

Post-Study Abroad Reentry

A qualitative case study on students' and study abroad professionals' experiences and perspectives

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July 2016

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Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

Participation in study abroad programs can offer students an educational insight into another culture; heavily strengthening their intercultural competence. This opportunity can additionally give students the necessary skills in order to think and act globally in our interconnected world. However, upon reentry, students are faced with various obstacles that can either make or break their reentry experiences. These challenges can ultimately determine their ability to comprehend and utilize these skills obtained from studying abroad. As international offices heavily prepare students pre-departure, reentry resources and programming to help students comprehend their experiences have been neglected due to their voluntary participation.

Using a qualitative case study research design, I conducted 28 one-on-one, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews at two universities in the United States. The research ultimately revealed that students who exerted high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy were more prone to seek out and connect with their international offices upon reentry. Furthermore, these students were more likely to obtain opportunities to work with and in their international office heavily strengthening their reentry and intercultural competence. The research also showed that students who were not active in seeking out the voluntary resources and programming were less satisfied with their reentry and study abroad experience. Additionally, these students felt their international office was at a disservice to them.

The research offers detailed insight into the affective, cognitive and behavioral components sojourners go through during their reentry and how they coped throughout these processes. The research also gives insight into the specific role and inner workings of two international offices helping give insight and bring rational to their reentry efforts, resources and programming. Moreover the research addressed the current obstacles each international office face with reentry.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must acknowledge and thank my advisor, Fengshu Liu. Working with her has helped me truly comprehend and understand the fundamentals of qualitative research. Her willingness to listen, support and encourage me throughout this process has been invaluable and a true instrument to my constant improvement. This thesis would not have been made possible without her assistance and great insight throughout this past year. Thank you!

I must also thank both the staff and students that took time out of their busy schedules to take part in my research. For without them, this thesis would not have come to fruition. Additionally, I am eternally grateful to both international offices for welcoming me with open arms and making me feel right at home during my fieldwork. Thank you for your patience, help and great support throughout this period; I truly appreciate it!

Last but not least, I must thank all my friends and family who have made this all possible. I cannot thank you enough for all your love, support and help throughout this master's program. Thank you for all the brainstorming sessions and much needed coffee breaks these past two years. Thank you for just listening to me; I wouldn't be where I am today without all your love and support. You have all made this thesis and master's degree attainable.

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.”

-Jane Howard

“A master can tell you he expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectations.”

-Patricia Neal

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Acronyms

ACE	American Council on Education
IIE	Institute of International Education
NAFSA	National Association of International Educators
OIE	Office of International Education
SIT	School for International Training
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

As published in the 2015 *Open Doors Annual Report* (Institute of International Education, 2015), 304,467 U.S. college and university students studied abroad for academic credit during the 2013/2014 academic year. This current statistic is at an all-time high and as trends have shown, study abroad is becoming integrated into more students' academic careers. These statistics can be reflected on the influence of globalization and the interconnectedness of our world. Recently, international educators and stakeholders have utilized study abroad as a means for creating global thinking in our competitive and internationalized world. Additionally, there has been a sweeping movement for students in the United States to think and act globally and study abroad can be used as a tool to help students achieve these goals (Stearns, 2009).

At this moment, college and university students in the United States are being advised from their international offices to study abroad. One of the main focuses international offices highlight about studying abroad is that it is an opportunity to develop their intercultural skills, ultimately helping them obtain academic, personal and career goals in which participation in study abroad programs can offer its participants.

Study abroad educators often assert that one of the goals of study abroad is to train future global leaders to be more effective, respectful of other cultures and political and economic systems, and willing to take a stand for the world's welfare, not just what benefits a specific country (Dwyer & Peters, 2012).

Specifically, intercultural competence understood as the cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics acquired through study abroad that can further support effective and appropriate interaction in various cultural frameworks. These goals have recently been defined by researchers as intercultural competence, a concept and skill many international educators are exerting effort on to help their students view study abroad as a lifelong process (Bennett, 2011). Moreover, when students are properly advised and offered adequate resources, intercultural competence can be a cultural instrument international educators can help students comprehend and put into practice before, during and after their study abroad has ended (La Brack, 1993).

