that they had done so to a greater degree than the three other dimensions.

Table 4-34

Differences between Assessment Dimensions' Mean Scores Compared

(I) Assessment Measure	(J) Assessment Measure	M_{Diff} (I-J)	SE	Sig.
Reflection	Identification	-.191	.037	.000
	Confidence	-.019	.039	1.00
	Preparation	.037	.035	1.00
Identification	Reflection	.191	.037	.00
	Confidence	.173	.032	.00
	Preparation	.228	.036	.00
Confidence	Reflection	.019	.039	1.00
	Identification	-.173	.032	.000
	Preparation	.056	.034	.606
Preparation	Reflection	-.037	.035	1.00
	Identification	-.228	.036	.000
	Confidence	-.056	.034	.606

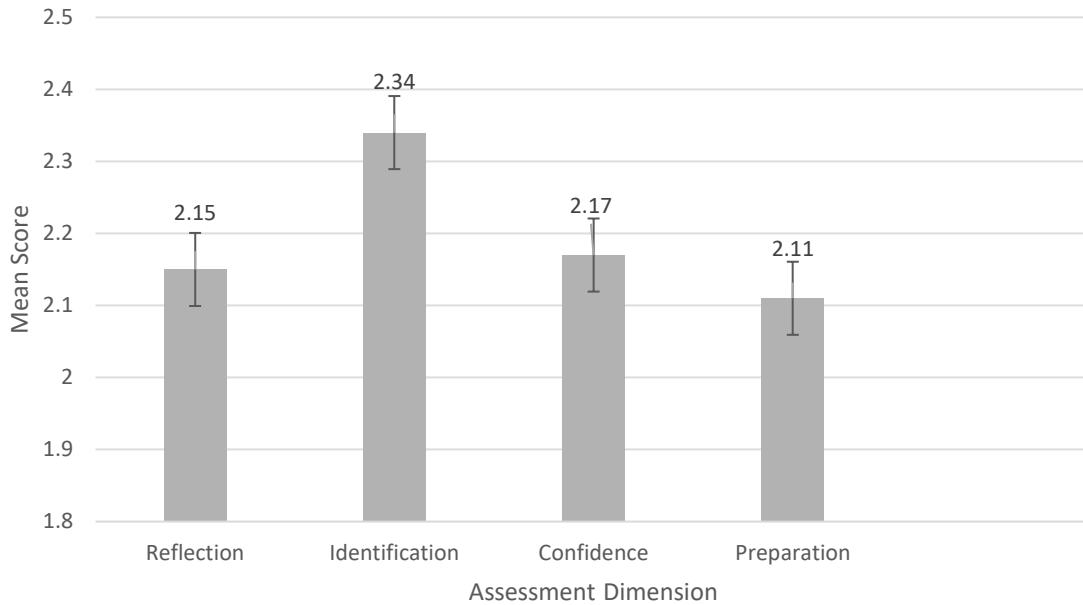


Figure 4-37. Mean and SEM scores for each assessment dimension, combining groups (Control, Experiment) and pre- and post-session results.

Assessment Measure as a function of group. In this analysis, each dimension of the assessment measure (i.e., Reflection, Identification, Confidence, Preparation) is presented as an average of PRE and POST mean scores for each group (Control and Experiment). There was a significant interaction between *assessment* and *group* $F(3, 278) = 6.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .023, \delta = .969$. Post hoc results show that, independent of any other factors, the difference in the Reflection mean was significant between groups (Experiment > Control) $F(1, 278) = 9.37, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .033, \delta = .862$. The mean differences of the other three dimensions reveal no significance between groups. The mean scores for all four assessment measures appear in Table 4-35 followed by Table 4-36 which displays the difference in assessment measure by group, and an indication of significance.

Table 4-35

Mean of Each Dimension of Assessment Measure, by Group (Control v. Experiment)

Assessment	Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reflection	Control	2.03	.063
	Experiment	2.26	.039
Identification	Control	2.31	.058
	Experiment	2.37	.036
Confidence	Control	2.20	.059
	Experiment	2.14	.036
Preparation	Control	2.13	.055
	Experiment	2.09	.042

Table 4-36

Difference in Mean Scores Between Groups for Each Dimension of Assessment Measure

Assessment	(I) Group	(J) Group	<i>M_{Diff}</i> (I-J)	<i>SE</i>	Sig.
Reflection	Control	Experiment	-.226	.074	.002
Identification	Control	Experiment	-.065	.068	.344
Confidence	Control	Experiment	.063	.069	.369
Preparation	Control	Experiment	-.035	.065	.588

The two groups' mean scores differed significantly only on the Reflection dimension with the experiment group showing an overall higher score than the control group for Reflection, $M_{diff} = 0.226$, $SE = 0.074$, $p = .002$. The Reflection statement is “*I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace*” and perhaps the Experiment group, knowing that they would undergo a reflection session about their

experience abroad, had a higher degree of engagement in and throughout the process. Figure 38 plots the mean and SEM score for each factor by group.

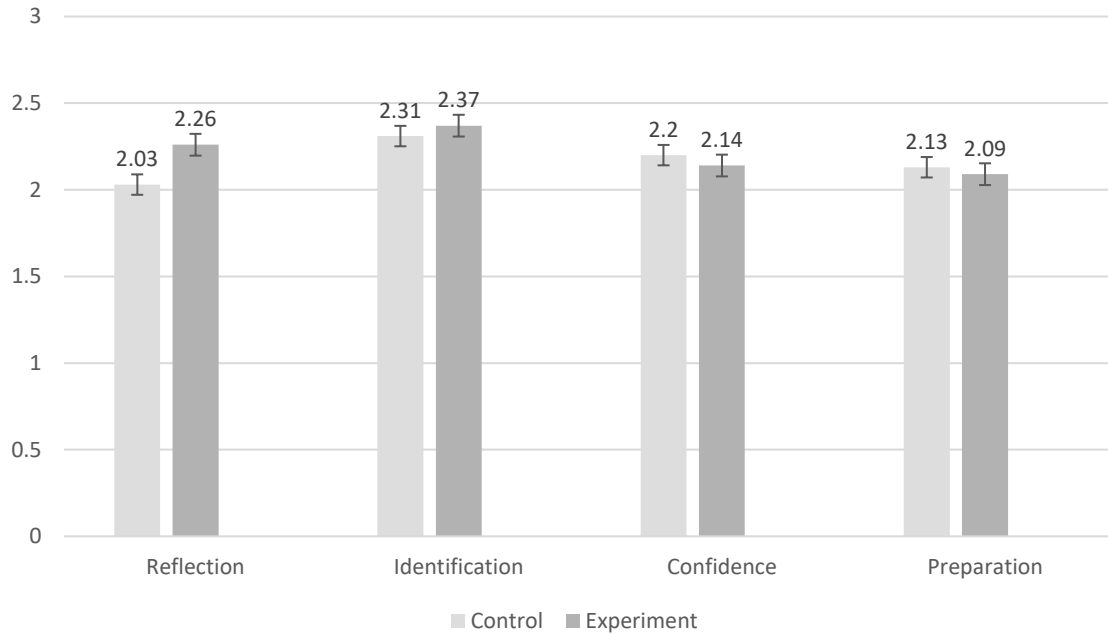


Figure 4-38. Mean and SEM scores for each dimension of the assessment measure, by group (Control v. Experiment).

Summary of Results for Research Question One: The Assessment Measure. The findings of this analysis support the prediction that the intervention session would impact experiment subjects' POST scores significantly over those in the control group, using the assessment measure to gauge the change post-intervention. The finding that supports the hypothesis was the significance of the interaction of *intervention* and *group* ($p = .002$); this shows that independent of other factors, the intervention led to an increase of Experiment's assessment measure mean – that is, students' perceived levels of ability – Reflection, Identification, Confidence and Preparation -- from PRE to POST.

In comparing the movement between groups, the data revealed no significance in the means at PRE ($p = .364$) with a significant difference at POST ($p = .011$). In addition, the within

group scores revealed that experiment showed a positive change in mean score of the assessment measure from pre- to post- ($p < .001$), while the change in the control group mean was not significant ($p = .359$).

Then, there were two outcomes revealing statistical significance but which are neutral with regard to supporting the research hypothesis that the intervention would have a positive impact on the Experiment subjects. Those two findings are:

- The significance of the main effect of *assessment* ($p < .001$) in which it was revealed that the Identification dimension was, overall, a significantly higher mean than the other three (Reflection, Confidence, Preparation); and,
- The significance of the interaction of *assessment* and *group* ($p < .001$), in which the two groups' mean scores differed significantly on one dimension, Reflection ($p = .002$).

It is apparent that the above quantitative results point to an increase of the assessment measure from PRE to POST – that is, the students' overall self-perception of the impact of the session. Their further qualitative post-session comments from the survey and a follow-up with the researcher a few weeks later align with this finding (see Discussion chapter).

The next section examines the change in the scores assigned to the participants' responses to an open-ended question from PRE to POST that asks students to describe how and where they developed or improved a skill while abroad. These responses, or “stories” complement the assessment of the participants' reported outcomes for the assessment measures analyzed above.

Research Question #2: Results of Story Ratings

Introduction

Research hypothesis #2 predicts that participation in the reflection session will result in an increase in the quality of session participants' written examples (or "stories") of specific skills developed abroad. Students in both the control and experiment groups were asked to respond to an open-ended question in both the pre- and post-session survey that reads:

Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

The question offered context to the question (i.e., a job interview) in an attempt to simulate the mindset of an interviewee. Ratings for these stories served as the dependent variable for this hypothesis.

Results: Rating Students' Stories

The rubric that was introduced in Chapter 3 Methods is examined here with examples from the participants in the study. The five levels (0 to 4) are gradually more descriptive, more detailed, and richer in substance. The student should place him/herself at the center of the story as the goal is for the student to describe an instance or example of him/herself demonstrating a specific skill. A defining characteristic of the highest level (level four on the scoring rubric) includes a shift in perspective, such as that described by Paige, Vande Berg and Lou (2012), which defines a transformative experience.

Each response to the open-ended question was randomly assigned to two of the three raters trained for this study. This resulted in each rater scoring two-thirds of the stories in the study and each story being scored by two raters. The scoring rubric was modeled on the VALUE Learning Rubrics published by the AAC&U (Rhodes, 2010) as shown in Chapter 3. The five-

level rubric used this terminology for the ratings: 0 = unacceptable, 1 = below satisfactory, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = above satisfactory, 4 = exceptional.

Establishing interrater reliability and agreement. As addressed in Chapter 3, a level of interrater reliability had been established with a Fleiss' kappa value of .79 that was considered *substantial* in preliminary testing (Landis & Koch, 1977). In rating student stories, when the initial assigned scores from the two raters matched, it was recorded as the rating for that story. If the scores assigned by the raters did not match, a discussion took place to resolve the discrepancy, referencing the coding they had each performed on the text to determine the agreed-upon rating. The percentage of ratings that required discussion was approximately 7%, and it is noted that where differing ratings occurred, all were only one level apart. Because the reflection sessions and surveys were administered in English across both the U.S. and Europe, there were non-native English speakers among both the experiment and control groups. All of the European campus-based contacts and the reflection session facilitators were confident that students could successfully participate using English. The raters focused on the communicative aspect of any responses that contained errors -- thus overlooking grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes that did not interfere with comprehension -- and rated all stories based on the degree to which they described the situation, task, action and result of demonstrating a skill.

Level 0 Stories – Unacceptable: Does Not Meet Criteria

The lowest rating, *Level 0 Unacceptable: does not meet criteria*, was included in the rubric following a recommendation found in the *VALUE Rubrics* of the AAC&U on which this project's rubric is modeled (Rhodes, 2010). In addition to the 4-point scale used in the *VALUE Rubrics*, a sub-par category is recommended for non-responsive answers; and this fifth rating

was added in this study using a value of zero. The mastery level for zero is considered non-responsive, and the characteristics are:

- Lacking specificity and context.
- Very brief (e.g., responses that only named a single skill or quality were given this rating).
- Wholly inappropriate interview response.

Some examples of Level 1 responses are those in which only a skill was named (e. “confidence” or “communication skills”). Given that the question included the phrase “describe when and how you demonstrated a skill”, simply naming a skill was considered unacceptable. Responses that did not address the question in any way also received a zero rating – for example “I don’t know” or “I’m going to this event to learn how to articulate the answer to this question.” The number of Level 0 ratings was 35 among experiment participants in the pre-session survey and two in the post-session survey. Among the control group participants, there were 17 stories rated Level 0 in the first survey and 25 rated Level 0 in the follow-up. Level 0 responses are wholly inappropriate in response to job interview questions.

Level 1 Stories – Below Satisfactory: Minimally Meets Criteria

The responses rated *Level 1 Below Satisfactory, Minimally Meets Criteria* offer slightly more information beyond naming a skill – for example “*I gained independence. I was placed in a city where I did not know the language*”, or “*I learned to adapt to new surroundings and situation.*” This slight bit of additional information or context resulted in a rating of 1; typically there was some reference to oneself, and perhaps an indication of what prompted the skill to be needed or cultivated, yet the vagueness prevents the identification of just how a skill was developed.

Starting at stories rated Level 1, it was generally clear that students recognized they could report an impact of some sort from studying abroad, yet Level 1 examples lacked the specificity

that would make them sufficient in a job interview. There were also a number of stories placed in this category because they were not expressed in first-person (and thus take on a more prescriptive tone). The mastery level for a rating of 1 is *Fairly Competent*, and the characteristics are:

- Offers basic information using broad or sweeping statements
- May identify a skill but is very general
- Offers a vague idea of what action was taken to address the situation (e.g., “I adapted” [generally-speaking])
- Topic is not highly substantive
- Is considered barely sufficient for an interview response

In the examples offered below and for subsequent levels, the student quote is followed by the nationality and gender of the respondent, the country the student studied in, and the skill they believe their story demonstrates. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

I gained independence. I was placed in a city that I did not know the language and adapted to the situation quite quickly. Scottish male, Australia, Independence

Adaptability is a skill that I have solidified from studying abroad. It taught me how to adapt to new places and people and be comfortable at a time when I felt somewhat unstable. I had to learn how to maneuver around in foreign customs and acculturate myself with the people there. U.S. female, Japan, Adaptability

Among the experiment participants, there were 118 pre-session stories that received a rating of 1, and 40 in the post-survey. In the control group, there were 59 PRE stories rated 1, and 61 in POST. Level 2 responses are barely sufficient as job interview responses. They may minimally answer a question (e.g., tell me about a time when you had to take initiative), but they do not offer enough detail for the listener to fully understand the degree of the demonstrated behavior.

Level 2 Stories – Satisfactory: Partially Meets Criteria

Stories rated *Level 2 – Satisfactory: Sufficiently Meets Criteria*, were reachable for the majority who participated in a session. These responses were considered sufficient for having

provided context, identifying/naming a skill or trait, and explaining (even if rather minimally) how the skill was applied and/or the situation was resolved. They hold room for improvement but show that minimally, the student has an example that an employer could appreciate for learning both about the student's skill as well as his/her self-awareness. The mastery level for a rating of 2 is *Competent* and the characteristics are:

- Provides a sufficient context of the situation
- Identifies (names) a skill or trait
- Refers to oneself in situation
- Explains (at least partially) how a skill was applied, but still rather broad in scope
- Rather brief, but a satisfactory interview response

Examples of *Level 2* responses include:

I would say that the biggest skills I developed were independence, time-management and openness to different things. I've demonstrated these by successfully passing all my classes in a different university system, was able to travel around all by myself, and made tons of friends and learned a lot from people all around the world.

U.S. male, Australia, Independence

While studying abroad I did not have a cell phone. Navigating around the city was difficult at first. I was able to find other ways to not get lost. I was being more observant of my surroundings, and I learned to ask for directions when I got lost, and I learned how to use a paper map.

Scottish female, Australia, Confidence

Because of my study abroad experience, I developed more self-confidence. Being put into positions where I had to make decision for myself such as a situation with a roommate with different views. I critically thought about what I believe in and why I believe in that. I was not as easily swayed by just agreeing with what someone else believed.

U.S. male, South Korea, Empathy

The POST ratings of Level 2 for Experiment numbered 86 compared to 8 pre-session scores assigned at Level 2. For Control, the number of Level 2 at PRE was 22, but declined at POST to 12. This was the top score achieved by any of the control group participants at either PRE or POST. Level 2 responses may be a bit brief, but they are satisfactory as a job interview response.

Level 3 Stories – Above Satisfactory: Fully Meets Criteria

Level 3 stories were not common in the pre-session survey for the experiment group (and note that the control group never reached a rating higher than Level 2). Level 3 ratings are very solid, and offer good description. The mastery level of a rating of 3 is *Very Competent* and the characteristics are:

- Speaks about oneself in a specific situation
- Describes the context/situation with a greater degree of detail
- Explains what needed to be done (task)
- Describes the action taken, and some idea of the result, but may still have some vagueness or describe a situation in general terms.
- Topic is sufficient but may be slightly lacking in substance
- References to host cultures may show sensitivity or appreciation (but do not show insensitivity)
- Story length is sufficient to offer a complete narrative (beginning/middle/end)
- A solid interview response

There were 24 Level 3 ratings assigned at PRE and 51 at POST for the experiment group.

Among the control group participants, there were no stories rated Level 3 at either PRE or POST of the study. Level 3 ratings indicate a solid job interview response:

While abroad I learned how to be empathetic of others' potentially negative responses or reactions without taking it personally or getting overwhelmed myself. For instance, Austrians have a reputation of being blunt for the sake of efficiency but are not actually trying to be rude. Many times in Austria, I had to put aside my feelings of condescension and think "Okay, they're not being rude, they're just being Austrian. What can I do to make this process of understanding quicker and easier?" Now [at home] working at a crisis center, there are clients who come in mad or crying or yelling or feel disenfranchised by the system and going abroad made me sympathize with the fact that there's a very valid reasons they're upset and I cannot pull away from them because of my own feelings of taking it too personally.

U.S. female, Austria, Empathy

Facing discomfort in order to persevere something that I find valuable. When I was studying abroad in Rwanda, the commodities were very different than they are the US. Often there was no running water or toilet paper and my diet consisted mostly of potatoes. I had to decide if it was more important for me to be comfortable or have a valuable experience outside of my comfort zone. In the end, I learned that when I am passionate about something I am willing to face an amount of discomfort to gain a valuable experience.

U.S. female, Rwanda, Self-Awareness

One of the most useful skills that I have achieved during exchange is group work. In Russia group work at university is not common but abroad, surprisingly for me, it is about 70% of all tasks (presentations, case studies, paper work etc.). I learned how to find a compromise, how to convince a person who doesn't want to listen to your opinion, how to distribute responsibilities among group members and organize effective work together. It is very important to be a rational team leader who is able to lead a group and take into account the other's ideas. During exchange I learned both how to be a leader and how to work in a team under someone's guidance. This skill will be very useful at workplace either on manager position or working in a group.

Russian male, Czech Republic, Teamwork

Level 4 Stories – Exceptional: Exceeds Criteria The total number of Level 4 ratings assigned this top rating in the rubric was six, all in the POST surveys of the experiment group. Level 4 stories were considered exceptional, in fact exceeding the sufficient criteria for a STAR. A defining feature is that the student wrote about a shift in perspective – and likely demonstrates a new-found understanding or appreciation for cultural differences. Among the control group participants, there were no stories awarded a Level 4 rating at either PRE or POST of the study.

The mastery level of a rating of 4 is considered *Sophisticated* and the characteristics are:

- Speaks about oneself in a specific situation
- Provides information on substantive situation (problem, challenge, issue, etc.) with rich context
- Identifies what was needed to do to resolve issue
- Explains the action taken
- Summarizes results, citing specific outcome; may explain its value in workplace and/or show insights gained
- Is respectful, may show multiple perspectives
- Story length provides full narrative and includes relevant details
- Demonstrates (and describes that) an insight was gained or a shift in thinking occurred
- An exemplary interview response

Examples of Level 4 responses:

I learned to effectively communicate in a foreign language. During my time abroad it would often be necessary to communicate with people who spoke absolutely no English. Despite my proficiency in the language, I do not consider myself a wholly fluent Spanish speaker, so I learned how to communicate and express myself in the language by "talking around" the things I didn't know how to say. For example, I might not have known how to

exactly translate the word 'crimson' into Spanish, but I know how to describe things with a similar color to communicate the same idea. In this sense, while I may not have the skills of a native speaker, I know I am capable of communicating effectively with clients who speak little to no English.

U.S. female, Spain, Communication Skills

While abroad in Spain, I was enrolled in course called Creative Economy. Our semester project was to find a problem, create a product that addressed it, and 'sell it' to the class. I chose to work with three others each from a different country. We had to use creative brainstorming techniques (such as mind-mapping); we found that we each had different solutions and this initially seemed to create a road block. But we worked together and found a solution that involved a piece of each of our individual ideas. After we presented to the class, we realized how challenging it was with different backgrounds but felt that we knew one another much better, appreciated our differences and would look forward to working together again.

U.S. male, Spain, Teamwork

Level 4 responses are exemplary as job interview responses. They reveal a type of shift in the student's way of thinking due to the way they responded to difference. The first example above, the student recognizes that the limitation of her language skills has an alternative solution; in the second example the student recognizes that despite the challenges that resulted from the multiple perspectives of the group, there was value in them, and that in looking to the future, he was prepared and could appreciate facing this level of diversity once again.

Assessing Pre- and Post-Survey Story Ratings

The bar graphs in Figure 4-39 and Figure 4-40 offer a visual of the frequency of ratings at PRE and POST for each group.

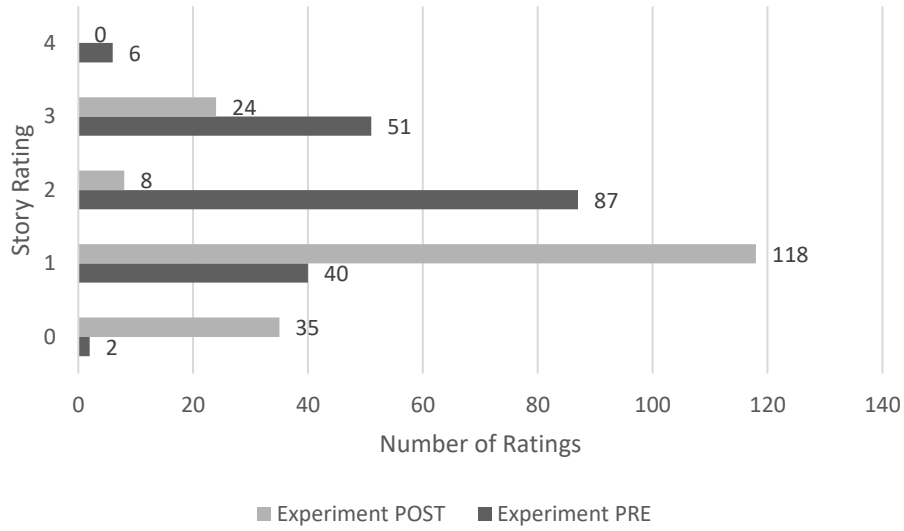


Figure 4-39. Experiment group: frequency of PRE and POST story ratings.

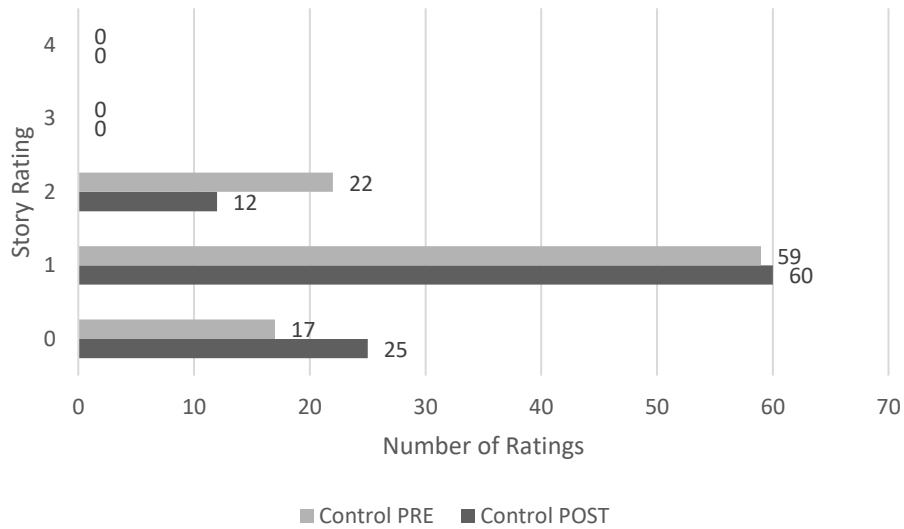


Figure 4-40. Control group: Frequency of PRE versus POST story ratings

Statistical Analysis of Story Ratings

Test for Normality and Skewness. An analysis of the PRE and POST story scores was conducted to assess for normality. Figure 4-41 below shows the PRE distribution was not evenly

distributed, with the rating of 1 on the 4-point scale (0 through 4) having the greatest frequency ($M = 1.01$, $SD = 0.635$, $Mdn = 1.00$) and with a slight negative skew ($\gamma_1 = -0.234$).

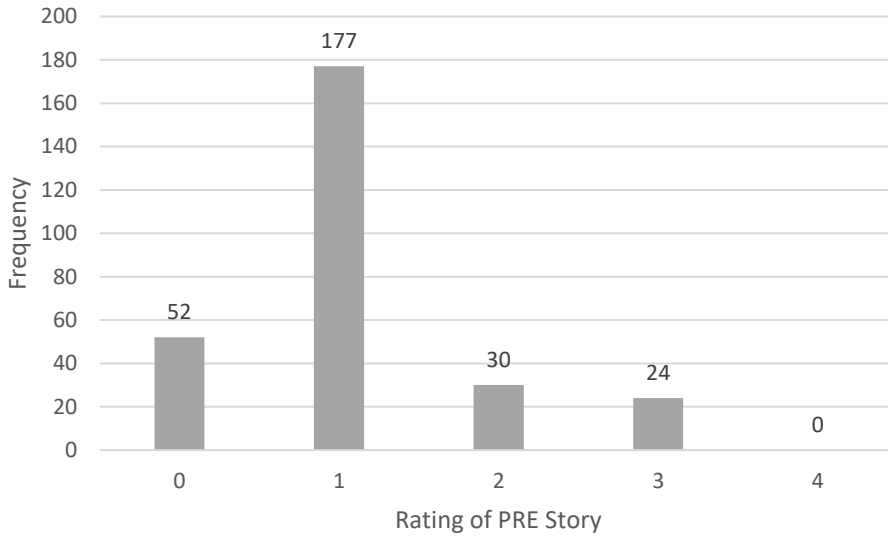


Figure 4-41. Frequency of PRE story ratings.

Figure 4-42 shows the POST distribution ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.949$, $Mdn = 2$) was a bit more evenly spread, with the rating of Level 1 ($n = 101$) and the rating of Level 2 ($n = 99$) being of near-equal frequencies; and a positive skewness ($\gamma_1 = 0.146$).

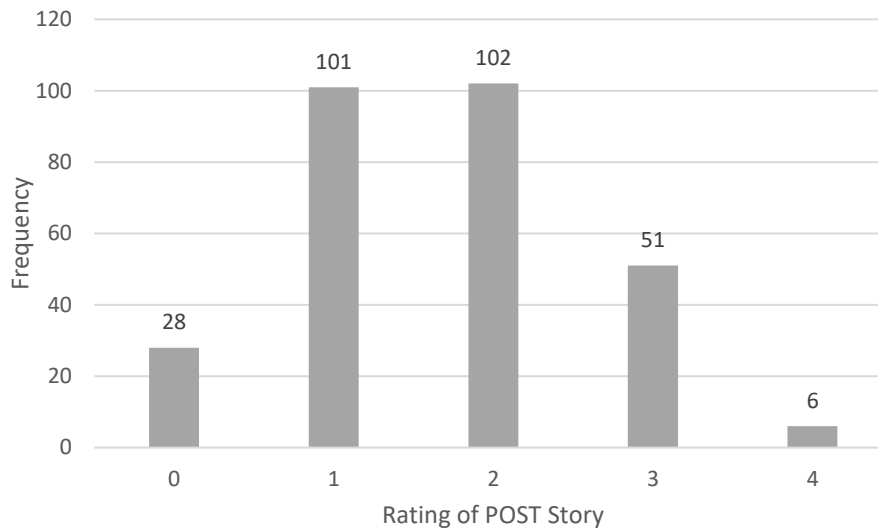


Figure 4-42. Frequency of POST story ratings.

The pre- and post-intervention (“PRE” and “POST,”) story rating distributions are slightly negatively skewed and there is insufficient evidence to support excluding a small number of potential outliers given the sample size (Grace-Martin, 2019, sec. 4). (See Appendix I for a table of the mean scores by region, group and gender).

General Linear Model: Tests of Effects Within- and Between-Subjects for Story Ratings

A repeated measures General Linear Model (GLM) utilizing two levels of *intervention* (PRE, POST) as the within-subject factor, and *group* (experiment, control), *gender* (male, female), and *region* (Europe, USA) as the between-subject factors was used to conduct the analysis of the impact of the intervention on the quality of students’ stories. The results showed a main effect of *intervention*, $F(1, 275) = 32.40, p < .001, n_p^2 = .11, \delta = 1.00$, and a significant interaction between *intervention* and *group* $F(1, 275) = 113.49, p < .001, n_p^2 = .292, \delta = 1.00$ which supports the research hypothesis; as well as a significant interaction of *intervention* and

region, which was independent of the other factors (*group* and *gender*) (U.S. > European), $F(1, 278) = 5.014, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .018, \delta = .607$.

Tests were conducted to further examine the significance values indicated by the omnibus tests. Post-hoc analysis examining the *intervention*group* effect showed a significant impact of the session with the mean score of the experiment group ($M = 2.02, SE = 0.064$), greater than that of the control group ($M = 0.80, SE = 0.105$) at POST, i.e., $M_{diff} = 1.213, SE = 0.123, p < .001$. The *intervention*region* effect also showed a significant difference between U.S. and European at POST, i.e., $M_{diff} = -0.350, SE = 0.123, p < .001$, although without involving the *group* effect (Control vs. Experiment) this is not attributed to the session (and thus without relevance to the assessment of its impact); the findings will be shared below for reference.

A Bonferroni correction was applied to this analysis which produces α -values that account for the multiple factors (i.e., *group* - Control/Experiment; *region* - U.S./European, and *gender*) by dividing the original α -value by the number of analyses on the dependent variable so as to minimize Type 1 errors (Statistic Solutions, 2019, para. 6). As stated in the previous section analyzing the assessment dimension -- which also utilized the Bonferroni correction -- it should be noted that it is considered a conservative test to account for multiple analyses within the same data set (Nakagawa, 2004; Perneger, 1998).

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Story Scores, by Intervention*Group

Post-hoc analysis examined significant interaction between *intervention* and *group*. The mean score of the experiment group at PRE ($M = 0.88, SE = 0.056$) was significantly ($p < .001$) less than the experiment mean at POST ($M = 2.02, SE = 0.064$). The mean score of the control group at PRE ($M = 1.15, SE = 0.092$) was significantly ($p = .005$) greater than the control mean

at POST ($M = 0.80, SE = 0.105$) (Table 4-37). This supports the hypothesis that the Experiment scores would increase as a result of the intervention, independent of any other factors. Figure 4-43 plots the change in the means by group for PRE and POST.

Table 4-37

*Story Rating Means by Intervention*Group*

Group	M_{Diff} (PRE- POST)	SE	$Sig.$
Control	-0.349	0.12	0.005
Experiment	1.14	0.75	0.0001

Story Rating Rubric: 0 = unacceptable, 4 = exceptional

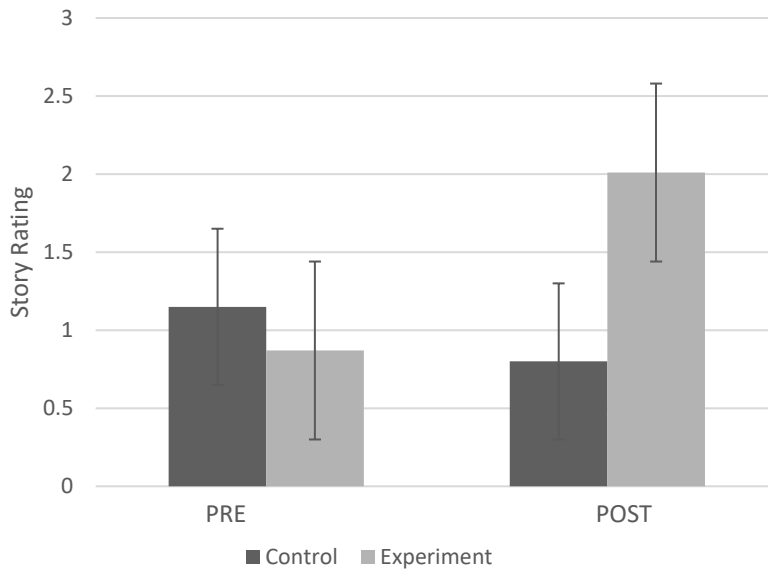


Figure 4-43. Plot of PRE and POST means for story rating, by intervention*group.

Furthermore, the comparison shown in Table 4-38 indicates significance in the difference between the groups at PRE, $F(1, 275) = 6.371, p = .012, \eta_p^2 = .023, \delta = 0.711$, with the Control mean ($M = 1.15, SE = 0.092$) higher than the Experiment mean ($M = 0.88, SE = 0.056$), $M_{diff} =$

0.273, $SE = 0.108$. At POST the significance, $F(1, 275) = 97.18, p < .001, n_p^2 = .261, \delta = 1.00$ was a result of the Control mean ($M = 0.80, SE = 0.105$) decrease of -0.35 and the Experiment mean ($M = 2.02, SE = 0.064$) increase of 1.14 ($M_{diff} = -1.213, SE = 0.123$) and supports the hypothesis that the quality of the students' stories in the experiment group would show a significant increase compared to the control group. The decrease in the control mean from PRE to POST may be due to lower motivation and with no activity (e.g., email communication or intervention) between the completion of the two surveys. Table 4-38 displays the difference in means and significance levels between groups.

Table 4-38

*Significance of Pairwise Comparison in Mean Scores for Story Ratings, Intervention*Group*

Factor/Intervention	M_{Diff} (Control - Experiment)	SE	Sig.
PRE Story Rating	0.273	0.108	0.012
POST Story Rating	-1.213	0.123	0.000

Main effect of the intervention. The overall effect of the intervention on the story examples offered by respondents in the Pre- and Post-surveys showed significance (POST > PRE) $F(1, 278) = 32.40, p < .001, n_p^2 = .105, \delta = 1.00$ (Table 4-39). This main effect does not offer additional information to support the hypothesis that Experiment story ratings would increase over those of Control in post-intervention (i.e., effect of group). The mean scores and pairwise comparison is shown below.

Table 4-39

PRE and POST Session Mean Scores of Story Ratings

Intervention	Mean	Standard Error
PRE (1)	1.02	0.054
POST (2)	1.41	0.062

This finding of main effect indicates that the POST score mean (that is, across both groups) of the story rating was higher than the PRE score mean of the story ratings (POST > PRE) $M_{diff} = -0.397$ $SE = 0.070$. $p < .001$. In examining these PRE and POST combined group means, the POST mean is higher due to the increase Experiment made at POST (and yet despite the decrease of Control at POST).

Story Ratings by Intervention and Region

The initial analysis indicated significance for the story ratings means by *intervention*region* $F(1, 275) = 5.014$, $p = .026$, $n_p^2 = .018$, $\delta = .607$, which was independent of gender and group. The post hoc analysis showed a significant difference between U.S. and European $F(1, 275) = 0.123$, $p = .005$, $n_p^2 = .029$, $\delta = .810$ at POST, although without involving the *group* factor (Control vs. Experiment), this is not attributed to the session (and thus is neutral to the assessment of its impact); however, the findings will be shared below for reference.

At PRE, the difference between the European mean ($M = 0.99$, $SE = 0.083$) and the U.S. mean ($M = 1.03$, $SE = 0.070$) did not produce significance $F(1, 275) = 0.123$, $p = .726$, $n_p^2 = .000$, $\delta = 0.064$ ($M_{diff} = 0.038$, $SE = 0.108$). Yet at POST $F(1, 275) = 8.103$, $p = .005$, $n_p^2 = .029$, $\delta = .810$, there is significance (U.S. > European) $M_{diff} = 0.350$, $SE = 0.123$, showing a European

mean ($M = 1.24$, $SE = 0.094$) lower than the U.S. mean ($M = 1.59$, $SE = 0.079$). Figure 4-44 plots the means for Europe and U.S. at PRE and POST.

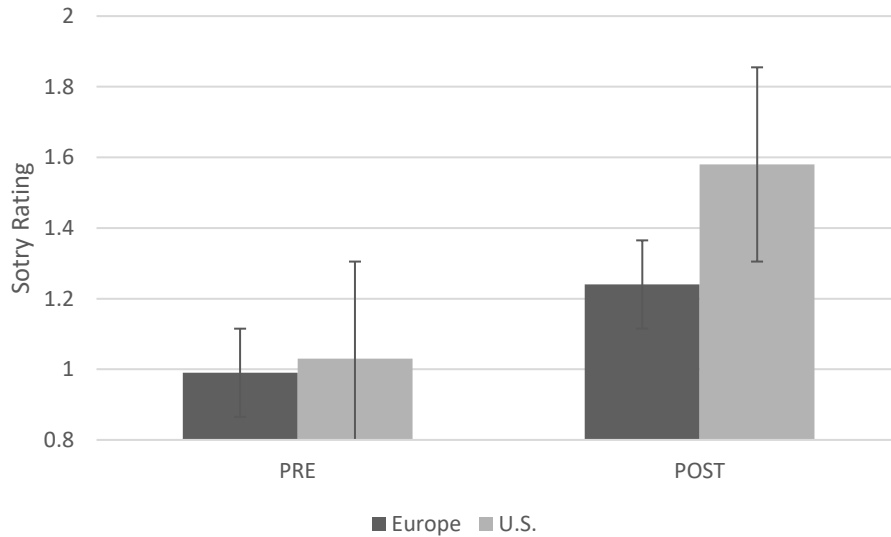


Figure 4-44. Story ratings PRE and POST (as effect of intervention), by region.

The difference between U.S. and European scores is not attributable to language differences or the session since both *region*group* scores were similar in PRE. A possible hypothesis for this result is that after completing the first survey, U.S. students were more likely to reflect on the topic, and to a greater degree than the European students and thus resulting in overall higher U.S. story ratings at POST.

It is important to note that there is a lack of significance for *intervention*group*region* $F(1, 278) = 1.50$, $p = .222$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$, $\delta = .231$. This indicates that the impact of the session on the U.S. students' story ratings was comparable to the impact on that of the European students' story ratings.

Summary Conclusion of Pre- and Post-Story Rating Analysis

The results which indicate the change in mean scores of the story ratings for the experiment versus the control group at POST ($p < .001$) show that the session participants were positively impacted in their ability to write about an example of skill development from their time abroad because of the intervention. Learning the process for crafting an example of skill development (by telling a story) in preparation for an interview is a primary focus of the intervention session. Being able to speak about one's skills in ways that employers will appreciate is the premise for the intervention which requires a process of self-reflection and strong self-awareness. This outcome will be further examined in the Discussion Chapter making the case for more institutions to build a reflection session into their programming for students and how being able to articulate one's skills benefits more than just the student, but employers as well.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Background and Significance

According to Matherly and Tillman (2015), employability established itself as an objective of higher education in the second half of the 20th century. Employability is also establishing itself as an objective of study abroad with numerous recent studies (with large sample sizes) pointing to this connection (Center for International Mobility, 2017; EC, 2014; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; OECD, 2016). Jones (2013) claims the skills defining intercultural competence overlap significantly with the key transferable skills that employers report valuing in job candidates. She points to study abroad having a dual contribution to student outcomes – that is, both with regard to intercultural skills and transferable skills. As cited earlier, students returning from abroad report a high degree of transferable skill acquisition and improvement (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Hubbard, Rexeisen, & Watson, 2018; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon, 2009).

The attention being paid to workplace readiness in higher education has also grown significantly in the past decade (Tillman, 2012), yet gaps appear to exist in how students' report their skill levels compared to how employers view today's recent graduates. The Finnish study *Hidden Competences* (Center for International Mobility, 2017) as well as a study conducted in the U.S. for the AAC&U (Hart Research Associates, 2015) each show that recent graduates overestimate their skills and abilities compared to how employers rate them as a cohort. There is work to be done to help students focus on skill-building as well as reporting them accurately. As HEI's mission statements and intended learning outcomes speak of preparing students for a global workforce, they would be remiss in not helping formulate intentional opportunity for skill

development in education. As well, HEI's should facilitate the process for students to accurately identify their skills and understand the applicability of their intercultural and international learning to the workplace.

While career-focused programming for students who study abroad has grown in the past decade, the need to assess the impact of programming – such as that conducted for this study – is required as an expansion continues and as employability becomes a stronger focus of international exchange.

Conceptual framework. The constructivist context provides the conceptual framework in which this study was carried out. As noted in the literature review, constructivist theorists such as Dewey (1938), Mezirow (1990) and Bandura (1977) allow for meaning to be built upon experience, including the possibility of finding multiple meanings based on students' personal and social experiences that influence their self-reflection. This pragmatic approach aligns with common practices of campus-based student programming related to both learning abroad and career development.

Methods. The design of this project was characterized by collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single phase. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) term this convergent parallel design; a separate analysis occurs first and then both data sets are examined for relationships. Through a review of the literature on skill development reported from studying abroad, the researcher created the pre- and post-survey. Professionals from both education abroad and career services validated the survey questions. The survey was administered within a week prior to students attending the reflection sessions; the post-session survey was completed on paper at the end of the session. Control group participants were sent the first online survey link in an email from their universities' study abroad offices; the researcher sent the link to the

follow-up survey five to six days later to approximate the same time period as session participants.

Discussion of Key Findings

Research Hypotheses. This research addresses the primary question: Does an hour-long facilitated reflection session for undergraduates positively impact their ability to identify and articulate the transferable skills they developed as the result of studying or interning abroad?

The first research sub-question of this study is intended to assess the impact of the reflection session on students' articulation of the connection of having developed transferable skills abroad and identifying specific skills, along with their perceived levels of confidence and preparedness pre- and post-session with regard to job interviews.

The second sub-question examines whether attending the session (the intervention) results in students' ability to craft a higher quality story (or example) of their skill development from abroad. The main variables were *intervention* – with the pre-session and the post-session survey; and *group* – control vs. experiment, to examine the effect of the session on experiment subjects versus the control subject who did not participate in a session. In addition, the variables of *region* – U.S. versus Europe, and *gender* – male versus female, were added into the analysis. This section will offer discussion on the results of the data relevant to both research questions.

Here are the hypotheses and predictions to further address questions:

H1: Participation in the reflection session impacts students' perceived articulation, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

Prediction 1: Participation in the reflection session will result in an increase in the assessment measures of Experiment subjects' perceived articulation, identification, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad.

H2: Participation in the reflection session impacts the quality of Experiment subjects' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Prediction 2: Participation in the reflection session will increase the quality of students' written examples of specific skills developed abroad.

Further inquiry on independent variables of Gender and Region. Two independent within-subject variables of gender (male, female) and region (Europe and U.S.) were added in order to determine whether there were any significant differences based on these traits. For example, it was expected that the impact of the reflection session on students' perceived identification, articulation, confidence, and preparation of skills developed abroad will not differ between women and men nor between U.S. and European students, nor in their ability to write about their skill development. The GLM provided data on the significance of any of these variables in an initial omnibus test; any α -values that met the < 0.05 value used in this study was further analyzed in post hoc tests to determine the effect.

Summary Analysis: Assessment Measure. The results showed there was a significant effect of *intervention* as a function of *group* (Experiment>Control, $p = .002$), showing a substantial increase of the assessment measure post-intervention *only* for the experiment group ($p < .001$), whereas no differences were observed between the pre- and post- assessment score for the control group ($p = .359$). Furthermore, no differences were observed between experiment and control group pre-intervention (Control >Experiment) ($M_{diff} = 0.060$, $SE = 0.066$, $p = .364$) thus supporting the homogeneity between groups. But differences were found post-intervention confirming that there was a significant effect of intervention, with the experiment group reporting a greater impact from the session on the four measures than the control group (Experiment>Control) ($M_{diff} = 0.157$, $SE = 0.061$, $p = .011$).

With regard to the between-subject findings, there were no differences in the interaction by *region* ($p = .059$); or by *gender* ($p = .635$). This supports that there was homogeneity between the U.S. and the European subjects, and that there was no difference in the impact of the session between the regions.

The responses from the student surveys and from several follow-up email exchanges conducted several weeks post-session, as well as information from the session facilitators about this project will be used to deliver key points derived from this research. With the campus contacts and facilitators having responsibility for programming for students returning from abroad, they offered reflections themselves on numerous aspects of this project including the recruiting of students, collaboration with career services offices, the student workbook and the challenges of the self-reflection, and modifications they may implement in their own future programming. They also provided their own convictions about the value of offering these reflection sessions to students.

Summary Analysis: Story Ratings. A repeated measures General Linear Model (GLM) utilizing two levels of *intervention* (PRE, POST) as the within-subject factor, and *group* (experiment, control), *gender* (male, female), and *region* (Europe, USA) as the between-subject factors was used to conduct the analysis of the impact of the intervention on the quality of students' stories.—Post-hoc analysis examining the interaction of *intervention*group* showed a significant impact of the session with the mean score of the experiment group ($M = 2.02$, $SE = 0.064$), greater than that of the control group ($M = 0.80$, $SE = 0.105$) at POST ($p < .001$).