With study abroad participation at an all-time high, international offices around the United States are advising thousands of perspective students pre-departure, however study abroad does not end when students return home. Reentry in fact is also an important part of the study abroad process as students reenter their colleges and universities campuses with a new found international perspective and knowledge they have acquired from abroad. Colleges and universities who send students abroad are facing challenges as the phenomenon of reentry has recently been recognized and acknowledged as a crucial and important stage of the study abroad process.

Research on study abroad has shown that we may gain several new skills and perspectives as a result of our experiences overseas, but when we are having a hard time readjusting to life back home, these can sometimes seem like a liability (Citron and Mendelson, 2005).

Students' reentry into the college and university system upon completion of study abroad is heavily reflective of the efforts, resources and programming made available from their home, colleges and universities' international offices. In order for students to get the most out of their study abroad experience and continue to develop and use their acquired intercultural competence obtained from study abroad, adequate resources from international offices must be made available to study abroad returnees in relation to their reverse culture shock¹. Furthermore, when returning back to the United States, experiencing some form of reverse culture shock during the reentry period is quite normal, if not experienced by most study abroad students. Leaving the students' host-country, their new friends and the diverse culture that they have grown accustomed to can make the reentry home a difficult and complicated process (The University of Iowa, 2016). Having an effective reentry system with initial reentry resources and programming enabling students to reflect on their experiences abroad (as seen in the attached photograph) can help optimize study abroad returnees experiences and further put their acquired intercultural skills and competence into practice both in and out of the classroom.

¹ Reverse culture shock is the initial experience suffered by some people after spending a given period of time abroad. Reverse culture shock works in conjunction with a students' reentry into the college or university system upon studying abroad (La Brack, 2003).



[Students reflect at a reentry workshop hosted by WMU Study Abroad in August 2015.]
Photo Courtesy of Western Michigan University – Study Abroad.

1.2 Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

Reentry can be an emotional and tiring time as students return home with a set of new international skills, perspectives and knowledge acquired from abroad. Upon returning home, these students are ultimately forced to readapt to their previous lifestyles as if they never left, which can lead to students feeling isolated and lost. As students face these problems head on, proper resources, guidance and support from their international offices is crucial to their success. In addition, as the concept of reentry has been recently legitimized as an adequate part of the study abroad process, the *purpose of this study is to explore the reentry efforts international offices are making for their returning students and how these efforts have helped students during this significant transition period, post-study abroad.*

Collecting qualitative data in the field through in-person interviews was done purposely to help explore the phenomenon of reentry itself and the reentry efforts, resources and programming international offices are making for their returning students. Specifically, the interviews were used to understand how these efforts have helped students during their significant transition period, post-study abroad from both the perspective of returning students as well as from the international offices perspective. The four **research questions** listed

below were developed to help guide this research project with the overall goal of helping to uncover the link between reentry efforts, resources and programming and the specific relationship to the reentry transition study abroad students experience, post-study abroad.

1. How do study abroad participants cope with reentry upon returning from their study abroad programs?
2. What efforts are being made by the university international offices to help students with their reentry transition?
3. What experience do international offices have in helping their reentry students?
4. How do study abroad participants perceive and experience these efforts?

1.3 Definitions of Key Terms

1.3.1 Study Abroad

Studying abroad as defined by *BBC News* (2000), is the act of a student pursuing educational opportunities and experiences in a foreign country. This can include students at the primary, secondary and post-secondary level.

In this study, the term study abroad will be defined and conceptualized as American college or university students who have taken part in a typical study abroad program. A typical study abroad program is defined as spending a minimum of a semester or year spent studying abroad in a foreign country (StudyAbroad.com, 2016).

1.3.2 Reentry

The term reentry can be seen under a plethora of different given names across the array of literature on the topic. Some common alternative names include: cross-cultural reentry, repatriation, re-entry shock and reverse culture shock. Although the terms vary in name, the definitions are all the same. The term reentry can be defined as the process of returning home and assimilating back into your previous routines after spending a given amount of time abroad (World Learning, 2008).

Throughout this research, the term reentry will follow the previously defined study abroad term in which American college or university students spent a semester or year studying in a

foreign country. The term will work cohesively throughout the research with the efforts, resources and programming from the students' international offices which will both be defined below.