Motivations to Study Abroad

While the students' reported motivations to study abroad were not factored into the analysis of the session's impact, examining the description data is insightful regarding how students consider the value of study abroad in developing or improving their transferable skills and, ultimately, increasing their employability. While the responses to this question were reported in the Results chapter, they are repeated here with further analysis to provide the context of their relevance to the implications and conclusions drawn here in this chapter. A pre-survey question asked students: *How important was each of the following in your decision to study abroad?* and offered a 5-point Likert scale with these options: *Not at all Important, Less Important, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Important, Extremely Important* in rating seven different motivational factors. To review full results, see Results chapter, section Reported Motivations to Study Abroad.

In ranking the percentage of responses receiving the greatest number of *Extremely Important* and *Important* responses, students' top motivation for studying abroad was *Learning about another culture* ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.70$, $SE = 0.04$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$); this includes all participants across group and region. The second-highest ranked motivation was *Travel opportunities* ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.81$, $SE = 0.05$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$). These were the two highest-ranked motivation factors for both European and U.S. students as well (See Table 0-19). Of the two career-related responses *Improving my employability* ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.06$, $SE = 0.06$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$) was ranked fourth of the seven motivations (see Table 5-1) and *Enhancing my resume* ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.99$, $SE = 0.06$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$) ranked sixth.

Table 5-1

Reported Motivations to Study Abroad, All Subjects

Motivation Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Learning about another culture	4.53	0.70	289	0.04	-1.63	2.83
Travel opportunities	4.49	0.81	287	0.05	-1.67	2.41
Learning foreign language	3.87	1.24	288	0.07	-0.89	-0.29
Improving my employability	3.85	1.06	288	0.06	-0.84	0.14
Fulfilling degree requirements	3.78	1.24	288	0.07	-0.86	-0.32
Enhancing my resume	3.76	0.99	286	0.06	-0.82	0.18
Spending time with friends	2.67	1.45	289	0.09	0.18	-1.39

It does not seem particularly surprising that students would rate *learning about another culture* and *travel opportunities* as their top motivations for studying abroad. This aligns with a U.S. study conducted by Anderson and Lawton (2015) in which the motivations in the category “world enlightenment” – containing statements such as *Learn about the world*, and *Better understand different cultures* – were collectively students’ top-rated reasons for studying abroad. What may be a bit more surprising is that the third-highest rated motivation by U.S. students was *Fulfilling academic requirements* ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.30$, $SE = 0.10$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$) followed by *Learning another language* ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.25$, $SE = 0.09$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$) as shown in Table 5-2 . While the precise number of U.S. students who studied in English-speaking countries cannot be determined due to the fact that students could respond that they had studied in multiple countries, it appears that 45 of the 183 U.S. participants reported studying in English-speaking countries, which is 24% (see Table 5-2). Thus an estimated 76% of the U.S. participants studied in a non-English-speaking country, although not all in language immersion programs.

Table 5-2

Mean Scores of Motivation Factors, by Region

Motivation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Fulfilling Degree Requirements						
European	3.70	1.13	105	0.11	-0.91	0.27
U.S.	3.82	1.30	183	0.10	-0.85	-0.54
Enhancing My Resume						
European	4.07	0.78	104	0.08	-1.11	2.21
U.S.	3.59	1.06	182	0.05	-0.59	-0.42
Learning About Another Culture						
European	4.37	0.78	106	0.08	-1.32	1.48
U.S.	4.62	0.62	183	0.05	-1.79	3.82
Learning Foreign Language						
European	4.13	1.20	106	0.12	-1.31	0.63
U.S.	3.72	1.25	182	0.09	-0.70	-0.54
Spending Time with Friends						
European	2.57	1.43	106	0.14	0.30	-1.32
U.S.	2.73	1.46	183	0.11	0.12	-1.42
Improving My Employability						
European	4.19	0.87	106	0.08	-1.15	1.27
U.S.	3.66	1.11	182	0.08	-0.64	-0.26
Travel Opportunities						
European	4.36	0.85	106	0.08	-1.40	1.87
U.S.	4.56	0.77	181	0.06	-1.87	2.91

The European students' third-highest reported motivation was *Improving my Employability* ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.87$, $SE = -1.15$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 5.00$). The European response to follow next was *Learning a Foreign Language* ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.20$, $SE = -1.31$,

Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00). These rankings align very closely with the *EIS* (EC, 2014) in which the top motivations to study or train abroad were reported by students as “the opportunity to live abroad and meet new people, improve foreign language proficiency, develop transversal skills. Just after this motivation comes the wish to enhance employability abroad for more than 85% of students” (p. 14) [note: a chart on page 73 of the *EIS* shows these skills in ranked-order as reported above, but does not specify the exact percentages for each]. This high degree of career motivation is reported in another study of European students who consider “improving my career prospects” very important (69%) or important (26%), thus totaling 95% who consider career motivations when choosing to study or intern abroad (Nilsson & Ripmesster, 2016, p. 623).

In the current study, the two career-related motivations – *Enhancing my resume* ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.99$, $SE = 0.06$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) and *Improving my employability (by developing certain skills, etc)* ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.06$, $SE = 0.06$, Min = 1.00, Max = 5.00) received the fourth and sixth-highest ranking, respectively, when examining all participants combined. While the career benefits of study abroad are often touted to attract students to participate in mobility programs, it is perhaps understandable that subjects’ top motivations remain the rather traditional ones of cultural learning and traveling. The career-related motivations and the more traditional ones of a study abroad experience (e.g., learn about another culture, travel opportunities) are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Just as the *EIS* (2014) and the IIE’s study *Gaining an Employment Edge* (2017) report, it is positive to see that students learn about another culture and travel, while also developing skills that may apply to their employability and serve as an asset in the workplace.

Reported Perception on the Value of the Reflection Session

The experiment subjects were asked to assess the likelihood of conducting a reflection process on their own accord by responding to this statement on the post-session survey: *Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained from studying abroad and been able to describe them accurately* using a 7-point Likert Scale (7-Strongly Agree, 1 Strongly Disagree). The overall average of the entire data set was 5.00 (see Table 5-3). The European students had an average of 5.15 ($SD = 1.25$, $SE = 0.15$, Min = 2.00, Max = 7) while the U.S. students had an average of 4.88 ($SD = 1.61$, $SE = 0.17$, Min = 1.00, Max = 7).

Table 5-3

Summary Statistics of Likert Scale responses to “Without attending this Session” question

“Without Attending” factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Combined regions	5.00	1.47	167	0.11	-0.69	0.12
European	5.15	1.25	72	0.15	-0.59	0.02
U.S.	4.88	1.61	95	0.17	-0.63	-0.15

This question was included in order to assess student perception of the value of the reflection process and for HEI’s to consider the importance of offering a session to students (see frequency of responses in *Figure 5-1*). Given the mean response of 5 (the Likert response of 5 equates to *Somewhat Agree*) and the fact that there were 43 responses of *Agree* (Likert score 6) and 25 responses of *Strongly Agree* (Likert Score 7), this indicates that it is important for students to receive prompting to self-assess the gains they made by studying or interning abroad.

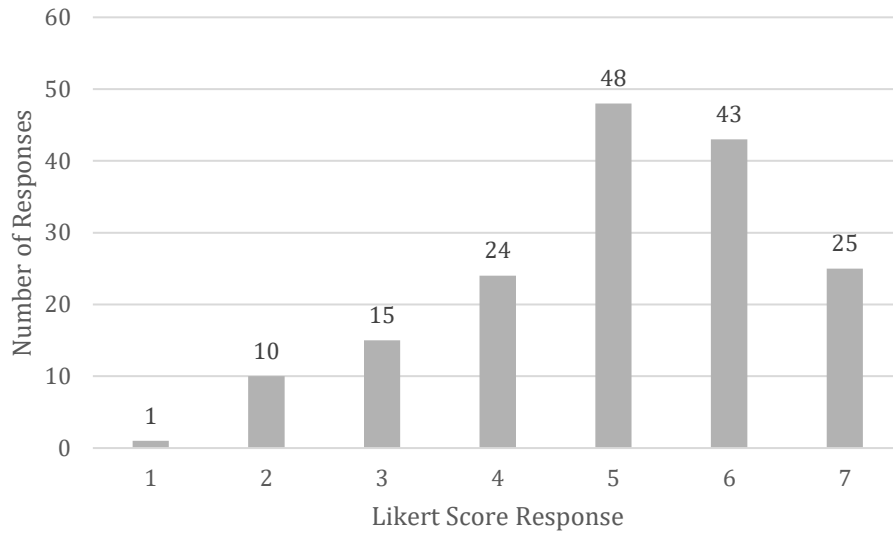


Figure 5-1. Frequency of responses to statement: "Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained"

The theorist Otto Laske (2006) cited in Chapter 2 indicated that humans often reach a point of growth and maturity at which they linger if left to their own accord, and need an external push to continue to develop. While giving credit to those students who are motivated (and perhaps self-motivated) to study abroad as they may be in the minority among their peers both in the U.S. and in Europe, it appears that institutions must also guide them through a process of reflection to self-assess their skills, increase their own self-awareness, and ultimately, to articulate the knowledge and skills acquired as a result of studying abroad. This will support the contribution of education abroad in fulfilling higher education's objective to increase students' employability.

Significance and Interpretation of Findings.

After a careful analysis of the research findings, three broad conclusions for this research were established – with each one discussed below – along with implications for both application and scholarship.

Finding One: Articulation of transferable skills. Students report developing a variety of transferable skills to a significant degree as the result of studying abroad yet may struggle to speak about them in descriptive terms, or to offer examples of having demonstrated the skill.

In responding to the survey questions about skill development, students reported that they had significantly increased their transferable skills by studying abroad. This finding aligns with a number of large U.S. and European studies of self-reported skill development in studying abroad (Center for International Mobility, 2017; Dwyer, 2004a; EC, 2014; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Hubbard et al., 2018; Paige et al., 2009). Students appear to report great gains their skills, and across nearly all the skills listed in the survey. Table 5-4 is below with the mean scores across all subjects for reference. (Appendix G displays the mean scores for reported skill acquisition by region and group).

Table 5-4

Mean Scores of Reported Skill Acquisition Abroad

Skill	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communication Skills	6.28	0.87	289	0.05	-1.73	5.11
Confidence	6.34	0.96	288	0.06	-1.95	4.86
Course or major-related knowledge	5.71	1.13	287	0.07	-0.87	0.87
Curiosity	6.30	1.03	289	0.06	-1.68	3.04
Empathy	5.83	1.14	288	0.07	-0.86	0.56
Flexibility/Adaptability	6.43	0.86	289	0.05	-1.87	5.31
Initiative	6.11	1.01	288	0.06	-1.43	2.79
Language Skills	5.74	1.17	289	0.07	-0.73	0.42
Leadership Skills	5.70	1.08	289	0.06	-0.65	0.38
Open Mindedness	6.26	1.07	289	0.06	-1.45	1.98
Problem Solving	6.09	1.00	288	0.06	-1.11	1.58
Self-Awareness	6.29	0.91	289	0.05	-1.49	3.35
Teamwork	5.75	1.16	289	0.07	-0.62	-0.16
Tolerance for Ambiguity	5.91	1.12	289	0.07	-0.91	0.62
Work Ethic	5.43	1.30	289	0.08	-0.62	-0.02

The 7-point Likert Scale options: *Significantly Increased* (7), *Moderately Increased* (6), *Slightly Increased* (5), *No Change* (4), *Slightly Diminished* (3), *Moderately Diminished* (2), *Significantly Diminished* (1).

In reviewing the mean scores of the Likert responses reported for these skills, most students believe they have increased their skills significantly. The skill with the lowest mean was Work Ethic ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.30$, $SE = 0.08$, $Min = 1$, $Max = 7$), and that mean was not particularly low – 5.43 on a 7-point scale. The three highest across all subjects were Flexibility/Adaptability ($M = 6.43$, $SD = 0.86$, $SE = 0.05$, $Min = 1.00$, $Max = 7.00$), Confidence

($M = 6.34$, $SD = 0.96$), and then Curiosity with the third-highest mean score ($M = 6.30$, $SD = 1.03$).

The discussion that needs to take place here is that students in this study, and in a number of others that have been reviewed, do indeed report a high degree of skill development (or improvement) from their study abroad experience. Yet it also appears from the findings in this study that they may be challenged in citing a specific example of having demonstrated (one of) these skills.

While the session increased the quality of the stories significantly, the average post-session score remained at the mid-point (2) of the rating scale. While a one-hour reflection session may not be a fully adequate amount of time for all students to reflect upon and learn to talk about skill development, an imbalance remains in students' overwhelmingly positive claims of skill development compared to their somewhat limited ability to offer rich examples from their experience.

When several session participants were asked to offer additional reflection several weeks post-session about the process of identifying their transferable skills, students did seem realistic in their self-assessment. They recognized that they had made gains, yet did not appear to be boastful, or exaggerating their abilities in their comments. Rather, it appears the students are still reflecting on the process itself – that their reflection was continuing after the session ended:

Before attending the session, I've never thought about the skills I developed during my experience abroad especially because I thought it was not necessary to explain them during a job interview. During the session, I realized how much I've grown during the semester in the United States, how many skills I've developed and broaden and how such skills could be used in different contexts and settings. Thus, I realized it's really important to make the interviewer understand my personal growth through concrete examples. I still find intense and not easy to think about those, because explaining such skills require to structure a clear explanation using the STAR system and – at least for me – it isn't something natural or easy to do.

What I find most difficult is to recognize the importance of my everyday life as international student as a source of inspiration to find examples of skills I acquired. At the

beginning I thought such stories couldn't be appealing for purpose of the job interview and telling them would have made me appear naive. Now, instead, I realized that reporting such examples and stories would be helpful in highlighting what I really achieved through the experience abroad and to suggest that I have something different from other people applying for the job, something different coming directly from my unique period outside Italy and the unique events and situations I faced during that time. Italian female, studied in the United States.

The statement above points out how this student had “never thought about the skills [she] developed” or that it might be necessary “to explain them during a job interview”. This sentiment is similar to many of the responses in an open comment section of the post-session survey – that is, that even thinking about what skills they have to offer was new to them.

This supports the idea that students need an opportunity to self-reflect and recognize the skills they gained, and how those apply in the workplace. Some international education professionals may even wish to make participation in such a session a requirement. In the discussions that took place during this project, it was often mentioned by facilitators and campus representatives that HEI’s should be obligated to provide sessions like this; yet we cannot forget that students themselves must also take some responsibility of their own. That leads to questions such as whether announcing a session as an option is enough; if leaving it up to the student to decide whether or not to do this self-assessment is sufficient, etc. Perhaps that is a question each institution must answer based on its own philosophy and approach to education abroad and career-focused programming.

Just as the above statement points out that “using the STAR system and – at least for me – it isn't something natural or easy to do” the next student also states that even after being shown a process by which to formulate an example of skill development, “. . . it is still difficult”. Education abroad professionals must keep this in mind when working with students; walking students through this process may require both creativity and patience.

Part of the reason I took part in the workshop was that I find it so hard to express why my year abroad was worthwhile to prospective employers. I did find it easier after the workshop and came up with a couple of examples, but it is still difficult.

I believe this is because on paper I did not do a lot extra on my year abroad - I studied, did some sport, socialised and travelled. In fact, I probably did less than I do at home in terms of trying new things or getting involved in societies or projects. However, this was largely because the university set-up was not conducive to this, and the student lifestyle was principally academic. During the first semester most of my energy was required just to attend university and get through daily life because of the huge change in culture and needing to speak a foreign language. Therefore, my achievements seem blurred and undefined as they stem mostly from emotional struggles and doing things that seem mundane when put on paper. I find it hard to express them in a way that makes them seem like achievements, as I find it is difficult for others to understand the emotional aspect without having been through it. This feels especially true for me as my year abroad was part of a modern language degree, which makes the experience much harder emotionally in the sense that I was not part of an Erasmus community and instead had to integrate into the local community, which often felt isolating and made it difficult to engage in certain activities.

Scottish female, studied in Italy.

A facilitator offered information on the value of students learning this process:

*I would say that even if a student leaves the session just knowing what STAR/CAR *is*, it's a win. Knowing the principle [of crafting a STAR] is essential to engage in the next steps (of actually formulating stories whether for mock interviews or real interviews) and everyone has to start somewhere. For some students it takes a bit longer to absorb the process and practice.*

These statements offer evidence that a short reflection session may nudge students' so that they continue to reflect and to identify specific examples of skill development afterwards.

This gap – between students responding to a survey question that they developed a skill yet struggling to offer an example – is a topic that the field should examine more carefully. As Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) question whether international educators can fairly claim that study abroad is transformative, education abroad professionals must further examine the relationship between studying abroad and transferable skill development. Relevant questions may be whether all program types afford students such opportunities, how intentional must these opportunities be constructed, and to what degree are we encouraging – or denying – students interaction with the host culture. Given the criteria established for the story rating rubric in this study, Level 4 requires that students show they have undergone a shift of thinking or acquired a

significant insight. This means that not all students may have a story to tell from abroad that attains this highest level, yet there may still be very poignant stories which are relevant for the that students can share with potential employers.

One solution may be to help students become more aware of ways to consider the challenges abroad as opportunities for skill development starting at the time they are selecting a program and preparing to depart (see Recommendations of Facilitators, below). To introduce this idea may offer greater context to the student, and thus deeper recognition of the opportunity for skill-building abroad. If study abroad is billed by HEI's as a way to build one's resumé, it is important that advisors are able to articulate just what that means and that this is explicitly addressed in the advising process.

Finding Two: Impact of experience. Students can benefit from guidance in learning to talk about the impact of their study abroad experience in anticipation of interviewing for jobs upon graduation.

Given the very low PRE story ratings and the significant increase in the mean POST score for the session participants, it is apparent that facilitated reflection advances their ability to demonstrate a transferable skill. The facilitators commented that in general, students are not likely to discern how talking about their skills to an employer may require a different approach than when telling family or friends about their experience. This echoes back to point made in a recommendation in the seminal article, "Employers Attitudes Towards Study Abroad" by (Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007):

Study abroad and career services professionals should collaborate in order to give students some basic training in how to present what they have learned through studying abroad, in ways that employers will appreciate. In our experience, former study abroad participants are more likely to discuss the place where they studied, and aspects of local cultural life, than they are the sorts of learning outcomes—the specific knowledge, skills and perspectives they learned abroad (p. 30).

Thus, students need guidance to realize that speaking to employers requires a specific approach using information about outcomes. Theorists explain that learning to make discernments of this type is a significant developmental step at a time when intensive cognitive, intellectual and psycho-social growth is underway (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In a post-session follow-up, several students shared their thoughts on the process of reflection in the session several weeks earlier. The first female explains how she had found it difficult to put her experience into words, but found the session helpful in connecting her experiences to “employable skills”:

Before attending the session, I had a lot of trouble putting into words what my study abroad experience meant to me and did for me, beyond the basic, “It was amazing” and “It was life changing.” I think it is so difficult to articulate because many of the people I am talking to haven’t shared these experiences. Life while you study abroad is so unlike anything else I have ever experienced. It can be hard to explain it then, to people who don’t fully understand what I am talking about.

When I talk to others who have studied abroad, suddenly it is so easy for me to go into detail about how it has affected me. Of course, in the context of a job interview, I need to be able to give concrete answers regarding the skills I have developed, which is why breaking it down with the STAR method has been incredibly helpful. This method helps me think through individual experiences and connect them to the employable skills that they demonstrate. Breaking my experiences down this way has allowed me to better articulate their impact in a way that also makes me a more competitive job candidate.

U.S. female, studied in Spain.

Another student states that in deciding to study abroad, it had not occurred to her that it could have a positive impact on her professional development:

Prior to studying abroad, I didn’t realize the impact my experiences abroad would have on my professional development. I thought of it as a way to finish my courses required for my major while getting a more global perspective. In hindsight, I recognize that my experiences have actually set me apart from other job candidates both in the connections I am able to make between a beyond the classroom experience and skills I have acquired but also in the way that I am able to handle situations with more confidence in myself. To an employer, I think that studying abroad shows that the candidate is willing to challenge themselves and step outside of their comfort zone. Since coming back from abroad, I have heard several employers state that they are always

excited to hear that a candidate has had experience abroad, due to the perspective that they bring back with them. U.S. female, studied in Costa Rica.

Also relevant to this finding is that the facilitators in this project – all of whom have considerable experience working with students on the process of skill identification and preparing for job interviews – report that they frequently witness the challenges students seem to have in knowing themselves well and being comfortable talking about themselves. Students also are not aware that they may call upon a broad set of life experiences as examples of their skills (i.e., it is not limited to the workplace for recent graduates). One facilitator, employed in a U.S. Career Services office, offered this observation on the topic:

Students seem to really struggle with recalling information, or recognizing the importance/relevance of a variety of experiences. Some students have a hard time preparing STARs all around, whereas others need reminders that they can include information about Study Abroad and other topics. For some reason they feel that they absolutely must only talk about work experiences [in job interviews].

While this session focused on the students' international experience, helping students identify their applicable skills from a variety of life experiences is important. In order to gauge how impactful students consider their international experience relative to other life experiences, the post-session survey had this question for students:

Check the answer that best describes your thoughts (read all first, then choose one):

- Overall, the strongest examples of skill development that I can share with potential employers are from studying abroad. (4)*
- I have strong examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but have equally as strong examples from other experiences in my life as well. (3)*
- I have good examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but examples from other experiences in my life are stronger. (2)*
- I have no examples of skill development from studying abroad; all of my examples will be from other life experiences. (1)*

Table 5-5 displays the mean score for this response ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.65$, $SE = 0.05$) indicating that students look to the examples from studying abroad as strong ones, but that they equate with those from other areas of their experience.

Table 5-5

Mean of Likert Score Responses for "Strongest Examples of Skill Development"

"Strongest Examples" factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Combined regions	3.06	0.65	164	0.05	-0.86	2.92
Europe	3.06	0.59	69	0.07	-0.01	-0.12
U.S.	3.06	0.70	95	0.07	-1.22	3.88

This result supports encouraging students to recall an example related to studying abroad to answer a job interview question, as they are "strong examples." This rationale, along with the point made to students in the introduction of the session – that having an international experience is likely a place where transferable skills can be developed – supports encouraging students to examine their time abroad and to share their examples.

Finding Three: Identification of skills. The majority of students report that learning to identify and articulate skills from studying abroad is not something that they would be likely to do on their own, meaning higher education institutions should consider it their obligation to facilitate this process.

To obtain some idea of how unique the process of reflection is for students, a question on the post-session survey for experiment subjects asked "Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained from studying abroad and been able to describe them

accurately. The average response (see Table 5-6) of session participants on a 7-point Likert scale was a 5.00 (*Agree Somewhat*) when both U.S. ($M = 4.88$) and European ($M = 5.15$) means are combined.

Table 5-6

Summary Statistics of Likert Scale responses to "Without Attending this Session" question

"Without Attending" factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Combined regions	5.00	1.47	167	0.11	-0.69	0.12
European	5.15	1.25	72	0.15	-0.59	0.02
U.S.	4.88	1.61	95	0.17	-0.63	-0.15

Additional comments from session participants. Session participants were offered the chance to make open-ended comments on the post-session survey (*Do you have any comments that you would like to add about the session?*). The sampling of statements below indicates the students found it valuable, including some indicating that it changed their thinking a bit, or got them thinking harder about the subject (for example, comments including "made me aware," "made me think more"). A full list of the open-ended comments appears in Appendix J.

From U.S. participants:

- *Very good session. Got me thinking about the skills I gained from studying abroad and gave me tools on how to articulate them better.*
- *Thank you for allowing me to reflect in more detail about the challenges, experiences and characteristics I gained.*
- *Very informative. Got in the mindset for interviews.*
- *If definitely has me thinking a lot about how I can tie my experience back into an interview as I prep for graduating next year.*
- *It was really helpful!*
- *This session contributed me to have confidence in myself by allowing me to acknowledge how unique I am with my study abroad and internship experiences.*

- *I was most excited for this session and I definitely feel that it helped me be able to describe my experiences at a professional level.*

From European participants:

- *Thank you very much. It was really helpful. I feel much better, prepared for interviews.*
- *Really great! Thought-provoking and a good beginning to the long job hunt ahead. Thank you!*
- *I find this session very useful because it made me think more about the skills I developed that I can present at my job interview one day.*
- *The session made me aware of more gained transferable skills than I initially thought I gained.*
- *I see and understand now more how I could use skills from my time abroad - thanks a lot.*

A U.S. student offered a post-reflection several weeks after she had participated in the session.

She states that is being able to translate her life experiences into “useful information about yourself” is an “essential skill.”

I don't think I ever said studying abroad “changed my life,” but when I look at isolated experiences, I can see that my skills were put to the test. Studying abroad helped me see how my experiences can be translated into lessons and information for the future. For instance, the “STAR” format of explaining an experience and evaluating how I handled it has helped me speak deeper into how studying abroad changed me. I think it is an essential skill to be able to articulate life experiences and translate them into useful information about yourself for a job interview. The ability to market yourself to a future employer is imperative, and if you can do it through study abroad experience, I think it can really set you apart from the rest of the applicants.

U.S. female, studied in Australia.

While in the process of working with HEI's to host reflection sessions, it became evident that many education abroad professionals have already turned to their career services colleagues for help in this task, yet it appears that many more schools have not yet taken this step.

A session facilitator offered this observation about the session's value even for students who don't craft a STAR during the session:

I think that even if during the session students have not been able to formulate a STAR they have still gained a lot and will be able to go back to what they have heard and learned in the session, especially when preparing for an interview.

A number of conversations in the course of this study involved the topic of whose responsibility it is to help students identify and talk about their skills after studying abroad. Many working in higher education explained that they believe the session should be required, or at least available to students, and yet from the observations made in setting up this study, it appears institutions who do offer such sessions remain in the minority. Martin Tillman (2014) surveyed U.S. institutions and found that the biggest barrier to offering programming linking study abroad to career to be a lack of resources – both funding and staffing (p. 9). In addition, Tillman points to the need for staff training, and for greater collaboration between education abroad and career services offices.

In speaking with European campus contacts, it appears that very few campuses have designated career services staff/offices. Rather, the education abroad professionals take responsibility for programming related to the integration of career with study abroad. In Europe, two of the host institutions were universities of applied sciences. These campus contacts explained that the focus in any degree is intended to lead to professional careers. R. Coelen (personal communication, August 29, 2018), explained that there is not a career services office NHL Stenden, but rather

The link between what is learned, and the practice of a profession is closer than what you would find at a comprehensive research-intensive university. This requires our faculty to be much more connected to the world of work than what would be expected at a research-intensive university. The consequence therefore is that learning outcomes are framed towards skills and knowledge that is useful for professional practice.

Tatiana Aleekseva (personal communication, August 29, 2018), at Saxion University (another Dutch university of applied sciences), also explained that career education is built into the

academic curriculum, for example CV writing and the job application process are discussed in language courses. As well, every student has a career coach to help them consider the value of their educational choices towards their career.

Most U.S. host sites involved both the study abroad and the career services office in promoting the session. Most already collaborate in some way to provide programming for study abroad students. In the U.S. Jodi Hicks, assistant director for Overseas Programs finds value and benefits in having reached out to ask her career services colleagues to help deliver the session offered each semester on her campus:

Making the session Marketing Your International Experience Workshop a collaborative effort between the Center for Global Education and career center at Chapman University has created a connection for students between study abroad and employability. Students are able to reflect and put into perspective the transformative skills they gained abroad and learn how share that in a meaningful way with employers. The workshop has also created greater collaboration among departments on campus and has emphasized for faculty, staff, students, and their parents the value of study abroad.

Challenges and Barriers in Facilitating Reflection Sessions

Nearly all of the session facilitators have a role in working with outbound study abroad students (such as conducting pre-departure orientation and re-entry, programming) and thus provided valuable insight about the challenges of hosting sessions at their institutions, recruiting students to attend, and in guiding students through the reflection process. These challenges and barriers will be outlined in this section.

Except for the two sites where sessions were made part of an existing class or program, most campus contacts had concerns about recruiting enough students to conduct a productive session. As mentioned previously, the format of this session ideally needs a minimum of about six students to provide fruitful discussion (story sharing, etc.) since students learn from one another. It was challenging to recruit this ideal minimum – and at two sites, sessions were

conducted with just four students each. The facilitators said that they relied more heavily on the examples in the workbook to prompt discussion with smaller groups, yet the advantage of having fewer students was that they could spend more time listening to students' stories and offering critiques and suggestions.

In talking with the campus contacts, it does seem that the culture of the campus itself has an impact on student interest in the session. At one private university in Southern California, it appears the optional sessions have caught on well since starting to offer them two years ago. The study abroad and career services offices both publicize the event each semester, and list it as one of the services of the study abroad office included in the off-campus study fee that students pay to go abroad. This campus of 4,800 undergraduates – which sends approximately 650 students abroad each year – typically sees about 30 students attend each semester. One of the facilitators offered these thoughts on attendance:

I think making the materials available to them in several formats and venues is important. If a student hears about this offering in more than one place, it gives it greater stock and increases the likelihood they will attend. Just like convincing them to go abroad is best done by their peers, hearing about this experience from their friends is probably the best marketing tool. Also, I think students often think they are better prepared to speak to their experience than they actually are. Having this false confidence means they don't think they need to attend, as they have it all figured out. Once they get into interviews and flounder, the necessity becomes greater.

The challenge of students crafting a story. While all were experienced facilitators, some shared insight on the process, including one that may be helpful to others conducting sessions:

Even though it's uncomfortable, I think letting the silence remain after you ask for volunteers to share. Reminding them that this is a space where we don't expect them to have all of their responses figured out and we can help them polish as a group. Usually once you get one student to break the ice and share, others will follow. If you have any students attending that you know, asking them before the session to share out can be useful.

Given that the study did boost the mean story scores of session participants significantly, yet given that the scores reached only the mid-point of the 5-point rating scale, the researcher posed this question to facilitators at the end of study: *Why is crafting a STAR so seemingly difficult for so many students? (Why is simply talking about themselves so difficult for students?)* One of their responses points to the reasons cited in the literature review – the session is expected to be challenging. The nature of transformative experiences results in difficulty to put them into words, and critical reflection and self-awareness are required in order to make meaning from them (Mezirow, 1991). Laske (2006) claims that humans get to a certain point in their development and kind of stop, or linger in one place without further growth, at least for a while. From this perspective, we must know that as educators (the definition encompasses education abroad and career services professionals here), it is our role to nudge. One of the facilitators offered this reflection on this subject:

I don't think it's difficult for students to talk about themselves in general, I think it's that we are asking them to talk about themselves through a professional lens. The stakes are raised and as we don't typically have career development conversations with students, unless they visit us in a career center or seek us out – they lack opportunities to practice. I think the STAR framework does make it easier once students are familiar with it, but it takes a lot of practice to make responses seem effortless. Students also forget to include specifics (for example: I grew attendance of the French Club by 10% through street marketing outreach) or they don't think that their experiences have transferrable skills, even when they do. If we know that many students are not seeking out the services of their campus career centers, then I think we have to meet the students where they are: in classes, in clubs and organizations and provide the information to them there.

And another facilitator's reflection on the level of challenge for the student:

I think once our students actually sit down and write their STARS after reading and hearing other examples, it is not too difficult for them. The difficult part is initially realizing that this is something they should do, but once they do, they're able to come up with a few examples. Especially after studying abroad they have a few examples they can give. I think students just don't realize they should have these examples. I know when I studied abroad I never heard about STARS or had these examples prepped.

Another facilitator pointed to the value of having stories ready when going into interviews – that it gives the student an advantage:

I think that since most students do not prepare STARS study abroad examples, they can impress employers more than students who have not studied abroad and those who did but do not talk articulately about their study abroad. Staff in our career centers also give examples that when they meet with study abroad alumni, a lot of them do not list study abroad on their resume until told to and also just say “it was great” so the staff see a strong need for this too and know that employers value global experiences.

Another underlying cause of the challenge to recall a skill may be that some students did not have an experience abroad that resulted in a high level of skill development. That is not what international education professionals want to believe, yet many students struggle. This points us to the question of program design, and whether collectively, we have arrived at a point where we unintentionally isolate students from the significant level of interaction with the host culture that is most often needed to drive skill development (i.e., it is more likely to happen when one is challenged or “outside his/her comfort zone”, etc.). In our efforts to increase the number of students going abroad, have we needed to adjust the program features so that students will feel more comfortable – for example, by remaining mostly within their own cultural bubble – and thus are we limiting exposure to differences? This question is beyond the scope of this study, but it is one that is worthy of exploration.

Recommendations from the Facilitators

There are numerous valuable insights from the project facilitators about building this type of reflection session into the study abroad programming on a university campus. The facilitators offered suggestions for a few modifications that might help improve certain aspects of the sessions:

- With regard to logistics, making the session longer was one suggestion. Especially if the group is more than 20 students, a minimum of 75 minutes is needed to allow more students to speak.
- Another was to offer examples of stories in the workbook that are *not* good examples, and the reasons why they need improving (and ultimately show an improved version of the story). A facilitator working in a U.S. career services reports that it is a commonly-used technique when teaching students about writing a resumé to show some bad examples for the purpose of critiquing.
- Another suggestion was to incorporate videos of students talking about their experiences (telling their STAR stories) to change up the delivery used in the session.

Comprehensively integrating the notion of employability into the study abroad

experience. In the larger context, several facilitators mentioned that introducing the notion of skill development as the result of a study abroad experience prior to departure may put the idea in students' heads that just about every challenge they face may actually be an opportunity. One facilitator believes that this may not only allow the student to speak more articulately upon her return, but may make room for a positive attitude when things don't go as planned abroad. One of the U.S. host sites does offer a session at the pre-departure orientation that sparks students to consider the endeavor a skill-building opportunity. Titled "Global Experiences and Your Career", the session description in the student program reads: *It's no secret studying abroad can give your resume a boost, but those desired skills, and how you talk about them, don't magically appear. Learn what you can do while overseas to gain experience employers need.* The session is a precursor to the reflection session offered to students upon their return, and promotes the idea

of goal-setting as the student sets off for the semester abroad. Another U.S. institution in this study has also incorporated a similar session into the pre-departure orientation titled *Design your*

International Experience. The campus contact explains: *This [session] gets students thinking about possible learning moments abroad and how they can develop their transferable skills abroad. We do not have them do STARS before, instead we focus on more of the learning moments and reflection questions about what they want to accomplish. That plants the seed to come to the workshop after studying abroad.*

Another facilitator also suggested a plan that involves discussion on this topic prior to departure which includes having the student journal on the topic while abroad. She envisions very productive reflection sessions upon the students' return under conditions such as this.

I think that most students do not prepare STARS with study abroad examples, but they could impress employers more than students who have not studied abroad and those who did but do not talk articulately about their study abroad if they did include a STAR about going abroad. I began this workshop because I felt like something was missing when they come back to help put it all into perspective, and I never had these opportunities after I studied abroad. This workshop along with [a locally-offered day-long workshop for study abroad returnees] Lessons from Abroad is a great package for students to integrate their study abroad experience back home. Staff in our career centers also give examples when they meet with study abroad alumni since a lot of them do not list study abroad on their resume until told to and also just say "It was great." The staff see a strong need for this [training] too and know that employers value global experiences.

Dissemination of the Findings

The researcher intends to present the findings of this study at conferences focused on international education, education abroad and career development; articles will also be submitted for publication in related journals. The message of the findings – that prompting critical reflection in students returning from abroad is essential to further the mission of internationalization – is one that should be shared in the field. The researchers spoke on the topic of study abroad and employability as a doctoral candidate – in March 2018 as a panelist in a session titled *The Value of International Experience in the Contemporary Workplace* at the IIE

Best Practices conference in New York; and gave presentations on the topic at two California Study Abroad Town Hall meetings, in April 2018 and April 2019 in Los Angeles, where education abroad professionals meet annually for a day-long discussion of current topics and issues. The Southern District of NAFSA Region XII invited the researcher to offer a train-the-trainer webinar on how to facilitate reflection session in February 2019 (with over 40 attendees), and NAFSA Region 1, along with British Columbia Council of International Education (BCCIE) invited the researcher to do the same in May, 2019 with over 70 attendees.

In collaboration with study abroad advisors on U.S. campuses, the researcher will seek to present the reflection session used in this study with undergraduates returning from abroad. Career services professionals should be invited (in advance) to be involved, and the advisors should consider the presentation as a “train-the-trainer” session so that in observing, they may be able to work towards facilitating the session on their own at some point in the future. The employer of the researcher, the American Institute for Study Abroad (AIFS), partners frequently on projects, publications and presentations with IIE, including a large study co-published in 2018 on the career benefits of study abroad reported by U.S. undergraduates entitled “Study Abroad Matters: Linking Higher Education to the Contemporary Workforce through International Experience.”

The facilitators’ suggestions for improvements -- such as recommending a longer time period for the session, incorporating other media (e.g., videos) and perhaps making the equivalent of the workbook available in an online interactive format – will be considered for the future. In the longer-term, the researcher will seek to develop a comprehensive program to integrate career development into the learning-abroad experience from the time the student is

selecting a program/destination, continuing while abroad, and with follow-up upon return (such as this session).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The increase in the quality of the students' stories after attending the session was measurable (with an increase of one solid point on a 5-point rating scale and thus arriving at mid-point); and if this can be achieved in one hour with students, then it is important to build from this study in several ways. The first has been discussed above and is currently being practiced by some institutions – that the idea of skill development is planted in students' minds prior to going abroad, even from the time the idea is being promoted to students and as they select their program. Secondly, that this process of helping students identify and articulate their relevant skills become a collaborative effort among international educators, career professionals, faculty and administrations. Thirdly, that those who are on-site with students become advocates of this process of helping students give meaning to their experiences, become more self-aware, and consider the skills they develop while abroad. If a one-hour session can promote this degree of improvement, an expansion of collective effort can most likely do even more.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this project related to its design. This study focused on U.S. and European students which provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the results of U.S. and European populations, but it is also narrow in its focus with only selected Western, developed nations. It was assumed that the participants across the United States and Europe would have similar variance in gender and socio-economic status (for example, two-thirds of U.S. study abroad participants are female, middle/upper-middle class, and the sample population reflects this). The sample did not have great variance regarding demographic differences

between the United States and Europe, although there were some traits of each group that reflected either a greater range of diversity. For example, the U.S. sample in this study had a lower percentage of white participants (56%) than the national averages (71% in 2015-2016) reported in recent years (IIE, 2018, p.78). Also, the participation of U.S. females in this study (87%) was higher than the national U.S. average (66.5%) reported in the IIE *Open Doors* report (2018).

The findings of the study cannot be generalized across U.S. or European students, as the sample may not be wholly representative. The majority of participants responded to an open call to attend the reflection sessions voluntarily; they may be curious and motivated individuals who do not represent the norm. The element of self-report (e.g., the four assessment measure questions) also results in the normal concerns of any such type of self-reporting. Students may have an inflated perception of their abilities. However, given that the researcher could not find any previous study assessing the training of students to talk about how their experience abroad led to skill development, this study was designed to be exploratory and reveal preliminary findings that could serve as the basis for further examination.

While session facilitators were thoroughly trained on how to conduct the sessions, there are different personalities involved along with differences in the student participants. For example, some groups may be highly participatory and talkative while others may not engage as much. This may have an impact on the reflection process and the results the students offer, especially the thoughtfulness put into the examples they share verbally and on the written survey. Prescribing a uniform set of exercises is the constant, yet it is not possible to eliminate the differences resulting from differing personalities in the ensuing discussions.

Experienced facilitators may be more comfortable pushing students to examine their experience and have other students in the room help them identify several skills that they displayed to solve a crisis or challenge. Despite considerable steps to standardize the sessions (one workbook, same agenda, identical sequencing of activities, etc.), some facilitators may prod students for deeper meaning behind their stories, which helps students understand how to talk about their experiences in ways that employers will appreciate. Advance discussions among the facilitators confirmed their intentions to coach students to be honest, realistic, and accurate in conducting the sessions. All noted that it is a significant developmental step for college undergraduates to grasp the connection from experience to articulating transferable skills. Thus, this points to the highly ambitious aspect of this project as it focuses on helping students make a major developmental shift.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are a multitude of directions that may advance research on the effectiveness of facilitated reflection to help students articulate their transferable skills resulting from learning abroad. From this study, which focuses on the most fundamental step of helping students to articulate their skills, further research on the expansion of increased collaboration between and among study abroad, career services and faculty can broaden the scope of such practices and impact more students. Questions that merit further exploration:

- This study was intentionally limited to subjects who spent at least a semester (or 10 weeks minimum) abroad to differentiate them from shorter-term experiences. However, short-term study abroad should be assessed just as rigorously for student outcomes involving employability. In the U.S., the *Open Doors* 2018 report – (IIE, 2018) defines short-term as eight weeks or less; in the *EIS* (EC, 2014), there is no mention of specific

program length, yet it is noted that 11% of students participate on “other summer schools and similar short-term formats with international audience” (p. 38).

- This session provides a start on what could become an expanded program of reflection – that is, conducting self-assessment and employability programming before, during and upon return – for study abroad students. More comprehensive programs should be explored, developed and assessed.
- It appears there is need for more dialogue among international educators, career services professionals, faculty, and administration with industry to examine the study abroad experience both for the skills it promotes and a process to educate employers about student outcomes.

Summary: Significance of the Findings

Considering the relevant literature, the statistical findings regarding the impact factors and the story ratings – and students’ post-session comments about the intervention – this research leads to three main findings about the assistance that study-abroad students could benefit from in preparation for their job interviews:

1. Articulation of transferable skills. Students report developing a variety of transferable skills to a significant degree as the result of studying abroad, yet may struggle to speak about them in descriptive terms, or to offer examples of having demonstrated the skill.

2. Impact of experience. Students can benefit from guidance in learning to talk about the impact of their study abroad experience in anticipation of job interviews.

3. Identification of skills. The majority of students report that learning to identify and articulate skills from studying abroad is not something that they would be likely to do on their own, meaning HEI’s should consider it their obligation to facilitate this process.

These three points – along with the increase in students’ ability to articulate the connection between study abroad and their own skill development and in the story ratings as a result of the reflection session as the intervention in this study – strongly support the importance of offering reflection sessions to students. The significant effect of the intervention as a function of group ($p = .002$) showed a substantial increase of assessment scores (across measures) post-intervention only for the experiment group ($p < .001$), whereas no differences were observed between pre- and post-intervention assessment for the control group ($p = .359$). Furthermore, in post hoc tests, no differences were observed between experiment and control group pre-intervention ($p = .364$) thus supporting the homogeneity between groups. But differences were found post-intervention confirming that there was a significant effect of intervention, with the experiment group reporting a greater impact from the session on the four measures than the control group ($p = 0.011$).

The increase the experiment group made in the story ratings as the result of the intervention over the decrease by that of the control group from PRE to POST ($p < .001$) is a marker by which international educators can recognize the value of taking students through this reflection process. It is an imperative that students are able to talk about their skills in ways that employers will appreciate so that:

- Students themselves will speak accurately and substantively about themselves (i.e., their transferable skills) as job candidates;
- HEI’s may recognize and acknowledge the contribution that study abroad makes towards increasing students’ employability – for the development of knowledge and skills that may be considered transferable and/or intercultural;

- Employers will better understand the benefits of an international experience, and that the skills reported by students align closely with the skills employers seek.

In making the case for the internationalization of higher education, de Wit (2017) explains, “The global knowledge economy requires universities, cities, and nations to be key competitors for students, faculty, research funding, and strategic partnerships, and to prepare their graduates to be global professionals, scholars, and citizens” (p. 25). This rationale aligns with Hudzik’s (2011) claim that study abroad serves as a pillar of comprehensive internationalization – that it is key to preparing students to be those important global citizens. As Amber Thom Bienick (personal communication, March 1, 2019), a career counselor at the University of St. Thomas (Minnesota, USA) explains:

One of our institution’s strategic goals has been globalization. This means a variety of things, but ultimately focuses on preparing and educating our students for entering a truly global workforce. We send over 50% of our students abroad at some point in their college career, and have significant number of international students on campus. The Marketing Your International Experience session we offer is an important starting place to get students processing their global experiences, and understanding how what they’ve learned and experienced will play a role in their careers.

With many universities holding employability as an intended outcome for their graduates (Matherly & Tillman, 2015), it is important that universities ensure that students recognize and can articulate the benefits of learning abroad. Providing the proper training affirms the contribution study abroad makes in increasing graduates’ employability.

Concluding Thoughts

This intervention session in this research utilized an agenda that is typical of those offered by study abroad and career services offices to assess the student outcomes of a reflection process to help them identify and describe the transferable skills they developed studying abroad.

The study achieved this goal to better understand the impact of the reflection session – and the findings indicate that it has value for students, HEI's, and employers. By helping students recognize that valuable skills can be developed from an international experience, holding such sessions makes them more self-aware, knowledgeable and perhaps even more accurate and honest in their self-assessment of their employability. For HEI's, there is evidence that education abroad supports the objective of increasing the employability of graduates. And as a benefit to employers, participants of this session likely present themselves as job candidates who understand the connection between life experience and skill-development, can talk about their skills accurately, and present a high degree of self-awareness.

The current study is only a start in the process of assessing the programming offered for study abroad students to link their experience to their employability. Professionals in education abroad and career services who offer such programming can be assured that to take students through this process should have a positive impact. Professionals may continue to explore ways to broaden the reflection process throughout the experience and to navigate the balance of responsibility that falls on both the institution and the student. Ultimately, by increasing the understanding of the study abroad-employability connection, we will create graduates who are well prepared to work and succeed in an increasingly interconnected and complex world.

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APPENDIX A: Student Workbook

MILANO

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MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A self-reflection process to identify your transferable skills for the workplace

*Presented by Ann C. Hubbard
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APPENDIX A-2: Student Workbook

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Many employers do not realize that studying abroad is an opportunity to gain skills that will be valuable in the workplace. Your job is to reflect on what you learned so that you can explain the skills gained from your experiences abroad. Transforming your learning into stories that show how you successfully managed difference and challenges will say a lot about you as a person and as a potential employee.



TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

are those which are **applicable to any position or profession**. They may also be called **people skills, soft skills or career skills**. Examples are *flexibility, self-awareness and respect for others*.