1.3.3 The Office of International Education

Across many U.S. college and university campuses, there is an office that works directly with students in order to prepare them for various educational opportunities in foreign countries. The Office of International Education (OIE), also works with incoming exchange and degree seeking international students.

As stated by The University of Rhode Island (2016), the OIE works diligently to promote the globalization of education and the development of students' intercultural competence through educational opportunities in a diverse variety of global environments. An OIE can provide students with various opportunities to spend a given amount of time abroad including: semester or year-long study abroad programs, short-term study abroad programs and faculty-led short-term study abroad programs.

In addition to helping students' go abroad, an OIE works directly with foreign students coming to study at their college or university. The OIE also helps assist faculty with preparation to help lead short-term study abroad programs. Other responsibilities an international office has can include many of the following: the creation and development of international education agreements, student scholarships, the collection of global education empirical data, reentry resources, programming etc.

1.3.4 Office of International Education Directors and Advisors

In this study, staff that work within the OIE were interviewed in order to better understand the inner workings and daily operations of an OIE. The interviews were also utilized as a way to explore the reentry efforts, resources and programming made available to their reentry students.

An OIE is comprised of various jobs including directors and study abroad advisors. These staff members often work directly with the students who partake in traditional study abroad

programs. These staff members develop study abroad programs and both recruit and prepare students to live and study in a foreign country. Their positions are often administrative with tasks related to their programs and the management of the OIE. These tasks can include: site visits, the development of contracts, study abroad advising sessions, advising students throughout the pre-departure process, creating and implementing reentry resources, programming for their returning students, etc.

1.3.5 Reentry Efforts, Resources and Programming

As previously defined, reentry is the process of returning home from a semester or year abroad. As an international office works meticulously to prepare their students for their study abroad experience, many international offices have and are creating reentry efforts, resources and programming for their study abroad students. The creation of these resources has been a way for the international office to help students with their initial reentry and give them guidance and support in order to keep developing their intercultural competence. These efforts, resources and programming can include: reentry welcome back parties and mixers, reentry workshops, study abroad photo contests, volunteering opportunities, one-on-one advising sessions, etc. An example of a reentry resource can be seen in the attached picture on page 3. In the picture, students were reflecting on and writing down their experiences from their semesters abroad. This resource was facilitated by the students' international office and study abroad advisors who helped prepare them for the study abroad experience.

The efforts, resources and programming that an international office creates for their students can be seen as an opportunity for students to constructively unpack and make sense of their time abroad, helping bring the process full-circle. Additionally, these efforts, resources and programming can help students further their intercultural competence by promoting education and career endeavors in a global perspective.

1.4 The Rational and Significance of the Study

Research on reentry has rarely examined the relationship between reentry resources and efforts allotted from international offices and its impact on their students, particularly as students themselves have expressed interest in these efforts. The purpose of this study is to explore the reentry efforts international offices are making for their returning students and how these efforts have helped students during this significant transition period, post-study abroad from the perspective of returning students as well as from the international offices perspective. This study hopes to uncover the link between reentry efforts, resources and programming and the reentry transition of study abroad students. Additionally, this study will heavily rely on the perceptions, thoughts and experiences from returning study abroad participants helping display their integration and reentry aligned with their knowledge and understanding of their acquired intercultural competence. This study is designed to contribute to the knowledge stock on reentry; specifically in the key role international offices can play when helping advice and allocate resources for returning students during their transitional period. Furthermore, this study aims to address the difficulties international offices face when implementing reentry resources and programming for their students.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study covers two four-year universities located in the United States in the state of Wisconsin following a qualitative, case study design. With the focus of this research on two specific universities and their respected international offices, the research and data may not be comprehensive enough to make generalizations in a broader context on the subject of reentry. The research and data lack the positivistic viewpoint associated with reentry as the data has been translated and decoded through qualitative methods by the researcher. Moreover, the given time and logistical issues presented did not allow for more universities to be included in the research. Nonetheless, the designed case study allowed for rich data to be collected and presented in this thesis, ultimately helping give a conceptual framework for what efforts and resources two well-established international offices are doing for their study abroad students, post-study abroad. Moreover, the case study allowed for the opportunity to explore and present the unique study abroad and reentry stories, experiences and perceptions from the students themselves, helping tell a one of a kind story.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis has been organized into five separate chapters. The first chapter of the thesis provides an introduction and background to the study. Chapter two begins with a review of the existing body of literature on study abroad and the phenomenon of reentry. The chapter then describes the theoretical frameworks and perspectives that will help guide and make sense of the analysis of the data collected. Chapter three presents the methodology and methods employed throughout this study. The chapter goes into specific details on the research decisions and techniques including qualitative research, semi-structured interviews as well as a recount and reflection of the fieldwork preparations, processes and experiences while collecting data at both universities. Chapter four presents an analytical presentation and discussion of the findings collected in the field. The last chapter; chapter five, brings the thesis to a conclusion with general responses to the research questions that helped guide the research through its entirety. The chapter then concludes with my recommendations and final thoughts.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Study abroad has been viewed as an eye opening, exciting and thrilling time as well as a rite of passage for many university and college students in the United States (Institute of International Education, 2014). According to Brewer and Cunningham (2010), the first reported study abroad participation from American students was in 1923 from the University of Delaware. At the time, known as Delaware College, eight students embarked on an exchange program to France with the purpose of enhancing their studies and giving them a global perspective that could be incorporated into both their academic and professional endeavors.