Employers report that they **highly value these types of skills in recent graduates**. They do not expect you to know everything about the industry you are seeking to enter, but *they do expect that you have acquired transferable skills from your life experiences* - including academic and work settings, personal challenges and learning abroad.

COMMON TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Strong communication skills (verbal, written)
 Self-awareness
 Adaptability
 Take initiative
 Respect
 Resilience



Flexibility
 Problem-solving
 Open-mindedness
 Work in diverse teams
 Time management

INTERCULTURAL SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Intercultural intelligence (or competence) is a skill set that is applicable across all work sectors and positions and valued by employers. Reflect upon what you are learned abroad from exposure to different people, ideas, attitudes, and ways of knowing. *Intercultural skills include: Curiosity, Cultural Self-Awareness, Respect, Empathy, Creativity, Problem-Solving, Flexibility, Adaptability.*

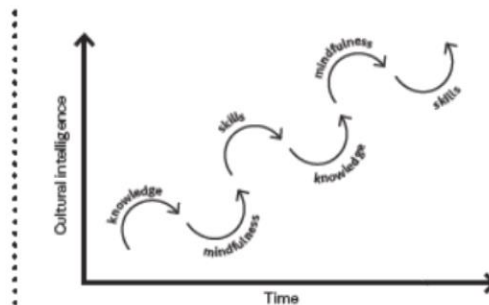
Cultural intelligence is not specific knowledge of a single culture, but rather **knowing what it takes to effectively communicate across cultures** - knowing where the differences lie and ways to learn about and manage them.

EMPLOYABILITY

[əmˈplɔɪəˈbɪlədə]
noun



1. a broad range of skills and competences necessary to function in a working environment and to enable one to succeed in the workplace (*Erasmus Impact Study, 2014, European Commission, p. 29*)



In this model, 'mindfulness' points to the need to reflect on what we have learned (knowledge) and how we can apply it (skills).

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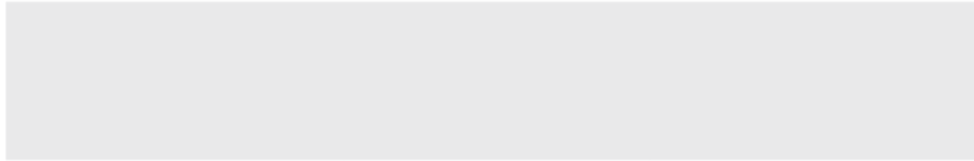
APPENDIX A-3: Student Workbook

WARM-UP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

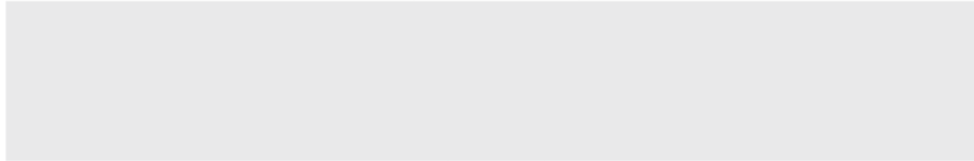
Your responses to these questions will help to set your mind in the right direction.
These questions are a 'warm-up' and will help you hone in and further identify specific skills and qualities.

From My International Experience...

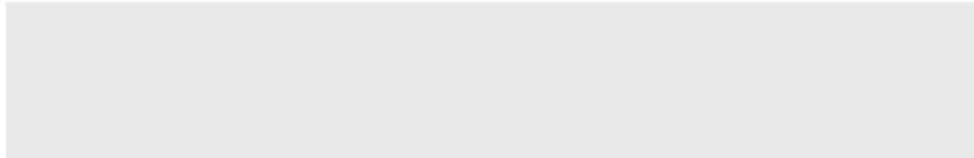
I can identify a change in myself – my values, outlook, attitude and/or abilities:



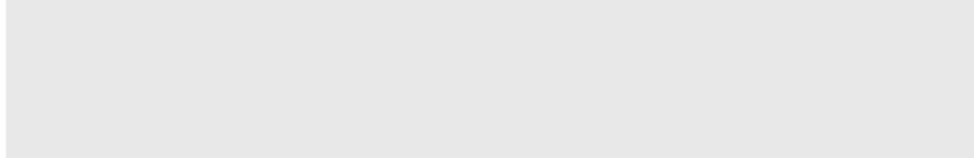
I experienced new cultures. One strategy that was really helpful in learning how to interact with people from another culture was:



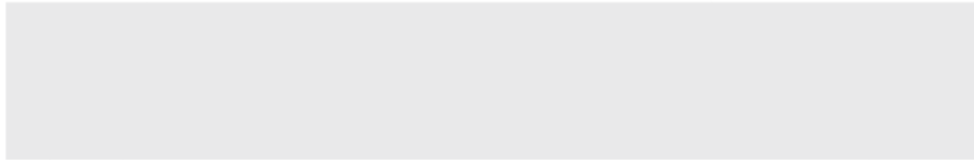
I have clarified what is important to me – who I am, who I want to be, and what I want to accomplish.
For instance...



I had to learn how to adapt. One change that was really hard for me to adapt to in my host culture was:



I gained a greater perspective on global issues. One social issue (local or global) that I learned more about is...



APPENDIX A-4: Student Workbook

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Use this list to put your experience into words – about knowledge and skills that you learned, gained, and developed.

Go through this list first and check everything that you believe applies.

Then go back and review, and select what you think the top three traits; you may wish to focus on these in the exercises to follow.

Cultural Understanding and World View:

As a result of my international experience(s), I have developed:

- A greater knowledge about another culture
- Awareness of political, economic or social events around the world
- My interest in global or transnational issues
- My involvement with a global issue
- My involvement with a civic cause
- A definition of my political views
- My ability to speak a foreign language

Personal Growth and Values

My international experience(s) have helped me to grow and develop:

- My desire for more diverse friendships and social networks
- My desire to further my education (e.g., postgraduate degree)
- A better understanding of myself and my values
- My sense of confidence in new situations or when meeting new people
- My ability to accept differences in other people
- My ability to empathize with people, especially those who are different from me
- My ability to be more flexible and open-minded
- My tolerance of ambiguity in a variety of situations
- An understanding of my own strengths and weaknesses
- My ability to be independent
- My ability to take initiative

And, I have:

- Become more aware of the way I use and structure time
- An increased capacity to profit from my mistakes
- Strengthened relationships with my family members
- Strengthened relationships with my friends
- A clearer notion of what I will do with my life

Additionally:

- I am more capable of solving life's day-to-day problems
- I think more critically: I am more discerning and analytical
- I have improved observation skills
- I can appreciate time to be alone, disconnected from social media, etc.
- I am more confident about the decisions I make
- I recognize the importance I put on developing my skills and talents
- I have an increased willingness to work hard and sacrifice in order to do well in school or in my job

Professional & Career Development

Studying Abroad contributed to:

- My ability to formulate my career goals and clarify my professional aspirations
- Greater awareness of the opportunities in life that are open to me.
- Developing skills and intercultural competencies which will aid in obtaining my first job after graduation
- My increased willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am unaccustomed
- The importance I place on working in a field that I find interesting
- The importance I place on having personal fulfillment in my work
- My ability to speak a foreign language in the workplace
- Developing my ability to understand an organization's culture
- My ability to adapt in diverse workplace environments
- Other things you want to list:

APPENDIX A-5: Student Workbook

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Review these lists of skills and qualities to help you articulate the skills you may have developed studying abroad.

SKILLS

- Establish rapport quickly
- Function with a high level of ambiguity
- Achieve goals despite obstacles
- Take initiative and risks
- Manage time and multiple tasks
- Identify and solve problems
- Accept responsibility
- Communicate despite language & cultural barriers
- Ability to compromise
- Learn quickly
- Handle stress/difficult situations
- Manage/Organize
- Lead formal and/or informal groups
- Cope with rejection, criticism, constructive feedback
- Capacity to ask for & receive help
- Adapt to new environments
- Understand an organization's culture
- Learn through listening and observing
- Foreign language skills

QUALITIES

- Self-reliance
- High energy/enthusiasm
- Appreciation of diversity
- Perseverance
- Tolerance/open-mindedness
- Assertiveness
- Self-confidence
- Self-knowledge/Self-awareness
- Independence
- Inquisitiveness
- Flexibility

CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS

This list shows a skill set students often report is the result of an international experience. These comprise a set of key transferable skills.

- Flexibility
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Sense of humor
- Perspective-taking (or perspective-shifting)
- Open-mindedness
- Strong communication skills
- Motivation
- Work effectively in diverse teams
- Foreign language skills
- Curiosity
- Resourcefulness
- Respectful
- Creativity

GENERAL SKILLS DESIRED FOR ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS

Here is a list of skills that employers report they expect to see in recent graduates. These are included here since, while perhaps not as often reported by students who studied abroad, they are worth recognizing. Employers expect recent graduates to have the ability to:

- Work in a team structure
 - Make decisions and solve problems
 - Plan, organize and prioritize work
 - Obtain and process information
 - Analyze quantitative data
 - Create and/or edit written reports
 - Sell or influence others
 - Verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization
- And possess:
- Technical knowledge related to the job
 - Proficiency with computer software program

APPENDIX A-6: Student Workbook

FOCUSED INTERVIEWING (ALSO KNOWN AS BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING)

Use the STAR technique to build concise, descriptive responses.

Employers most often ask questions such as: "Tell me about a time when you had to problem-solve" or "Tell me about a time that you were part of a team and talk about the role you played and what you contributed to the group."

If you are able to respond with a STAR, your responses will be descriptive and relevant -- and will be more credible.

What is a STAR?

S - Describe the specific setting or **situation** for which the experience took place.

Example: While studying abroad in Germany, I found that my coursework was extremely different from what I was accustomed to. I was used to having assignments due throughout the semester, but for my German courses the entire grade was based on the final with no accountability beforehand.

T - Describe the specific **task** or project related to the skill sought.

Example: During that semester, I was taking a full load of coursework for my major, and I was motivated to do well during my semester abroad. I had to figure out a way to stay on top of it all because it would be impossible to do well at the end of the semester if I left studying all to the end.

A - Describe the specific steps or actions you took to complete the task or project.

Example: I had to act as a self-starter, and I set out a structured study plan for myself for the entire semester. I formed small study groups with a few classmates for each of my classes, and we'd meet once a week.

R - Describe the **results** or outcomes resulting from the actions taken.

Example: I developed strong time management skills because of the new type of academic setting I experienced in Germany. Because I kept up with my study plan throughout the semester, I ended up succeeding, and I was able to keep my stress level down before final exams.

This is a typical STAR answer. It could be the answer to, "Give me an example of an accomplishment you are proud of." If someone asked, "What's your greatest skill?" you might answer, "I believe I can set goals and meet them," and then give a story like the one above. Or, if the interviewer says, "Why should we hire you?" you can begin with "I am a good problem solver, for instance..." and continue with an example like the one above.

.....
Having a specific example gives you much more
credibility that if you merely say "I can set goals
and meet them" or "I am a problem-solver."
.....

The STAR technique is widely cited by career specialists; its origin appears to be unknown. An online search will result in many additional resources about this interview technique.

APPENDIX A-7: Student Workbook

BUILDING YOUR STORY AS A "STAR"

Think now about putting your study abroad to good use in your job interviews. You will want to craft your examples in ways that employers will appreciate – and that takes some preparation.

It's common to first be thinking:

"Studying abroad changed my life."

Then, compose a general statement, such as:

"I had to adapt to different customs while abroad."

Next get more specific; for example:

"There are situations when I don't understand what the right manners are in Italian shops & restaurants."

THE FINAL STEP IS TO ADD EVEN MORE DETAIL.

Use the STAR format by stating the:

Situation - a brief explanation of what was happening. Maybe it was one day, maybe it was something happening over time.

Task - What needs to be solved?

Action - What did you decide to do about it?

Result - Explain your success!

- (S) I walked into a gelato shop in Rome and saw that customers were to take a number to be served. I did so, but after 10 minutes, I realized that they weren't actually using the number system.
- (T) I had to decide what I was going to do if I was going to get ice cream, but it did not feel right being so assertive; in US culture it would be considered rude to advance without honoring the number system.
- (A) I decided that I would follow what I saw others doing. I realized that if I observed how others were advancing, I could follow along.
- (R) I never would have guessed that something as simple as ordering a gelato would be such a chance to learn. But it taught me that good observation skills are key and that it's not only OK but essential to shift your thinking sometimes and do things differently than you are used to. Before this, I may have said that Italian culture was unorganized or chaotic, but I learned there are just other ways of doing things. I recognize that I can apply this lesson to my life and my future work environment.

.....
STARS should show specific skills -- that you have thought about how you developed them and what that means for your performance in the workplace.
.....

APPENDIX A-8: Student Workbook

SAMPLE STORIES

SAMPLE STORY #1 An Italian in the U.S.

- (S) I had heard that the U.S. system would be different than Italian university, but I didn't realize just how much until I got there.
 - (T) We received a syllabus that overviewed every week of the semester, with specific reading assignments for each day and there was work to turn in nearly each week. Our grades were dependent on many different assignments as well as class attendance and participation. This is so unlike the Italian system where it is up to each student to do the reading and be prepared when it's time to sit for the final exam.
 - (A) I had to make a plan and be very disciplined to complete all of the assignments well and on time. I realize that may seem obvious, but it took careful planning and motivation to complete work at stages in the semester where I had never before been required to do so. I wasn't used to having so many assignments or being graded on how much I contribute to class discussions.
 - (R) At first this new system felt very overwhelming. But, what I learned is that I myself learned well and succeeded. I not only learned a lot about literature, but I learned how I learn and what I prefer but that I can be flexible and adapt as well.
-

SAMPLE STORY #2 A U.S. student in Spain

- (S) In my homestay in Spain, I learned how to consider and respect different viewpoints. I grew very close to people with very different opinions than my own – and all of this was accomplished despite the fact that my Spanish was not quite yet fluent.
- (T) My host father wanted to engage me in discussions on world politics, especially about U.S. foreign policy. He wasn't happy about the U.S. influence in the world and asked me questions that honestly, I wasn't prepared to answer. I felt so ignorant with my limited language skill and by not knowing the specifics about the foreign policies of my own country.
- (A) I faced this challenge head-on: I made a point to read the Spanish newspaper each day so that I could acquire both the knowledge and the vocabulary.
- (R) Over time, I got pretty good at being able to engage in discussion with him. We had quite different viewpoints on a number of things, but his approach was not to insult but to challenge me. I respect him for this, and I am grateful for the opportunity to see political discourse as an exercise in learning and not demeaning anyone. I learned so much about the value in considering other viewpoints and shifting my perspective.

Note: Carefully consider whether you think it's a good idea to reveal your political party preferences in a job interview. This story does not 'call' either point of view by name. While perhaps the listener could speculate on the political orientation of the storyteller, it still leaves room for ambiguity.

.....

SAMPLE STORY #3 A French intern in India

- (S) I was interning in India with a team who were all Indian. I quickly realized that they said 'yes' to everything I asked of them when in reality, they had not done the work I asked about.
- (T) I needed to find a way to understand why they told me they were willing to do the work but did not deliver.
- (A) I sent up a meeting with each of them and talked about our roles. They explained that they were willing to do the job but did not always understand what was required of them and were not comfortable telling me, nor did they want to respond with a 'no' for fear that I would think I was being unreasonable.
- (R) By working more closely and creating a relationship with each of them -- so as a manager but in an understanding kind of way as well -- we were able to get everything done, avoid problems and even find innovative solutions together.

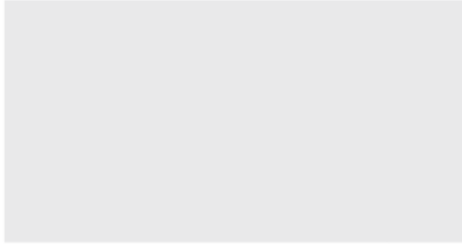
Note how this story doesn't log any complaints about having to deal with difference. It speaks of the challenges, but focuses on being successful in communicating.

APPENDIX A-9: Student Workbook

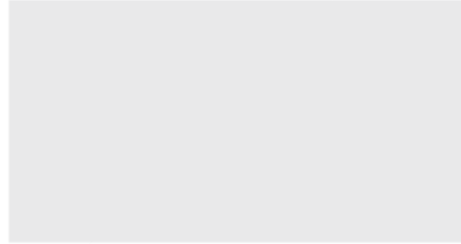
LEARNING MOMENTS ABROAD

What new situations and challenges did you face in these areas? Make notes here and use them to build your STAR's

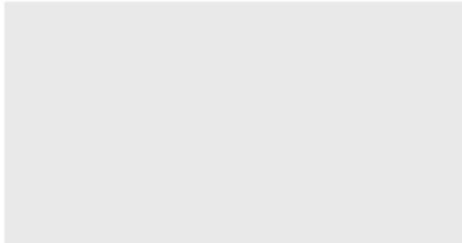
Academics, in/out of classroom:



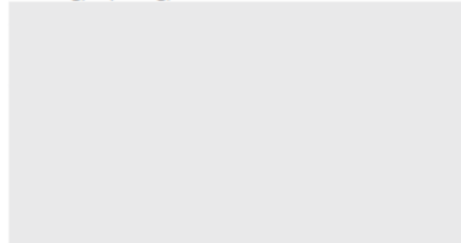
Preparing to go abroad (visa applications, account & financial arrangements, etc.):



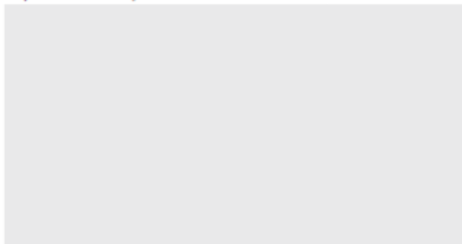
Engaging in local culture - Housing, Daily Life:



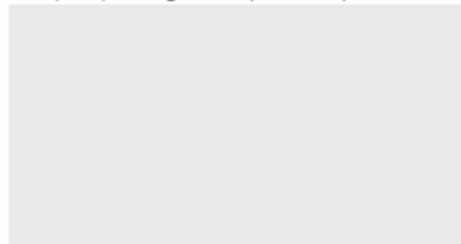
Traveling, Exploring, Site visits:



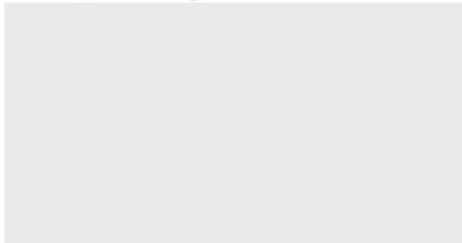
Meeting new people (of host culture, other cultures, my own culture):



On my own, learning about myself and my own culture:



Internship, volunteering, other:



APPENDIX A-10: Student Workbook

PREPARING "STARS" FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

Prepare a collection of 4-5 'STAR's in advance for your interviews. Map out the skills and qualities below so that you can speak about them in full sentences.

Skill/Trait

EXAMPLE:

Problem-solving, initiative, adaptability

STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result)

S: Academic system abroad was different, challenging

T: I needed to have a plan to succeed

A: Set up weekly study groups, set schedule for myself

R: I did well, and I enjoyed learning in a very different system

Skill/Trait:

S: _____

T: _____

A: _____

R: _____

Skill/Trait:

S: _____

T: _____

A: _____

R: _____

Skill/Trait:

S: _____

T: _____

A: _____

R: _____



It is predicted that 47% of today's jobs will become automated in the next 25 years. It may seem counter-intuitive, but an Oxford study reports that this will require workers to acquire strong creative and social skills.

<http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21594298-effect-todays-technology-tomorrows-jobs-will-be-immenseand-no-country-ready>

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Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano

APPENDIX B: Trainer Guide

MILANO

Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation - CHEI



UNIVERSITÀ
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Making the Most of Your International Experience

Helping students through a process of reflection to prepare for the job search.

A Trainer's Guide

Developed by Ann Hubbard

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Vice President, AIFS Study Abroad, Stamford, Connecticut, USA • ahubbard@aifs.com

APPENDIX B-2: Trainer Guide

Introduction

If you work with undergraduates as they prepare for and return from studying abroad, you hear them use “amazing” and “awesome” as well as many superlatives – “the best, the greatest, the most” – to describe their experience. Students realize they have gained a great deal from studying abroad, but aren’t always certain of how to articulate it: just what are the skills and qualities that can be developed as the result of an international experience, and how do you identify them and talk about them?

Because the study abroad experience is rich with examples of challenging experiences, having to problem-solve and examining one’s own self in a way that students may have never done before, it is especially rich in terms of developing transferable, or soft skills -- things like flexibility, appreciation of difference and problem-solving. In other words, it can provide excellent ‘content’ to talk about personal qualities and skills in job interviews.

The workbook is the result of the collaborative effort of a campus education abroad and career services office – which adapts a basic step-by-step career preparation process to help students reflect upon and subsequently identify the benefits they gained from studying abroad. It focuses on self-assessment and building interview ‘stories’; you will want to be sure students know this is only a slice of the preparation that they must do in the job search process.

Thank you for your willingness to help students through this process. I appreciate it and look forward to working with you.

Ann Hubbard, M.A.

Doctoral Candidate at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

Vice President - AIFS Study Abroad -Director, University Relations for Customized Programs and Academic Assessment

Training Session Overview

Student Learning Outcomes

- Reflect on the experience to identify skills and qualities developed in studying abroad.
- Identify situations experienced abroad to support claims of skills/qualities.
- Develop short ‘stories’ to demonstrate skills in interviews.
- Understand the importance of preparing for job interviews.

Session Format

- Offering this as an in-person sessions on campus is important so that students can share their examples and practices telling their ‘stories’ with one another.
- It is intentional that there is not a PowerPoint presentation for this session; rather, the focus is on the workbook.
- This session is highly interactive; you are a facilitator, not a lecturer.
- It is helpful for you to have access to a whiteboard (or big paper tablet) to draw some examples in the warm-up section.

Session Schedule

- 10 minutes: Facilitator introduces session topic, reviews objectives (page 2)
- 5 minutes: Warm-Up Diagram and discussion
- 10 minutes: Warm-Up Reflection Questions (page 3)
- 5 minutes: What Have I Gained from my Experience? (page 4)
- 5 minutes: Possible Outcomes of an International Experience (page 5)
- 15 minutes: Focused (behavioral interviewing), Building Your Story as a STAR, Sample Stories (pp 6-8)
- 10 minutes: Session Wrap-Up
- 60 minutes **One hour total**

IMPORTANT: Please be certain that all participants in the session have completed the pre-session survey prior to the start of this session. If students were asked to complete the survey online, you will want to check the completion status prior to the start of the session. You can have paper copies of the survey ready as a back-up (and have student(s) complete the survey on paper) if needed before the session begins.

Developed by Ann Hubbard

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APPENDIX B-3: Trainer Guide

Supporting Theories: Trainer Notes

This session is based on helping students engage in critical reflection. I look to a model proposed by Australians Boud, Keogh and Walker for reflection, that when used in a deliberate and meaningful way, was based on three main components: return to experience, attending to feelings, and re-evaluation of the experience. They base this learner-centered model on Dewey's definition of 'deliberate' to mean that learners have formed a specific intention to learn from their experience. This session looks back at the experience abroad and seeks to derive meaning. You will set this context in your introduction of the session.

Reflection can take place prior to, during or following an experience, each with a unique benefit: prepare for/anticipate, collect/analyze information, and acquire new knowledge/make sense of experience. So of course ideally all study abroad programs would promote careful reflection from the pre-departure phase, but that is not reality (at least yet). Many institutions offer sessions like this one you will deliver; and it is important to note (point out to students) that this type of skills assessment is a very typical first step in working with career services in either exploring careers or preparing for the job search.

Guidelines for the role of the facilitator (Boud & Walker 1998) state that in the reflection process:

- Reflection is not just thinking
- Must focus on the internal, or oneself
- Must assist students in their learning
- Including emotions is OK
- Questioning is healthy – including asking questions which are neither too benign nor too intrusive

To explain the range of interpretations that may result from an experience, Boud & Walker (1990) offer that every situation has a 'learning milieu' with the cultural, social, institutional and psychological factors interacting to produce a different outcome for each learner. They distinguish the event (what happened) to the experience (how the learner responds and reacts to it). This is an important delineation when facilitating students through a process of reflection. As facilitators, we need to point out that telling only about 'what' happened does not serve to enlighten the listener about what the student learned from the experience. That meaning must be explicit, clearly explained and made relevant to the workplace.

Facilitation Tips: A Primer for Trainers

It's good practice to:

- Use open-ended questions.
- Acknowledge the contributions that students make.
- Ask for specifics and examples with questions that move the learner along a little step at a time.
- Paraphrase and summarize what you hear, or ask if another participant is willing to add, comment, etc.
- Provide clues and suggestions to help the student but don't offer the full 'solution' or ending, etc.
- "Stack" or "queue" responses when multiple hands are raised (this means stop to identify/acknowledge the order in which they will each speak).
- Redirect questions to the group to help promote discussion.
- Be creative and energetic – adding your own personal story is being an engaging trainer.
- Acknowledge and honor students' feelings.

While it is ideal to ask each student speak at some point in the large group, there is no forcing them. They will spend time in pairs interviewing one another, and the information they share in the pre- and post-surveys will capture the essential for the purpose of my research.

Boud, D., Walker, D. (1990). Making the most of experience. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 12(2), 61–80.

Boud, D., Walker, D. (1998). Promoting reflection in professional courses: The challenge of context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2).

Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). Promoting reflection in learning: A model. New York, Nichols Publication.

Walker, R. (1986) Fictional-critical writing: an approach to case study research by practitioners. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 16(3), 175–182.

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APPENDIX B-4: Trainer Guide

Session Introduction: Trainer Notes

Time allowed: 10 minutes

Introduction Notes

Page 2 of the workbook provides information relevant to your introduction. You will want to include these points:

- **By having studied abroad, you have set yourself apart as an undergraduate, but you must also be able to say something substantive about your experience to potential employers.** Global Career consultant Martin Tillman says "It is no longer enough to simply say that you studied abroad; you must be able to show that you developed skills."
- **Employers are not necessarily impressed by the fact that you studied abroad.** Their priority is to find out what your skills are, often regardless of how you acquired them.
- **Capitalize on the fact that your time abroad was a rather recent life experience.** If you studied abroad as an undergraduate and you are now a recent graduate or slightly beyond, it is important that you capitalize on the fact that this experience wasn't too long ago, and bring its relevance to light.
- **The study abroad experience should allow you to focus on intercultural skills and sensitivity** – a highly transferable skill set that is applicable across all work sectors and positions.
- **Know how to prepare for your interview.** It is always imperative to prepare for interviews, both in terms of knowing about the employer and position but also in terms of preparing examples and stories you can tell to 'substantiate your claims'.
- **It is nearly impossible to be over-prepared!** Some students think that they might seem too prepared if they have a set of examples in mind as they enter the interview.

And, reference the information about skills as listed on page 2 of workbook:

- **Transferable skills are those 'people skills,' 'soft skills' or career skills** that are important across all job sectors and positions.
- **Many intercultural skills are also transferable skills.** It may be opportune to focus on these in returning from abroad (if student has a good example, etc).
- **Explain the term "employability"** – each person has a unique set of knowledge and skills that define this.
- **As for developing Cultural Intelligence**, unless we stop to reflect and give meaning to our experiences, we are unlikely to have a well-developed level of cultural intelligence, sensitivity, etc.

Share the Objectives of the Session

Inform students of these Learner Outcomes; that the intended objectives of this session will enable them to:

- Reflect on your experience to identify skills and qualities developed abroad.
- Identify situations that you experienced abroad to support your claims of skills/qualities.
- Develop short 'stories' that will demonstrate your skills in interviews.
- Understand the importance of preparing for job interviews.

"We do not 'store' experience as data, like a computer; [rather] we 'story' it—in anecdotes, jokes, dreams, ambitions, and gossip." Richard Walker, (1986) Fictional-critical writing: an approach to case study research by practitioners. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 16(3), 175–182.

Helping students construct their experience into stories is key to helping them communicate something about themselves, their character, and their personal qualities.

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APPENDIX B-5: Trainer Guide

Warm-Up Diagram (in large group)

Time allowed: 5 minutes

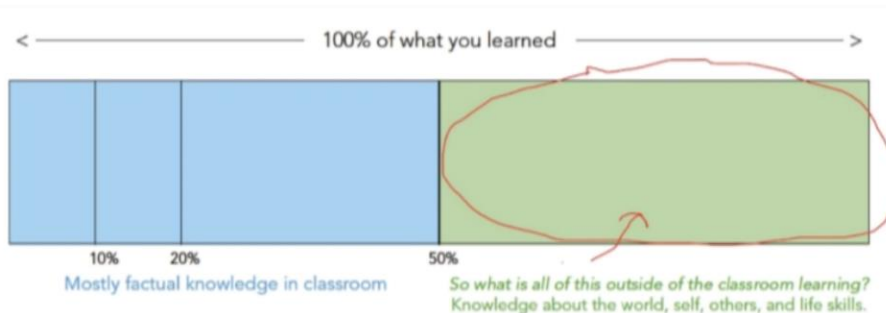
Explain to the group that you want to get them focused in order to start to build their 'bank' of examples/stories to use in interviews:

1. If everything you learned during the time abroad, totaling 100%, fits into the box below, what percentage of it did you learn in the classroom? Draw this diagram on a board or flip chart:



Most students claim that the most learning abroad took place outside of the classroom. For the purpose of having an example, let's say you think that about 20% of your learning was in the classroom. That leaves 80% of 'other' learning; what was it, and how do you call it?

Trainers can create a drawing that looks similar to this as students offer 'estimates' and discussion flows:



Learning and skill-building result from all aspects of an international experience. It is a good idea to point out to students that just as much 'volume' of classroom learning may take place during the same time period at home, but it's a larger percentage of their total learning for the semester. When at home, there is typically less of a learning curve in daily life because you are in familiar places, eating familiar food, among familiar people, etc.

2. In reflecting on their study abroad experience, most students recognize that it was a very powerful, intense learning experience. If everything you learn in a semester (or time period equivalent to the time you spent abroad) equals one unit of learning, how many learning units did you gain while abroad?

X = one unit of learning during a semester at home

XXX = the amount of learning I gained while abroad in a semester (or, it was three times more impact that when I'm at home)

These are just some very subjective, creative ways to get students thinking about the learning that took place while abroad.

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APPENDIX B-6: Trainer Guide

Warm-Up Reflection Questions (page 3)

Time allowed: 10 minutes

Ask students to first read the questions on page 3. The purpose is to get them thinking about situations that had impact and may provide good examples in interviews. Ask students to share their responses in an effort to have a healthy group discussion. There is no directive here on the format for them sharing an example, but you will want to facilitate as closely as possible, and ask questions to further their reflection.

Students often start out with statements like "Studying abroad changed my life" and these questions are intended to be a gentle way to get them to focus a bit more. It is often difficult to give words to a transformative experience, but this session attempts to model a way for students to offer examples that employers will appreciate.

What Have I Gained From My Experience? (page 4)

Time allowed: 5 minutes

- Give students a few minutes to complete the checklist.
- You can then ask for them to mention some of the items they checked, or you could do a quick poll to see which skills were most commonly chosen by the group (for example, independence, flexibility and appreciation of difference are commonly identified by undergraduates returning from abroad).
- Ask if anyone is willing to share one or more of the items they checked-off and give an example of something that happened, or that they accomplished while abroad that demonstrates and supports their claim. For example, a student might talk about how s/he learned to appreciate differences by living in a homestay with hosts who had very different political viewpoints.
- At this point in the session, the examples do not need to be highly developed stories; the goal is to just get them to identify opportunities they had for learning and new experiences, but trying to identify skills and give them a name.
- It is also possible to debrief this from the 'opposite' direction by asking students to share an example of a challenging situation or an accomplishment and identifying the skills and qualities that resulted.

Possible Outcomes of an International Experience (page 5)

Time allowed: 5 minutes

Have students examine the Possible Outcomes of an International Experience (page 4). These skills may help spark their reflection on their experience. It also helps provide the vocabulary that they need to be able to talk about their skills.

Focused (Behavioral) Interviewing (page 6)

Building Your Story as a STAR (page 7)

Sample Stories (page 8)

Time Allowed: 15 minutes

This technique prepares students to tell stories (give examples) in interviews that are succinct, relevant and purposeful. Here is a schedule of how to present the STAR technique, engage students in preparing and sharing their own STARS, and the accompanying points of information you should provide.

1. Introduce the STAR technique by using example on page 6. Using the formula of Situation, Task, Action, Result is a good way for students to craft their examples.
2. Use the steps on page 7 to show that careful detail is needed in a job interview.
3. Give the students a few minutes to read over the examples on page 8 and then use page 9 to think about their own experience and the skills they can talk about from various aspects of their experience. They can use page 11 to formulate and write their STAR examples.

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APPENDIX B-7: Trainer Guide

4. Have the students share their STARS in small groups (of 2-3). The listener needs to offer feedback, especially with regard to the skills they hear being described. This interviewing with peers is an important part of the session as listeners often 'hear' skills that the speaker may not have even realized, etc.
5. Have students share their examples with large group where you too can comment, ask more questions, etc. Your role is to help them perfect their example – so if more detail or explanation is needed, you must say this.

These points are important for students to hear as you explain :

- **Have 3-4 stories ready when you go into any job interview.**
Use real-life experience stories from which you:
 - learned or accomplished something with relevance to your personal growth, etc.; or
 - acquired a new or reinforced an existing skill or positive quality
 - It is important to focus on the behaviors you displayed (for example, conflict, problem-solving, creativity, communication, teamwork, etc) and to develop stories around these.
- **A common interview technique is Behavior-Based Interviewing.** The interviewer will ask you "Tell me about a time when [you were part of a work team]" or "Tell us about your experience in [problem-solving]."
- **Include at least a few stories from your semester or travels abroad.**
- **Profound learning from challenging situations and the unique experiences make great examples**
- **Your time abroad has a certain 'shelf life' for greatest relevance, and you should use it to your advantage.** Stories are highly relevant upon your return and for at least awhile after graduating.
- **Don't have all of your stories be from your time abroad!** You don't want the interviewer to think that you can speak only about your study abroad experience; you should develop examples from other life experiences (summer jobs, student clubs, volunteering, athletics, etc). Diversify your examples, stories and experiences. Again, interviewers are less concerned of which experience and more interested in the actual behavior, skill or competency.
- **A good way to build your collection of stories is to think about times when you have been especially challenged or taken a risk.**
 - It may either be about something that happened on a given day ("one time")
 - Or a situation that happened *over time* (you were challenged by the differences in the education system abroad over the course of the semester).
- **Give it a beginning and an end** while making a relevant point and specifically identifying the skill or quality it demonstrates.
- **Be sure to include relevant details** – for example, how many elementary students were in your afterschool art class; what were the average sales of the retail store where you worked, etc.?
- **Don't bother with irrelevant detail** – for example, if your story is about a missed flight or train, no need to call out the flight numbers or the exact departure times!
- **Be sure to show respect for cultural differences.** No matter how challenging something was, you don't want to use denigrating terms. For example, instead of saying your room in your homestay was 'ridiculously small' you need to explain that the room was 'much smaller than you were used to.'
- **Stories need to be appropriate.** When in doubt, err on the side of caution. Be aware that even though you now understand that having a drink with friends in a pub is a common 'no-big-deal' occurrence in Ireland, you may want to eliminate any reference to pubs, bars or alcohol in your stories since your interviewer may not have that same frame of reference.
- **Select stories that demonstrate why you are a qualified applicant.** It is your job in the interview to tell the interviewer how your past experiences have led you to develop the personal qualities and transferable skills they are seeking in a candidate.

Session Wrap-Up

Time allowed: 10 minutes

- Allow time for any follow-up questions the students may have
- Share information about the services and support offered by your campus Career office (resume writing, mock interviews, etc), and that this session is only one step in the preparation process.
- **Have students complete the post-session survey (2-sided page; and leave with you before they leave).**

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APPENDIX C: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

Pre-Session Survey: Study Abroad and Transferable Skills

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research project on study abroad and transferable skills. In attending this session, you are being asked to participate in a research project by completing this survey prior to the session and a shorter one at the close.

Please write your first and last name legibly on the line below to indicate your understanding of and consent to the following:

- My participation in this study is voluntary.
- I will complete this survey and the post-session survey.
- The length of the session will be one hour.
- The session may be recorded and later transcribed for exclusive use by the researcher.
- Participant anonymity will be kept throughout the research by assigning an anonymous code in data files, and separating identifying details and the informed consent from the survey content.
- My name will not be used in any reporting of the research findings.
- The data will be used for the sole purposes of this present study.
- Each participant will have free access to their personal data throughout the project by contacting the researcher.
- Any audio files or the session or any interviews will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Please enter your first and last name here (print legibly):

First name _____ Last name _____

When completing this survey, please give careful thought to how much effort you have put into preparing for your first job out of college. Be honest and realistic about how much time you have taken to identify your skills, write your resume and prepared to talk about the impact of your study abroad experience in ways that employers will appreciate. Answer these questions as if you were going on a job interview today.

Watch carefully; these next four answer scales are not all formatted in the same direction

2. I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

3. I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C-2: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

6. Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

7. What name(s) would you give the skill(s) that you just wrote about:

8. How important was each of the following in your decision to study abroad:

	Not at all important	Less important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Extremely important
Fulfilling requirements towards my degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing my resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning about another culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning/improving					
foreign language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time with friends who were studying abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving my employability					
(by developing certain skills, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX C-3: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

9. Please indicate the degree to which you believe you developed any of these skills abroad:

	Significantly Increased	Moderately Increased	Slightly Increased	No change	Slightly Diminished	Moderately Diminished	Significantly Diminished
Communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course or major-related Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curiosity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility/Adaptability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open-Mindedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem-Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-Awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tolerance of Ambiguity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Ethic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other - please describe here:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Program Duration

Did you study on a quarter, semester or academic year program abroad? Yes No
(A semester is typically about 14 weeks in length)

Have you studied abroad more than once as an undergraduate? Yes No

11. Total Number of Weeks You Have Studied Abroad: _____

12. Where did you study:

If you studied abroad for a semester or an academic year, list that country/countries here: _____

If you studied abroad on a short-term program, list that country/countries here: _____

13. My program was led by faculty from my home college/university:

Yes No

14. My primary living accommodation while abroad is best described as:

- Homestay
- Student residence or apartment with students from the U.S.
- Student residence of apartment with mix of U.S. and other international students
- Student residence or apartment with all/mostly host country students
- Apartment living on my own
- Other (please specify): _____

15. My age is: _____

16. My gender is: Female Male Other _____

APPENDIX C-4: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

17. College Year Status While Abroad:

- First Year
 Sophomore
 Junior
 Senior
 Fifth Year Senior

18: Ethnicity (optional):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> American Indian or Alaska Native
<input type="radio"/> Asian
<input type="radio"/> Black or African-American
<input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino
<input type="radio"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | <input type="radio"/> White
<input type="radio"/> Two or more ethnicities
<input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |
|---|--|

19. Please choose the best option(s) which describe your major(s) and minor(s). You may select more than one in each column:

	Major	Minor
Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business & Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication or Journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engineering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fine and Applied Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign Language or International Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Professions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities (e.g., English, History, Philosophy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal Studies or Law Enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math or Computer Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural Sciences (e.g., Biology, Chemistry)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Sciences (e.g., Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undeclared	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (list below):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Language: choose the response which best describes your program

- I studied in an English-speaking country.
- I studied in a country where English is the official language but studied the local/indigenous language (for example, studying Asante Twi in Ghana).
- I studied in a non-English-speaking country. I did not study the host country language (I did all of my coursework in English).
- I studied in a non-English-speaking country. I studied the host country language at the beginning level but took my other subject coursework in English.
- I studied in a non-English-speaking country. I studied the host country language at the intermediate or advanced level *but took my other subject coursework in English.*
- I studied in a non-English-speaking country. I studied the host country language at the intermediate or advanced level *and did all of my coursework in that language as well.*

21. I took courses:

- Which enrolled only U.S. students
- Which enrolled U.S. and other international students (from countries other than host country)
- In the regular university system of my host country
- Not applicable (for example, if you did only an internship abroad)
- Other: please specify: _____

APPENDIX C-5: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

22. While studying abroad (check all that apply):

- I did volunteer work, or community service
- I did an internship
- I was involved in a campus or student club/organization
- I traveled within my host country to other cities or regions
- I traveled outside of my host country to others nearby
- None of the above

23. Please check all of the statements that apply to finish this sentence -- "Prior to studying abroad. . .":

- I had never been outside of the U.S. or Canada
- I had traveled to Mexico with my family (for example, a vacation)
- I had traveled to Mexico on my own, or with a group (for example, a school trip)
- I had traveled outside of North America with my family (for example, a vacation)
- I had traveled outside of North America on my own, or with a group (for example, a school trip)
- Other, please describe:

24. Answer this question only if you were born in another country and now live in the U.S. permanently:

Country of origin _____ Number of years in U.S. _____

25. Answer this question only if you are an international student (from outside the U.S.) seeking a degree in the U.S.:

Home country _____

26. Check the appropriate occupation for your "Parent A" (your other parent/guardian will be called "Parent B" and you should answer these last questions accordingly):

- Stay at home/homemaker.
- Day laborer, janitor, house cleaner, farm worker, food counter sales, food preparation worker, busboy.
- Garbage collector, short-order cook, cab driver, shoe sales, assembly line worker, mason, baggage porter.
- Painter, skills construction trade, sales clerk, truck driver, cook, sales counter or general office clerk.
- Automobile mechanic, typist, locksmith, farmer, carpenter, receptionist, construction laborer, hairdresser.
- Machinist, musician, bookkeeper, secretary, insurance sales, cabinet maker, personnel specialist, welder.
- Supervisor, librarian, aircraft mechanic, artist and artisan, electrician, administrator, military-enlisted personnel, buyer.
- Nurse, skilled technician, medical technician, counselor, manager, police and fire personnel, financial manager, physical occupational or speech therapist.
- Mechanical, nuclear, or electrical engineer, educational administrator, veterinarian, military officer, elementary, high school and special education teacher.
- Physician, attorney, professor, chemical and aerospace engineer, judge, CEO, senior manager, public official, psychologist, pharmacist, accountant.

Continued on next page

APPENDIX C-6: Pre-Session Survey for U.S. Students

27. Check the appropriate occupation for your "Parent B." If you grew up in a single-family home without a second parent, choose "Not applicable".

- Stay at home/homemaker.
- Day laborer, janitor, house cleaner, farm worker, food counter sales, food preparation worker, busboy.
- Garbage collector, short-order cook, cab driver, shoe sales, assembly line worker, mason, baggage porter.
- Painter, skills construction trade, sales clerk, truck driver, cook, sales counter or general office clerk.
- Automobile mechanic, typist, locksmith, farmer, carpenter, receptionist, construction laborer, hairdresser.
- Machinist, musician, bookkeeper, secretary, insurance sales, cabinet maker, personnel specialist, welder.
- Supervisor, librarian, aircraft mechanic, artist and artisan, electrician, administrator, military-enlisted personnel, buyer.
- Nurse, skilled technician, medical technician, counselor, manager, police and fire personnel, financial manager, physical occupational or speech therapist.
- Mechanical, nuclear, or electrical engineer, educational administrator, veterinarian, military officer, elementary, high school and special education teacher.
- Physician, attorney, professor, chemical and aerospace engineer, judge, CEO, senior manager, public official, psychologist, pharmacist, accountant.
- Not applicable

28. Check the highest level of education completed by your "Parent A."

- Less than 7th grade
- Junior high/middle school (7th, 8th, or 9th grade)
- Partial high school (10th or 11th grade)
- High School Graduate
- Partial College (at least one year)
- College Education (AA, BA, etc.).
- Graduate or doctoral degree

29. Check the highest level of education completed by your "Parent B." If you grew up in a single-family home without a second parent, check "Not Applicable".

- Less than 7th grade
- Junior high/middle school (7th, 8th, or 9th grade)
- Partial high school (10th or 11th grade)
- High School Graduate
- Partial College (at least one year)
- College Education (AA, BA, etc.).
- Graduate or doctoral degree
- Not Applicable

Thank you for your contribution to this research about study abroad and skill development.
Your participation is truly appreciated.

APPENDIX C: Pre-Session Survey for European Students

(Example: Netherlands)

Pre-Session Survey: Study Abroad & Employability

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a session on study abroad and transferable skills. In attending this session, you are being asked to participate in a research project by completing this survey prior to the session and a shorter one at the close.

Please write your first and last name legibly on the line below to indicate your understanding of and consent to the following:

- My participation in this study is voluntary.
- I will complete this survey and the post-session survey.
- The length of the session will be one hour.
- The session may be recorded and later transcribed for exclusive use by the researcher.
- Participant anonymity will be kept throughout the research by assigning an anonymous code in data files, and separating identifying details and the informed consent from the survey content.
- My name will not be used in any reporting of the research findings.
- The data will be used for the sole purposes of this present study.
- Each participant will have free access to their personal data throughout the project by contacting the researcher.
- Any audio files of the session or any interviews will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Please enter your first and last name here (print legibly):

First name _____ Last name _____

When completing this survey, please give careful thought to how much effort you have put into preparing for your first job out of college. Be honest and realistic about how much time you have taken to identify your skills, write your resume and prepared to talk about the impact of your study abroad experience in ways that employers will appreciate. Answer these questions as if you were going on a job interview today.