As study abroad has become modernized, it has been thought of and described as a fun add-on during the university and college experience. According to the Institute of International Education (2014), study abroad has commonly been described as being light and fun with little to no relevance to academic study. It is widely argued that the study abroad experience should not be viewed as an extended vacation or a lightweight academic semester. Currently, many top leading organizations like the American Council on Education (ACE), NAFSA²: Association of International Educators (NAFSA), the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the School for International Training: SIT Study Abroad (SIT) are working diligently to redefine the misleading and inaccurate definition of study abroad in the United States. This has been the first tactic of redefining what it should mean to study abroad in today's dynamic, interconnected and globalized world.

Over the past decade, study abroad and its legitimacy has changed drastically in comparison to its early days. Now, as we are living in an interconnected world, study abroad has been utilized as a tool for helping create global thinking in our competitive and internationalized world. The main goal of a study abroad program is to help train and prepare future global leaders to be more effective and efficient than previous generations (Dwyer & Peters, 2012). Additionally, since the inauguration of study abroad, there has been a sweeping movement for

² Formerly known as National Association of Foreign Study Advisers

students in the United States to think and act globally (Stearns, 2009). Furthermore, to anyone in the field of international education, the benefits of study abroad are self-explanatory, but the difficult task has been translating those benefits to the current generation of students on college and university campuses throughout the United States. With the previous belief that studying abroad will simply “change your life”, no specific data was available to back this claim.

Researchers have now started to re-evaluate study abroad and have conducted surveys and case studies to straightforwardly reveal the benefits of participation in exchange programs. As stated by Brewer and Cunningham (2010), a major objective of sending students abroad is the goal of developing an internationalized higher education experience that students can carry with them after graduation. Current research and trends have helped increase the number of students who study abroad. Results have shown that study abroad provides personal growth, intercultural development, education and career attainment and internship opportunities (Dwyer & Peters, 2012). As study abroad has been redefined, practitioners and stakeholders have begun to focus on study abroad as a holistic process, where participants change and grow throughout the various stages of study abroad including the pre-departure, during and post-departure processes (La Brack, 1999).

As the research on the specific benefits of study abroad have been addressed and the redefined definition of present day study abroad has been brought up to date; the current literature on the best reentry practices within the field of international education varies drastically. Reentry resources and toolkits have been created by leading international education agencies as well as empirical findings and research on best reentry practices to implore in an international office. However, there has yet to be a uniformed practice put into policy helping legitimize reentry as part of the study abroad process. Additionally, the reentry field itself is significantly disjointed with the focus on the singular characteristics and aspects of reentry including the affective, behavioral and cognitive components of reentry (Szkudlarek, 2009). Both of these components have made it difficult to view study abroad as a process, as well as understanding the importance of reentry resources and programming and their significance to the study abroad process.