Watch carefully; these next four answer scales are not all formatted in the same direction

2. I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

3. I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C-2: Pre-Session Survey for European Students (Example: Netherlands)

6. Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

7. What name(s) would you give the skill(s) that you just wrote about:

8. How important was each of the following in your decision to study abroad:

	Not at all important	Less important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Extremely Important
Fulfilling requirements towards my degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing my resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning about another culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning/improving foreign language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time with friends who were studying abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving my employability (by developing certain skills, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX C-3: Pre-Session Survey for European Students
(Example: Netherlands)

9. Please indicate the degree to which you believe you developed any of these skills abroad:

	Significantly Increased	Moderately Increased	Slightly Increased	No change	Slightly Diminished	Moderately Diminished	Significantly Diminished
Communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic or major-related knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curiosity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility/Adaptability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open-Mindedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem-Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-Awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with uncertainty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Ethic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other - please describe here:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Number of Times Studied Abroad

Have you studied or interned abroad more than once as an undergraduate? Yes No

11. Total Number of Weeks You Have Studied and/or Interned Abroad: _____

12. In which countries did you study:

If you studied or interned abroad for at least 12 weeks, list that country here: _____

If you studied or interned abroad for less than 12 weeks, list that country here: _____

13. My primary living accommodation while abroad is best described as:

- Homestay
- Student residence or apartment with students from my own country
- Student residence or apartment with other international students
- Student residence or apartment with all/mostly host country students
- Apartment living on my own
- Other (please specify): _____

14. My age is: _____

15. My gender is: Female Male Other

16. University Status While Abroad:

Bachelor year: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th Master year: 1st 2nd

APPENDIX C-4: Pre-Session Survey for European Students
(Example: Netherlands)

17. Please choose the best option(s) which describe your course/area of study. You may select more than one in each column:

	Major	Minor
Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business & Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication or Journalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engineering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fine and Applied Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign Language or International Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Professions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities (e.g., English, History, Philosophy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal Studies or Law Enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math or Computer Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural Sciences (e.g., Biology, Chemistry)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Sciences (e.g., Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undeclared	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (list below):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Language: choose the response which best describes your program

- I studied in a country where the language is the same as in my home country.
- I studied in a country with a foreign language; I took language courses there to improve my skills.
- I studied in a country with a foreign language where I was enrolled in regular university courses, and/or did an internship.
- Other, please describe: _____

19. I took courses:

- Which enrolled international students (for example, at a language institute or in 'courses for foreigners').
- In the regular university system of my host country.
- Not applicable (for example, if you did an internship abroad and no academic courses).
- Other: please specify: _____

20. While studying abroad (check all that apply):

- I did volunteer work, or community service
- I did an internship
- I was involved in a campus or student club/organization
- I traveled within my host country to other cities or regions
- I traveled outside of my host country to others nearby
- None of the above

21. Please check all of the statements that apply to finish this sentence -- "Prior to studying abroad. . .":

- I had never been outside of my home country or its surrounding region
- I had traveled in other countries near my home country
- I had traveled abroad with my family (for example, while on holiday).
- I had traveled abroad on my own, or with a group (for example, a school trip).
- Other, please describe:

APPENDIX C-5: Pre-Session Survey for European Students (Example: Netherlands)

22. Answer this question only if you were born in another country and now live permanently in The Netherlands:

Country of origin: _____ Number of years in The Netherlands: _____

23. Answer this question only if you are an international student seeking a degree in The Netherlands:

Home country: _____

24. Check the appropriate occupation for your "Parent A" (your other parent/guardian will be called "Parent B" and you should answer these last questions accordingly):

- Stay at home/homemaker.
- Day laborer, janitor, house cleaner, farm worker, food counter sales, food preparation worker, busboy.
- Garbage collector, short-order cook, cab driver, shoe sales, assembly line worker, mason, baggage porter.
- Painter, skills construction trade, sales clerk, truck driver, cook, sales counter or general office clerk.
- Automobile mechanic, typist, locksmith, farmer, carpenter, receptionist, construction laborer, hairdresser.
- Machinist, musician, bookkeeper, secretary, insurance sales, cabinet maker, personnel specialist, welder.
- Nurse, skilled technician, medical technician, counselor, manager, police and fire personnel, financial manager, physical occupational or speech therapist.
- Mechanical, nuclear, or electrical engineer, educational administrator, veterinarian, military officer, elementary, high school and special education teacher.
- Physician, attorney, professor, chemical and aerospace engineer, judge, CEO, senior manager, public official, psychologist, pharmacist, accountant.

25. Check the appropriate occupation for your "Parent B." If you grew up in a single-family home without a second parent, choose "Not applicable".

- Stay at home/homemaker.
- Day laborer, janitor, house cleaner, farm worker, food counter sales, food preparation worker, busboy.
- Garbage collector, short-order cook, cab driver, shoe sales, assembly line worker, mason, baggage porter.
- Painter, skills construction trade, sales clerk, truck driver, cook, sales counter or general office clerk.
- Automobile mechanic, typist, locksmith, farmer, carpenter, receptionist, construction laborer, hairdresser.
- Machinist, musician, bookkeeper, secretary, insurance sales, cabinet maker, personnel specialist, welder.
- Nurse, skilled technician, medical technician, counselor, manager, police and fire personnel, financial manager, physical occupational or speech therapist.
- Mechanical, nuclear, or electrical engineer, educational administrator, veterinarian, military officer, elementary, high school and special education teacher.
- Physician, attorney, professor, chemical and aerospace engineer, judge, CEO, senior manager, public official, psychologist, pharmacist, accountant.
- Not applicable

26. Check the highest level of education completed by your "Parent A."

- Less than seven years of primary school
- From 7 - 9 years of primary & secondary school
- Up to two years of secondary school
- High School Graduate (Ex: VMBO, VWO or equivalent, etc)
- At least one year at university or vocational school (such as MBO)
- University degree (Bachelor or equivalent)
- Graduate or doctoral degree

27. Check the highest level of education completed by your "Parent B." If you grew up in a single-family home without a second parent, check "Not Applicable".

- Less than seven years of primary school
- From 7 - 9 years of primary & secondary school
- Up to two years of secondary school
- High School Graduate (Ex: VMBO, VWO or equivalent, etc)
- At least one year at university or vocational school (such as MBO)
- University degree (Bachelor or equivalent)
- Graduate or doctoral degree

Thank you for your contribution to this research about study abroad and skill development.
Your participation is truly appreciated.

APPENDIX C: Post-Session Survey (for both U.S. and European Students)

POST-SESSION SURVEY: Study Abroad and Transferable Skills

1. Name: _____ I studied in (country): _____

For the purpose of validating this research, please write your name here to match with your name as you wrote in the online pre-session survey. Your name will only be used for matching purposes and will never appear in the information published about this research project.

★ When completing this survey, please give careful thought to how much effort you have put into preparing for your initial job search upon graduation. Be realistic about how much time have you taken to identify your skills, write your resumé, and prepare to talk about your study abroad experience in ways that employers will appreciate. Answer these questions as if you were going on a job interview today.

Watch carefully; these next four answer scales are not all formatted in the same direction

2. I have thought hard about how studying abroad resulted in developing specific skills that I can apply in the workplace:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

3. I have identified skills (for example – flexibility, initiative, etc.) that I developed studying abroad that I can apply to my first job after graduation:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am confident that I can speak accurately to potential employers about the transferable skills I developed while studying abroad:

Strongly Agree Agree Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I am prepared to offer specific examples of skills that I developed while studying abroad to potential employers:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

6. Imagine you are in a job interview and the employer poses a question asking you to tell about a skill you developed while abroad. Write your answer below describing when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace.

APPENDIX C-2: Post-Session Survey (for both U.S. and European Students)

7. What name(s) would you give the skill(s) that you just wrote about:

8. There are transferable skills that I would like or need to develop more thoroughly:

- NO
 YES If yes, please name one or more here:

9. If you had previously attended a session similar to this one, please indicate when and where:

10. Without attending this session, I would not have thought about the skills I gained from studying abroad and been able to describe them accurately:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Check the answer that best describes your thoughts (read all first, then choose one):

- Overall, the strongest examples of skill development that I can share with potential employers are from studying abroad.
 I have strong examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but have equally as strong examples from other experiences in my life as well.
 I have good examples of skill development from studying abroad to share with potential employers, but examples from other experiences in my life are stronger.
 I have no examples of skill development from studying abroad; all of my examples will be from other life experiences.

12. Do you have any comments you would like to add about this session?

Please consider listing your email address here so that the lead researcher can contact several participants at random with one additional follow-up question: _____

Thank you for your participation in this research project!

APPENDIX D: Permission to use Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (BSMSS)

Ann Hubbard

From: Will Barratt <Will.Barratt@indstate.edu>
Sent: Friday, June 16, 2017 7:50 PM
To: Ann Hubbard
Subject: Re: Request for permission to use SES Scale

Ann

You have my permission to use the BSMSS in the study described below pending approval of the appropriate human subjects committee.

I am traveling at the moment or I would send you a list of articles that have used it, but the same list is available on Google Scholar.

Good luck.

Will

Will Barratt, Ph.D.
Professor, Graduate School, Roi Et Rajabhat University
Coffman Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Educational Leadership, Indiana St. U.
On the move, sent from mobile

----- Original message -----

From: Ann Hubbard <ahubbard@alfs.com>
Date: 6/16/17 15:51 (GMT-05:00)
To: Will Barratt <Will.Barratt@indstate.edu>
Subject: Request for permission to use SES Scale

Dear Dr. Barratt –

I am a doctoral student in Higher Education Internationalization at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan (I am a U.S. citizen who lives/works here in the U.S.).

The degree program: <http://centridiricerca.unicatt.it/chei-activities-phd#content>

Me as a candidate: <http://centridiricerca.unicatt.it/chei-phd-programme-chei-doctoral-candidates-2016-2017#content>

I am conducting research on participation in study abroad and the development of transferable skills. I will be surveying students prior to and following their participation in a training session on identifying and articulating their skills. I would like to include the Barratt SES scale in the survey, and am requesting your permission.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ann Hubbard

APPENDIX E: Story Rating Rubric

APPENDIX E: Rating Rubric: Craft a Story About a Skill You Developed While Studying or Interning Abroad in Preparation for a Job Interview				
<p><i>Definition: Craft a suitable story about a skill you developed while abroad involves explaining when and how you demonstrated a skill that will have value in the workplace. This means offering information about the situation, what needed to be done, and how you resolved the problem, learned new insights, or acquired new skills or abilities that potential employers can appreciate and which have value in the workplace.</i></p> <p>These criteria establish the basis for the Level Ratings, with Level 0 not meeting these, and Level 5 exceeding them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks about or refers to oneself in a specific situation while abroad • Uses content that is appropriate for a job interview • Provides information on the situation (e.g., problem, challenge, issue, etc.) • Identifies what was needed to do to resolve situation (task) • Explains the action taken • Summarizes results, citing specific outcome; may explain how the demonstrated skill has value in the workplace. • Is succinct but of sufficient length to include a story-like quality <p>Details about each level appear below</p>				
<p>Level 0 – Unacceptable: Does Not Meet Criteria "Non-responsive"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack specificity and context • Very brief (e.g., responses that only named a single skill or quality were given this rating) • Wholly inappropriate interview response 	<p>Level 1 – Below Satisfactory: Minimally Meets Criteria "Fairly Competent"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers basic information using broad or sweeping statements • May identify a skill but is very general • Offers a vague idea of what action was taken to address the situation (e.g., "I adapted [generally-speaking]) • Topic is not highly substantive • Is considered barely sufficient for an interview response 	<p>Level 2 – Satisfactory: Partially Meets Criteria "Competent"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sufficient context of the situation • Identifies (names) a skill or trait • Refers to oneself in situation • Explains (at least partially) how a skill was applied, but still rather broad in scope • Rather brief, but a satisfactory interview response 	<p>Level 3 – Above Satisfactory: Fully Meets Criteria "Very Competent"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks about oneself in a specific situation • Describes the context/situation with a greater degree of detail • Explains what needed to be done (task) • Describes the action taken, and some idea of the result, but may still have some vagueness or describe a situation in general terms. • Topic is sufficient but may be slightly lacking in substance • References to host cultures may show sensitivity or appreciation (but do not show insensitivity) • Story length is sufficient to offer a complete narrative (beginning/middle/end) • A solid interview response 	<p>Level 4 – Exceptional: Exceeds Criteria "Sophisticated"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks about oneself in a specific situation • Provides information on substantive situation (problem, challenge, issue, etc.) with rich context • Identifies what was needed to do to resolve issue • Explains the action taken • Summarizes results, citing specific outcome; may explain its value in workplace and/or show insights gained • Is respectful, may show multiple perspectives • Story length provides full narrative and includes relevant details • Demonstrates (and describes that) an insight was gained or a shift in thinking occurred • An exemplary interview response
				SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SAMPLE STORIES


APPENDIX E-2: Story Rating Rubric

APPENDIX E: Sample Stories by Level				
Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Confidence Communication Skills When I lost my passport, I called my parents and they sent me a copy of my passport page to get a new one.</p>	<p>I gained independence. I was placed in a city that I did not know the language and adapted to the situation quite quickly.</p> <p>When you travel, you meet tons of people. Communicating with anyone is the most valuable skill to any workplace environment.</p>	<p>I picked up on listening. Not only did I have to listen and understand Spanish, I also had to respond to indicate that I was comprehending the conversation. In the workplace this can be a useful tool as listening is not just hearing but also acting and responding in a way that indicates understanding to others.</p> <p>I gained so many valuable skills that can be applied to the workplace while studying abroad. The most important one is probably adaptability. I had to adapt to how another culture works and was thrown into so many diverse situations why studying abroad. In the work place, I have demonstrated this skill constantly. I adapt to every project that I work on and the way that I go about it depending on the dynamics of the project.</p>	<p>I developed and honed the skill of adaptability while I was abroad. I went abroad without knowing anyone. I had researched about Italian culture prior to leaving, yet I was still met with an entirely different way of life when I arrived in this new foreign country. I learned to adapt to completely new situations in order to be able to live in a new place. This will have value in the workplace because I was able to get along with people from a different culture and make a whole new group of friends. I believe that I am able to work with a large variety of people while still upholding my own values and ideas. Additionally, I learned how to adapt to a new way of life, which will translate to the workplace in being able to work well in various projects and situations.</p> <p>I learned to effectively communicate in a foreign language. During my time abroad it would often be necessary to communicate with people who spoke absolutely no English. Despite my proficiency in the language, I do not consider myself a wholly fluent Spanish speaker, so I learned how to communicate and express myself in the language by "talking around" the things I didn't know how to say. For example, I might not have known how to exactly translate the word 'crimson' into Spanish, but I know how to describe things with a similar color to communicate the same idea. In this sense, while I may not have the skills of a native speaker, I know I am capable of communicating effectively with clients who speak little to no English.</p>	<p>In my homestay in Spain, I learned how to consider and respect different viewpoints. I grew very close to people with very different opinions than my own – and all of this was accomplished despite the fact that my Spanish was not quite yet fluent. My host father wanted to engage me in discussions on world politics, especially about U.S. foreign policy. He wasn't happy about the U.S. influence in the world and asked me questions that honestly, I wasn't prepared to answer. I felt so ignorant with my limited language skill and by not knowing the specifics about the foreign policies of my own country. I faced this challenge head-on: I made a point to read the Spanish newspaper each day so that I could acquire both the knowledge and the vocabulary. Over time, I got pretty good at being able to engage in discussion with him. We had quite different viewpoints on a number of things, but his approach was not to insult but to challenge me. I respect him for this, and I am grateful for the opportunity to see political discourse as an exercise in learning and not demeaning anyone. I learned so much about the value in considering other viewpoints and shifting my perspective.</p> <p>While abroad in Spain, I was enrolled in course called Creative Economy. Our semester project was to find a problem, create a product that addressed it, and 'sell it' to the class. I chose to work with three others each from a different country. We had to use creative brainstorming techniques (such as mind-mapping); we found that we each had different solutions and this initially seemed to create a road block. But we worked together and found a solution that involved a piece of each of our individual ideas. After we presented to the class, we realized how challenging it was with different backgrounds but felt that we knew one another much better, appreciated our differences and would look forward to working together again.</p>

APPENDIX F: Approval letter from Ethics Committee

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

**FONDAZIONE POLICLINICO GEMELLI
PROTOCOLLO UNICO**
Tipo Atto: In Uscita
Prot. N. 0028545/17 - Del 09/06/2017
SEGRETERIA COMITATO ETICO

Gemelli 

Comitato Etico

Prot. 24570/17

Gentile Professoressa
Amanda Murphy
UCSC Milano

Riunione del 25/05/2017

Componenti Presenti:
Prof. Salvatore MANCUSO, *Presidente - Clinico - Ostetricia e Ginecologia*
Prof. Antonio Gioacchino SPAGNOLO, *Vice Presidente - Esperto di Bioetica*
Dott.ssa Rina CAMPOPIANO, *Farmacista SSR2*
Prof. Roberto COPPOLA, *Clinico - Chirurgia*
Dott.ssa Chiara DE WAURE, *Biostatistico*
Prof. Carlo FUNDARO', *Pediatra*
Prof. Maurizio GENUARDI, *Esperto di Genetica*
Dott. Pietro GRASSO, *Direttore Sanitario o suo sostituto permanente*
Sig.ra Luciana MATTU, *Rappresentante dell'area delle professioni sanitarie*
Prof. Pierluigi NAVARRA, *Farmacologo*
Dott.ssa Lucia PARRONI, *Farmacista esperto di dispositivi medici*
Dott. Carmine POMPEO, *Rappresentante Associazione d'el Volontariato di Tutela dei Pazienti*
Dott.ssa Erica Maria PROLI, *Farmacista SSR1*
Prof. Giovanni SCHIAVONE, *Esperto in materia giuridica e assicurativa o Medico Legale*
Prof.ssa Simona SICA, *Clinico - Oncematologia*
Dott.ssa Laura VENTURA, *Medico di medicina generale*

Membri esterni:
Avv. Filippo E. LEONE, *Responsabile Servizio Ricerca delegato dalla Fondazione Policlinico Universitario "A. Gemelli" per la formalizzazione dei contratti*

Il Comitato Etico, riunitosi il 25 maggio u.s. per esprimere il proprio parere etico motivato sullo Studio "Human Research Ethics Application form"

VALUTATE

le risposte a quanto richiesto da codesto Comitato Etico nella seduta del 16 febbraio 2017 e nello specifico la seguente documentazione:

Fondazione Policlinico Universitario A. Gemelli
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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APPENDIX G: Tables of Reported Skill Development Scores by Group and Region

Table G-1

Summary Statistics Table for Reported Skill Development by Group

Reported Skill, Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communication Skills						
Control	6.41	0.77	98	0.08	-1.39	1.76
Experiment	6.21	0.92	191	0.07	-1.79	5.58
Confidence						
Control	6.39	0.96	98	0.10	-1.83	3.18
Experiment	6.32	0.96	190	0.07	-2.02	5.71
Course or major-related knowledge						
Control	5.67	1.20	98	0.12	-0.83	0.68
Experiment	5.74	1.09	189	0.08	-0.88	0.94
Curiosity						
Control	6.50	0.93	98	0.09	-2.37	6.39
Experiment	6.20	1.07	191	0.08	-1.42	2.14
Empathy						
Control	6.06	1.10	98	0.11	-1.01	0.51
Experiment	5.71	1.15	190	0.08	-0.81	0.64
Flexibility/Adaptability						
Control	6.56	0.73	98	0.07	-1.79	2.90
Experiment	6.36	0.91	191	0.07	-1.82	5.36
Initiative						
Control	6.13	1.00	97	0.10	-1.35	2.12
Experiment	6.10	1.02	191	0.07	-1.46	3.08
Language Skills						
Control	5.62	1.10	98	0.11	-0.24	-1.07
Experiment	5.80	1.20	191	0.09	-0.95	1.08
Leadership Skills						
Control	5.73	1.12	98	0.11	-0.35	-1.06
Experiment	5.68	1.06	191	0.08	-0.82	1.25
Open-Mindedness						
Control	6.44	0.86	98	0.09	-1.36	0.76
Experiment	6.17	1.15	191	0.08	-1.36	1.67
Problem-Solving						
Control	6.17	0.93	98	0.09	-0.81	-0.40
Experiment	6.05	1.03	190	0.07	-1.20	2.11
Self-Awareness						
Control	6.43	0.85	98	0.09	-1.45	1.29
Experiment	6.22	0.94	191	0.07	-1.49	3.97
Teamwork						
Control	5.77	1.16	98	0.12	-0.34	-1.34
Experiment	5.74	1.17	191	0.08	-0.76	0.39
Tolerance of Ambiguity						
Control	6.17	0.96	98	0.10	-0.84	-0.45
Experiment	5.78	1.18	191	0.09	-0.85	0.62
Work Ethic						
Control	5.32	1.37	98	0.14	-0.44	-0.60
Experiment	5.48	1.26	191	0.09	-0.71	0.38

Note: Likert score of 7= *Significantly Increased*; 6 = *Moderately Increased*, 5 = *Slightly Increased*, 4 = *No Change*, 3 = *Slightly Decreased*, 2 = *Moderately Decreased*, 1 = *Significantly Decreased*

Table G-2

Summary Statistics Table for Reported Skill Development by Region

Reported Skill, Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communication Skills						
Control	6.28	0.91	106	0.09	-1.49	2.26
Experiment	6.28	0.85	183	0.06	-1.89	7.20
Confidence						
Control	6.20	0.99	106	0.10	-1.41	1.73
Experiment	6.42	0.94	182	0.07	-2.35	7.56
Course or major-related knowledge						
Control	5.58	1.09	106	0.11	-1.05	1.69
Experiment	5.79	1.15	181	0.09	-0.81	0.47
Curiosity						
Control	6.06	1.12	106	0.11	-1.01	0.35
Experiment	6.45	0.95	183	0.07	-2.26	6.46
Empathy						
Control	5.74	1.14	105	0.11	-0.71	-0.12
Experiment	5.87	1.15	183	0.08	-0.95	0.98
Flexibility/Adaptability						
Control	6.27	0.83	106	0.08	-0.84	-0.23
Experiment	6.52	0.86	183	0.06	-2.50	9.11
Initiative						
Control	5.98	0.95	105	0.09	-0.91	0.61
Experiment	6.19	1.04	183	0.08	-1.72	3.98
Language Skills						
Control	5.97	1.19	106	0.12	-1.17	1.50
Experiment	5.60	1.14	183	0.08	-0.52	0.10
Leadership Skills						
Control	5.56	1.01	106	0.10	-0.55	0.18
Experiment	5.78	1.11	183	0.08	-0.74	0.53
Open-Mindedness						
Control	6.17	1.10	106	0.11	-1.16	0.72
Experiment	6.31	1.05	183	0.08	-1.64	2.93
Problem-Solving						
Control	5.85	1.05	106	0.10	-0.64	-0.56
Experiment	6.24	0.94	182	0.07	-1.48	3.95
Self-Awareness						
Control	6.06	0.92	106	0.09	-0.62	-0.58
Experiment	6.43	0.88	183	0.07	-2.16	7.42
Teamwork						
Control	5.87	1.08	106	0.10	-0.83	0.45
Experiment	5.68	1.21	183	0.09	-0.50	-0.41
Tolerance of Ambiguity						
Control	5.86	1.08	106	0.11	-0.71	0.09
Experiment	5.95	1.15	183	0.08	-1.01	0.89
Work Ethic						
Control	5.56	1.17	106	0.11	-0.55	-0.39
Experiment	5.35	1.37	183	0.10	-0.60	-0.04

Note: Likert score of 7= *Significantly Increased*; 6 = *Moderately Increased*, 5 = *Slightly Increased*, 4 = *No Change*, 3 = *Slightly Decreased*, 2 = *Moderately Decreased*, 1 = *Significantly Decreased*.