This review of literature will be utilized as a reference point for the findings of the research at hand. Furthermore, it will focus on the key components of study abroad in alignment with this specific study. There will be emphasis on the reentry processes that have been developed and

theorized by various researchers in this field. Moreover, this chapter will focus on current reentry resources and programming that have been designed in relation to the study abroad processes for the utilization of best reentry practices within international offices in the United States.

2.2 Reentry Processes

There have been numerous theories and models created to conceptualize the reentry transition sojourners go through during their reentry transitions back to their home country. The body of literature that currently exists varies greatly in reflection of the various processes sojourners go through. The literature can be broken down into three specific concepts including the affective, cognitive and behavioral changes sojourners can go through during their reentry transitional experiences. This section will go through the various theories and models that have been created to conceptualize and theorize the phenomenon of post-study abroad reentry.

As previously addressed and defined, the term reentry has been changed and adapted into various terms across the array of literature on the subject with cross-cultural reentry, repatriation, re-entry shock and reverse culture shock being four of the most prominent. Although the terms vary, the definition is the same. Reentry is the process of returning home and assimilating back into your previous routines after spending a given amount of time abroad (World Learning, 2008). For this research, the term reentry will specifically be operated with only study abroad reentry in which the participants spent at least one semester abroad. Additionally, the research will focus specifically on American students reentering back to the United States after their semesters abroad in various foreign countries. Operationalizing this term and focusing specifically on American students who spent a minimum of one semester abroad will help keep the research aligned and consistent throughout its entirety.

2.2.1 Affective Components

The first component to be introduced related to study abroad reentry are the affective components sojourners go through during their reentry. Specifically, this component is most focused on the psychological wellbeing of the sojourners. The affective components are most reflective of the sojourners feelings, emotions and responses in reference to their reentry back

to their home country (Szkudlarek, 2009). The psychological consequences of reentry have been written and theorized by many researchers and it has been reported that as many as 70% of study abroad participants experience significant discomforts during their reentry transitional period; often more severe than the previous processes of study abroad (Adler, 1981; Baughn, 1995; Chamove & Soeterik, 2006; Linehan & Scullion, 2002; Martin, 1984). According to Furukawa (1997), one of the main reasons students experience difficulties during their reentry is from the abrupt change of environment and unpreparedness for the reentry process.

John Gullahorn and Jean Gullahorn created one of the most respected and significant theories of the reentry process. They were some of the first researchers that developed and presented the concept of reentry in 1963 with a specific focus on the specific stages and well-being of returning study abroad students from their studies overseas. Their model was adapted from both Oberg's (1960) research on culture shock and the Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve Adjustment Hypothesis theory seen in figure 2.1. Both pioneered a decade earlier, Oberg and Lysgaard first addressed the four stages of culture shock including: honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment and mastery. John and Jean Gullahorn's research and development of both Oberg's and Lysgaard's work prompted them to create an updated model. The W-Curve Hypothesis Model encompassed and addressed five different stages of reentry participants go through (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963).