APPENDIX H: Descriptive Data Tables: Assessment Measure Means

Table H-1

PRE & POST Assessment Dimension: Raw Mean Scores by Group, Region, and Gender

Assessment Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>		
Reflection1	Control	European	Female	5.00	1.265	16		
			Male	5.67	0.516	6		
			Total	5.18	1.140	22		
		U.S.	Female	Female	5.76	1.359	66	
				Male	5.00	1.500	9	
				Total	5.67	1.388	75	
			Total	Female	5.61	1.368	82	
				Male	5.27	1.223	15	
				Total	5.56	1.346	97	
	Experiment	European	Female	Female	5.56	1.032	56	
				Male	5.41	1.575	27	
				Total	5.51	1.230	83	
			U.S.	Female	5.58	1.295	91	
				Male	5.73	1.280	15	
				Total	5.61	1.288	106	
		Total	Female	Female	5.58	1.198	147	
				Male	5.52	1.469	42	
				Total	5.56	1.260	189	
			Total	European	Female	5.44	1.105	72
					Male	5.45	1.438	33
					Total	5.44	1.213	105
U.S.	Female	5.66		1.321	157			
	Male	5.46		1.382	24			
	Total	5.63		1.327	181			
Total	Female	5.59	1.259	229				
	Male	5.46	1.402	57				
	Total	5.57	1.288	286				

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
Reflection2	Control	European	Female	4.88	1.204	16	
			Male	4.50	1.378	6	
			Total	4.77	1.232	22	
		U.S.	Female	Female	5.58	1.266	67
				Male	5.44	1.424	9
				Total	5.56	1.276	76
			Total	Female	5.44	1.278	82
				Male	5.07	1.438	15
				Total	5.38	1.303	97
	Experiment	European	Female	Female	6.05	1.026	55
				Male	5.67	1.109	27
				Total	5.93	1.063	82
		U.S.	Female	Female	5.74	1.353	92
				Male	5.93	1.100	15
				Total	5.77	1.316	107
			Total	Female	5.86	1.244	147
				Male	5.76	1.100	42
				Total	5.84	1.211	189
	Total	European	Female	Female	5.79	1.170	71
				Male	5.45	1.227	33
				Total	5.68	1.193	104
U.S.		Female	Female	5.67	1.315	155	
			Male	5.75	1.225	24	
			Total	5.68	1.300	179	
		Total	Female	5.71	1.270	226	
			Male	5.58	1.224	57	
			Total	5.68	1.26	283	

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>		
Identification1	Control	European	Female	5.75	0.931	16		
			Male	5.67	1.862	6		
			Total	5.73	1.202	22		
		U.S.	Female	Female	6.15	1.153	66	
				Male	6.11	0.782	9	
				Total	6.15	1.111	75	
			Total	Female	6.07	1.120	82	
				Male	5.93	1.280	15	
				Total	6.05	1.140	97	
	Experiment	European	Female	Female	5.76	1.333	55	
				Male	5.56	1.423	27	
				Total	5.70	1.358	82	
			U.S.	Female	5.92	1.068	89	
				Male	5.33	1.915	15	
				Total	5.84	1.232	104	
		Total	Female	5.86	1.174	144		
			Male	5.48	1.596	42		
		Total	European	Total	5.77	1.287	186	
				Female	Female	5.76	1.247	71
					Male	5.58	1.480	33
			U.S.	Total	5.70	1.321	104	
				Female	6.02	1.108	155	
				Male	5.63	1.610	24	
Total	Total		5.97	1.189	179			
	Female		5.94	1.157	226			
	Male		5.60	1.522	57			
	Total		5.87	1.244	283			

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Identification2	Control	European	Female	5.94	1.063	16
			Male	5.67	0.516	6
			Total	5.86	0.941	22
		U.S.	Female	6.14	0.875	66
			Male	5.44	1.740	9
			Total	6.05	1.025	75
		Total	Female	6.10	0.911	82
			Male	5.53	1.356	15
			Total	6.01	1.005	97
	Experiment	European	Female	6.20	0.911	55
			Male	5.93	0.997	27
			Total	6.11	0.943	82
		U.S.	Female	6.33	0.986	89
			Male	6.07	1.387	15
			Total	6.29	1.049	104
		Total	Female	6.28	0.957	144
			Male	5.98	1.137	42
			Total	6.21	1.005	186
	Total	European	Female	6.14	0.946	71
			Male	5.88	0.927	33
			Total	6.06	0.943	104
		U.S.	Female	6.25	0.942	155
			Male	5.83	1.523	24
			Total	6.19	1.043	179
Total		Female	6.21	0.942	226	
		Male	5.86	1.202	57	
		Total	6.14	1.008	283	

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Confidence1	Control	European	Female	5.50	1.211	16
			Male	5.33	1.751	6
			Total	5.45	1.335	22
		U.S.	Female	5.86	1.162	66
			Male	5.56	1.590	9
			Total	5.83	1.212	75
		Total	Female	5.79	1.173	82
			Male	5.47	1.598	15
			Total	5.74	1.244	97
	Experiment	European	Female	4.93	1.464	55
			Male	5.00	1.519	27
			Total	4.95	1.473	82
		US	Female	5.24	1.306	89
			Male	5.47	1.767	15
			Total	5.27	1.374	104
		Total	Female	5.12	1.372	144
			Male	5.17	1.607	42
			Total	5.13	1.424	186
	Total	European	Female	5.06	1.423	71
			Male	5.06	1.540	33
			Total	5.06	1.454	104
U.S.		Female	5.50	1.281	155	
		Male	5.50	1.668	24	
		Total	5.50	1.334	179	
Total		Female	5.36	1.340	226	
		Male	5.25	1.596	57	
		Total	5.34	1.393	283	

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>		
Confidence2	Control	European	Female	5.56	1.094	16		
			Male	6.00	0.894	6		
			Total	5.68	1.041	22		
		U.S.	Female	Female	5.80	1.026	66	
				Male	5.22	1.302	9	
				Total	5.73	1.070	75	
			Total	Female	5.76	1.037	82	
				Male	5.53	1.187	15	
				Total	5.72	1.058	97	
	Experiment	European	Female	Female	5.58	0.994	55	
				Male	5.56	1.013	27	
				Total	5.57	0.994	82	
			U.S.	Female	5.87	1.057	89	
				Male	5.87	0.990	15	
				Total	5.87	1.043	104	
		Total	Female	Female	5.76	1.039	144	
				Male	5.67	1.004	42	
				Total	5.74	1.030	186	
			U.S.	Female	Female	5.58	1.009	71
					Male	5.64	0.994	33
					Total	5.60	1.000	104
				U.S.	Female	5.84	1.041	155
Male	5.63	1.135			24			
Total	5.81	1.053			179			
Total	Female	5.76	1.036	226				
	Male	5.63	1.046	57				
	Total	5.73	1.038	283				

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
Preparation1	Control	European	Female	5.06	1.482	16	
			Male	5.83	0.753	6	
			Total	5.27	1.352	22	
		U.S.	Female	5.74	1.207	66	
			Male	5.44	1.424	9	
			Total	5.71	1.228	75	
		Total	Female	5.61	1.284	82	
			Male	5.60	1.183	15	
			Total	5.61	1.263	97	
		Experiment	European	Female	4.60	1.673	55
				Male	5.37	1.079	27
				Total	4.85	1.541	82
	U.S.		Female	5.10	1.560	89	
			Male	5.40	1.352	15	
			Total	5.14	1.529	104	
	Total		Female	4.91	1.617	144	
			Male	5.38	1.168	42	
			Total	5.02	1.537	186	
	Total		European	Female	4.70	1.634	71
				Male	5.45	1.034	33
				Total	4.94	1.506	104
		U.S.	Female	5.37	1.451	155	
			Male	5.42	1.349	24	
			Total	5.38	1.434	179	
Total		Female	5.16	1.539	226		
		Male	5.44	1.165	57		
		Total	5.23	1.492	283		

Dimension	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>		
Preparation2	Control	European	Female	5.56	0.964	16		
			Male	5.67	0.816	6		
			Total	5.59	0.908	22		
		U.S.	Female	Female	5.67	1.128	66	
				Male	5.00	1.225	9	
				Total	5.59	1.152	75	
			Total	Female	5.65	1.093	82	
				Male	5.27	1.100	15	
				Total	5.59	1.097	97	
	Experiment	European	Female	Female	5.58	1.182	55	
				Male	5.26	1.059	27	
				Total	5.48	1.146	82	
			U.S.	Female	5.40	1.586	89	
				Male	5.87	0.743	15	
				Total	5.47	1.501	104	
		Total	Female	Female	5.47	1.443	144	
				Male	5.48	0.994	42	
				Total	5.47	1.352	186	
			Total	European	Female	5.58	1.130	71
					Male	5.33	1.021	33
					Total	5.50	1.097	104
U.S.	Female	5.52		1.411	155			
	Male	5.54		1.021	24			
	Total	5.52		1.363	179			
Total	Female	Female	5.54	1.327	226			
		Male	5.42	1.017	57			
		Total	5.52	1.270	283			

Table H-2

PRE & POST Assessment Dimensions: Logged Mean Scores by Group, Region, and Gender

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Reflection1	U.S.	Control	Male	1.94	0.431	9
			Female	2.31	0.569	67
			Total	2.27	0.565	76
		Experiment	Male	2.33	0.594	15
			Female	2.19	0.507	89
			Total	2.21	0.520	104
		Total	Male	2.18	0.562	24
			Female	2.24	0.536	156
			Total	2.24	0.539	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.12	0.209	6
			Female	1.94	0.434	16
			Total	1.99	0.390	22
		Experiment	Male	2.15	0.543	27
			Female	2.14	0.393	57
			Total	2.14	0.444	84
		Total	Male	2.14	0.497	33
			Female	2.10	0.409	73
			Total	2.11	0.436	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.01	0.361	15
			Female	2.24	0.563	83
			Total	2.21	0.542	98
Experiment		Male	2.21	0.561	42	
		Female	2.17	0.465	146	
		Total	2.18	0.487	188	
Total		Male	2.16	0.521	57	
		Female	2.20	0.503	229	
		Total	2.19	0.506	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Reflection2	U.S.	Control	Male	2.12	0.481	9
			Female	2.20	0.529	67
			Total	2.19	0.521	76
		Experiment	Male	2.42	0.511	15
			Female	2.27	0.541	89
			Total	2.29	0.537	104
		Total	Male	2.31	0.511	24
			Female	2.24	0.535	156
			Total	2.25	0.531	180
	Europea	Control	Male	1.76	0.367	6
			Female	1.89	0.431	16
			Total	1.85	0.411	22
		Experiment	Male	2.20	0.459	27
			Female	2.39	0.497	57
			Total	2.33	0.491	84
		Total	Male	2.12	0.472	33
			Female	2.28	0.525	73
			Total	2.23	0.512	106
	Total	Control	Male	1.98	0.463	15
			Female	2.14	0.523	83
			Total	2.12	0.516	98
Experiment		Male	2.28	0.484	42	
		Female	2.32	0.526	146	
		Total	2.31	0.516	188	
Total		Male	2.20	0.493	57	
		Female	2.26	0.531	229	
		Total	2.24	0.523	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Identification1	U.S.	Control	Male	2.40	0.446	9
			Female	2.47	0.483	67
			Total	2.46	0.477	76
		Experiment	Male	2.22	0.672	15
			Female	2.33	0.474	89
			Total	2.31	0.505	104
		Total	Male	2.28	0.593	24
			Female	2.39	0.482	156
			Total	2.38	0.498	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.30	0.656	6
			Female	2.21	0.388	16
			Total	2.24	0.460	22
		Experiment	Male	2.20	0.553	27
			Female	2.29	0.491	57
			Total	2.26	0.510	84
		Total	Male	2.22	0.564	33
			Female	2.27	0.469	73
			Total	2.25	0.498	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.36	0.519	15
			Female	2.42	0.476	83
			Total	2.41	0.480	98
		Experiment	Male	2.21	0.590	42
			Female	2.31	0.479	146
			Total	2.29	0.506	188
Total		Male	2.25	0.572	57	
		Female	2.35	0.480	229	
		Total	2.33	0.500	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Identification2	U.S.	Control	Male	2.19	0.609	9
			Female	2.42	0.441	67
			Total	2.40	0.465	76
		Experiment	Male	2.58	0.515	15
			Female	2.54	0.485	89
			Total	2.55	0.487	104
		Total	Male	2.44	0.574	24
			Female	2.49	0.469	156
			Total	2.48	0.482	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.12	0.209	6
			Female	2.34	0.492	16
			Total	2.28	0.439	22
		Experiment	Male	2.33	0.493	27
			Female	2.48	0.455	57
			Total	2.44	0.470	84
		Total	Male	2.30	0.460	33
			Female	2.45	0.463	73
			Total	2.40	0.466	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.16	0.478	15
			Female	2.41	0.449	83
			Total	2.37	0.460	98
		Experiment	Male	2.42	0.509	42
			Female	2.52	0.472	146
			Total	2.50	0.481	188
Total		Male	2.35	0.511	57	
		Female	2.48	0.466	229	
		Total	2.45	0.477	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Confidence1	U.S.	Control	Male	2.21	0.573	9
			Female	2.33	0.525	67
			Total	2.31	0.528	76
		Experiment	Male	2.22	0.650	15
			Female	2.05	0.506	89
			Total	2.08	0.529	104
		Total	Male	2.22	0.610	24
			Female	2.17	0.530	156
			Total	2.18	0.540	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.12	0.590	6
			Female	2.15	0.500	16
			Total	2.14	0.511	22
		Experiment	Male	1.97	0.513	27
			Female	1.93	0.445	57
			Total	1.94	0.465	84
		Total	Male	2.00	0.521	33
			Female	1.97	0.463	73
			Total	1.98	0.479	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.18	0.561	15
			Female	2.29	0.522	83
			Total	2.27	0.527	98
Experiment		Male	2.06	0.571	42	
		Female	2.00	0.485	146	
		Total	2.02	0.504	188	
Total		Male	2.09	0.566	57	
		Female	2.11	0.517	229	
		Total	2.10	0.526	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Confidence2	U.S.	Control	Male	2.00	0.372	9
			Female	2.27	0.466	67
			Total	2.24	0.462	76
		Experiment	Male	2.31	0.512	15
			Female	2.30	0.474	89
			Total	2.30	0.477	104
		Total	Male	2.19	0.480	24
			Female	2.29	0.470	156
			Total	2.27	0.471	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.35	0.497	6
			Female	2.16	0.478	16
			Total	2.21	0.480	22
		Experiment	Male	2.15	0.461	27
			Female	2.15	0.406	57
			Total	2.15	0.422	84
		Total	Male	2.19	0.467	33
			Female	2.15	0.419	73
			Total	2.16	0.433	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.14	0.446	15
			Female	2.25	0.467	83
			Total	2.23	0.464	98
		Experiment	Male	2.21	0.480	42
			Female	2.24	0.453	146
			Total	2.24	0.458	188
Total		Male	2.19	0.468	57	
		Female	2.25	0.458	229	
		Total	2.23	0.459	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Preparation1	U.S.	Control	Male	2.12	0.481	9
			Female	2.26	0.493	67
			Total	2.24	0.491	76
		Experiment	Male	2.19	0.500	15
			Female	2.01	0.540	89
			Total	2.04	0.535	104
		Total	Male	2.16	0.483	24
			Female	2.12	0.533	156
			Total	2.12	0.525	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.24	0.402	6
			Female	1.98	0.483	16
			Total	2.05	0.468	22
		Experiment	Male	2.07	0.427	27
			Female	1.87	0.535	57
			Total	1.93	0.509	84
		Total	Male	2.10	0.422	33
			Female	1.90	0.523	73
			Total	1.96	0.501	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.17	0.440	15
			Female	2.21	0.500	83
			Total	2.20	0.490	98
		Experiment	Male	2.11	0.452	42
			Female	1.96	0.541	146
			Total	1.99	0.525	188
Total		Male	2.12	0.446	57	
		Female	2.05	0.539	229	
		Total	2.06	0.522	286	

Dimension	Region	Group	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Preparation2	U.S.	Control	Male	1.91	0.343	9
			Female	2.21	0.468	67
			Total	2.17	0.463	76
		Experiment	Male	2.30	0.399	15
			Female	2.13	0.505	89
			Total	2.15	0.493	104
		Total	Male	2.15	0.417	24
			Female	2.16	0.490	156
			Total	2.16	0.480	180
	Europe	Control	Male	2.17	0.431	6
			Female	2.14	0.422	16
			Total	2.15	0.414	22
		Experiment	Male	2.01	0.371	27
			Female	2.18	0.434	57
			Total	2.12	0.420	84
		Total	Male	2.04	0.380	33
			Female	2.17	0.429	73
			Total	2.13	0.417	106
	Total	Control	Male	2.01	0.389	15
			Female	2.20	0.458	83
			Total	2.17	0.451	98
		Experiment	Male	2.11	0.401	42
			Female	2.15	0.478	146
			Total	2.14	0.461	188
Total		Male	2.09	0.397	57	
		Female	2.17	0.470	229	
		Total	2.15	0.457	286	

APPENDIX I: PRE- and POST-Story scores

Table I-1

Raw Mean Data Table of PRE- and POST-Story Scores

	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
PRE-Story Rating	Control	Europe	Female	1.00	0.756	15
			Male	1.33	0.516	6
			Total	1.10	0.700	21
		U.S.	Female	1.05	0.612	66
			Male	1.22	0.667	9
			Total	1.07	0.617	75
		Total	Female	1.04	0.636	81
			Male	1.27	0.594	15
			Total	1.07	0.632	96
	Experiment	Europe	Female	0.87	0.621	53
			Male	0.78	0.577	27
			Total	0.84	0.605	80
		U.S.	Female	1.16	0.625	92
			Male	0.70	0.455	15
			Total	1.10	0.624	107
		Total	Female	1.06	0.638	145
			Male	0.75	0.533	42
			Total	0.99	0.627	187
	Total	Europe	Female	0.90	0.650	68
			Male	0.88	0.600	33
			Total	0.89	0.631	101
U.S.		Female	1.11	0.621	158	
		Male	0.90	0.589	24	
		Total	1.09	0.619	182	
Total		Female	1.05	0.636	226	
		Male	0.89	0.590	57	
		Total	1.02	0.629	283	

	Group	Region	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
POST-Story Rating	Control	Europe	Female	0.67	0.488	15	
			Male	0.83	0.753	6	
			Total	0.71	0.561	21	
		U.S.	Female	0.94	0.605	66	
			Male	0.78	0.667	9	
			Total	0.92	0.610	75	
			Total	Female	0.89	0.592	81
				Male	0.80	0.676	15
				Total	0.88	0.603	96
	Experiment	Europe	Female	1.89	0.625	53	
			Male	1.56	0.641	27	
			Total	1.78	0.646	80	
		U.S.	Female	2.33	0.783	92	
			Male	2.30	1.032	15	
			Total	2.32	0.816	107	
		Total	Female	2.17	0.757	145	
			Male	1.82	0.868	42	
			Total	2.09	0.794	187	
	Total	Europe	Female	1.62	0.783	68	
			Male	1.42	0.708	33	
			Total	1.55	0.761	101	
U.S.		Female	1.75	0.988	158		
		Male	1.73	1.170	24		
		Total	1.75	1.011	182		
Total		Female	1.71	0.932	226		
		Male	1.55	0.934	57		
		Total	1.68	0.932	283		

APPENDIX J: Responses to Comments

Summary of Responses to “Comments” Section of Post-Session Survey

Session participants responded to the open-ended question of the post-session survey with comments. They were sorted into categories, and all appear below:

A number of comments were statements of thanks and appreciation. Total comments from U.S.: 8; from Europe: 1.

United States

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you

Thank you

Thank you so much! This was extremely helpful information

Thank you for your time This was great!

Great experience

Thanks, love it so far!

Europe

It was interesting, thank you

Another set of comments indicated appreciation for the opportunity to reflect and prepare for interviewing. Total comments from U.S.: 11; from EU: 8.

United States

- Personal help/assistance in making statement, looking at resumes. Great job with materials, example, opportunities, skill, direction.
- Excellent! Really drove home why I studied abroad and the many benefits from studying abroad
- Very good session. Got me thinking about the skills I gained from studying abroad and gave me tools on how to articulate them better.
- Thank you for allowing me to reflect in more detail about the challenges, experiences and characteristics I gained
- Very informative. Got in the mindset for interviews
- If definitely has me thinking a lot about how I can tie my experience back into an interview as I prepare for graduating next year
- Very helpful in fleshing out my skillset gained or improved while abroad
- Helpful
- It was really helpful!
- This session contributed me to have confidence in myself by allowing me to acknowledge how unique I'm with my study abroad and internship experiences

- I was most excited for this session and I definitely feel that it helped me be able to describe my experiences at a professional level.

Europe

- Thank you very much. It was really helpful. I feel much better, prepared for interviews.
- Very useful
- Very useful
- It was very helpful
- Really great! Thought-provoking and a good beginning to the long job hunt ahead.
Thank you!
- I find this session very useful because it made me think more about the skills I developed that I can present at my job interview one day
- The session made me aware of more gained transferable skills than I initially thought I gained
- I see and understand now more how I could use skills from my time abroad - thanks a lot

Comments on specific aspects of the session and/or the facilitator is another area where participants offered comments. Total U.S.: 9; total Europe: 8.

United States

- I like the feedback of when we tell our STARS - would like more than just writing notes.
- It stayed lively and engaging. Loved everyone's examples.
- STAR helpful in articulating experiences and skills.
- It was helpful showing me how to list skills and to structure my experiences
- I enjoyed it, was useful to write it in full.
- This session helped me list out my skills and generate STAR's portraying the use of those skills.
- I think that learning about the STAR method and how to apply it in interviews will be very helpful for my job search.
- Thank you for guiding our thoughts and telling us how to use all of our stories and make them better
- I have definitely been asking interview questions in the STAR format before so it's nice. to have it broken down and better understand how I should answer.

Europe

- The lecturer gave a very good presentation to give us a much better insight on our skills and their awareness.
- Great Professor.
- Good presentation of story-telling about skills and experiences.
- Good tool to find a way to articulate your skills, your worth to another person in any given situation. Sometimes you sell product, other times you're the object of the sale!
- I think the session was very interactive and fun.
- Well organized.
- Very informative, 'pushing' and leading more to think about the skills learned, helpful for future interviews.

- I enjoyed the interactions and the examples given which make it much easier to work and learn from.

Comments that offered suggestions for improvements totaled five, mostly about the logistical aspects of the session (e.g., time of year offered); all were from European sessions.

- Interesting seminar. Better next time at a different hour. People are not focused anymore and that's a pity.
- If more sessions will be held, it would be good to have some earlier in the year for more preparation for job applications.
- The session was too long - a presentation with Q&A would be more effective. Worksheet/book a great resource!
- Maybe it should contain a part where teacher speaks about skills that are most appreciated among employers if developed while studying abroad.
- Really helpful, wish it had been earlier in the year.