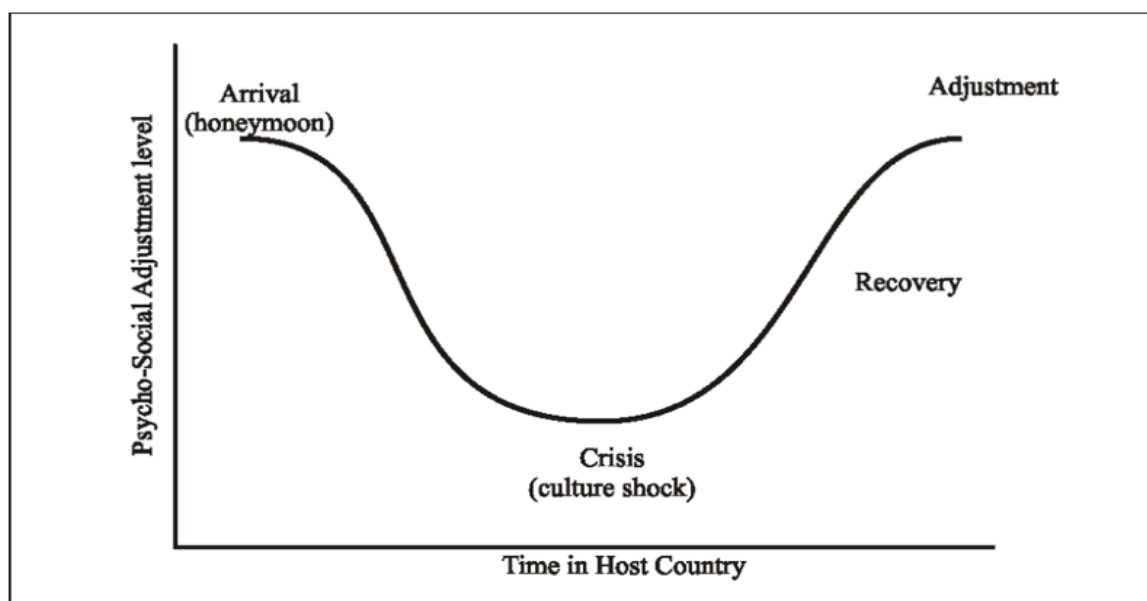


Figure 2.1. U-Curve of Cultural Adjustment

Source: Black, J.S. & Mendenhall, M. (1990). Cross-cultural training effectiveness: A review and a theoretical framework for future research. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 291-317

Within the updated W-Curve Hypothesis Model seen in figure 2.2, it was proposed that students go through an additional stage during their reentry that was not presented in the previous U-curve Adjustment Hypothesis. The updated framework includes the following stages: (1) honeymoon, the excitement of returning back to their home country, colleges and universities, friends and families; (2) culture shock, the difficulty of navigating through a new setting and the withdrawal of interest from friends and family; (3) initial adjustment, students adapt to their environment; (4) mental isolation, the belief that people do not understand their experiences abroad; (5) acceptance & integration, the ability to feel at home again. The W-Curve Hypothesis Model was developed to reflect the initial model students go through during their semester abroad and reapplied and conceptualized specifically for reentry to address the importance of adapting to a new environment. It was additionally created to highlight that sojourners transition at different paces as well as a way to measure the successfulness of their reentry.

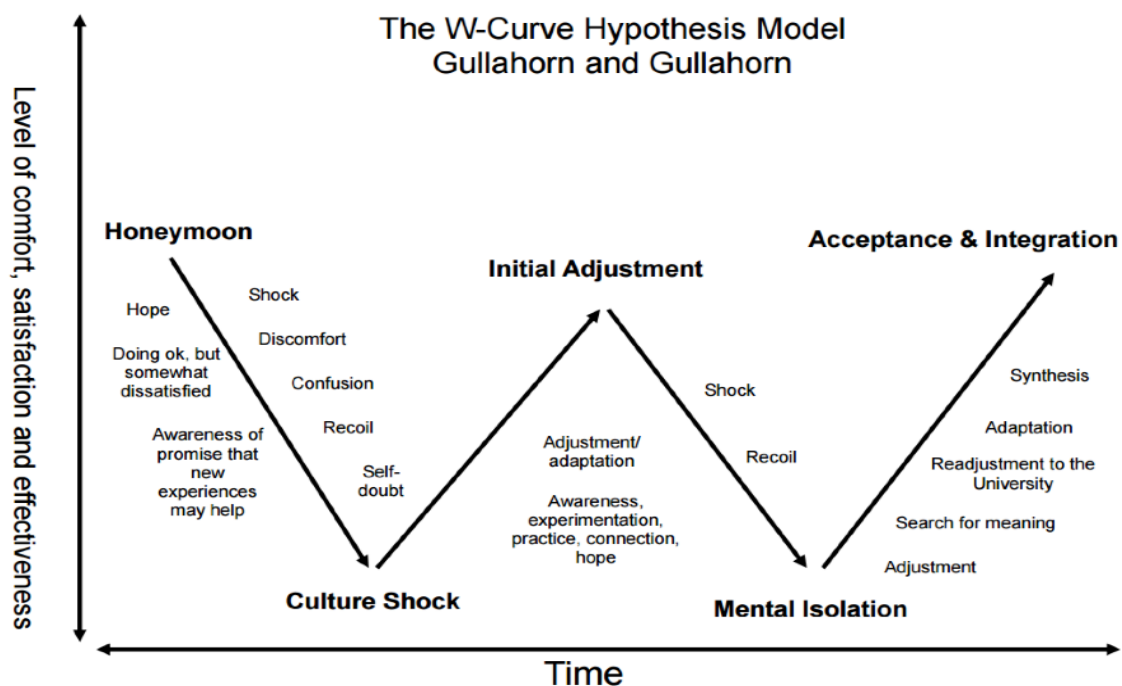


Figure 2.2. The W-Curve Hypothesis Model

Source: Hoffenburger, K., Mosier, R., & Stokes, B. (1999). Transition experience. In J.H. Schuh (Ed.), Education programming and student learning in college and university residence halls. Columbus, OH: ACUHO-I

2.2.2 Cognitive Components

In relation to the first set of affective theories that have helped give theoretical insight into the psychological wellbeing of students throughout their reentry, the cognitive components of reentry have been mostly classified with the sojourners expectations and identity of self. Both the Expectations Model and Cultural Identity Model heavily rely on the student's pre-entry expectations and its effect on their reentry. Both theories will be looked at closely in the next sections.

2.2.3 Expectations Model

Theorists have explored the expectations and realities of sojourners going through their reentry transitions. Specifically, there has been prevalent focus on the pre-reentry expectations and its relation to their transition back. These theorists have used expectation models to measure and compare the way a reentry student evaluates their study abroad experience based off of their pre-reentry expectations (Martin, Bradford & Rorhlich, 1995). These researchers refer to the Expectancy Value Model³ in psychological research that alludes to the satisfaction of expectations of students that leads to a positive evaluation of their study abroad experience, ultimately leading to a successful reentry (Furnham, 1988). In opposition of the above model, if students experience negative evaluations throughout the reentry process, this can lead to an unsuccessful reentry (Cochrane, 1983). The researchers themselves have added to the expectation models by the introduction of both negative and positive violations. Positive violations can occur when students' expectations are surpassed and their reentry is better than expected.

Other researchers have used the expectations model to examine how expectations align with sojourners realities. Christofi and Thompson (2007) addressed this phenomenon with their research on the reentry of students upon their semester abroad. Their research was employed through a phenomenological lens where they interviewed students on their expectations and

³ The Expectancy Value Model refers to the theory that there are expectations, values and beliefs that affect our behavior (Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele 1998).

the reality of their transition home. The researchers conclude their study with the assumption that the students' expectations play a crucial role in the ability to successfully reentry. Participants who had a difficult transition were met with frustration and disappointment when reentering. This was mainly due to their changes within themselves and the lack of change at home, ultimately making them feel isolated.

2.2.4 Cultural Identity Model

The Cultural Identity Model is another framework developed by researchers within the cognitive field of reentry research. Within this model, researchers focus on the identity change within sojourners upon returning home from their semesters abroad. Researchers working with this specific model firmly believe that participants of study abroad programs go through a transition of self and self-awareness. This transition highly influences their cultural identity upon returning home and going through their reentry transitional processes.

Sussman (2002), developed a framework that encompasses four identity changes participants can be placed in including: subtractive, additive, affirmative and intercultural. The four areas of identity change come as a result of the behavioral and social mannerisms of participants while abroad and their ability to transform the individual upon reentry. The study itself found strong relationships between cultural identity strength and its ability to cause reentry distress among its participants. Specifically, American students who went through high levels of distress during the reentry transitional period felt most alienated from their American identity. On the other hand, participants who strongly identify with their American culture did not express great distress during their reentry transitional period.

Building off of Sussman, Cox (2004) adapted his study and presented four new patterns of intercultural identity formation including: home-favored, host-favored, integrated and disintegrated. Cox proposed that sojourners with the least amount of distresses when reentering were from the integrated group. In this specific group, sojourners immersed themselves in their host-country while keeping a strong sense of cultural identity.

2.2.5 Social Cognitive Theory and Reentry

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory conceived how cognitive, behavioral, personal and environmental factors help shape our motivations and actions (Crothers, Hughes & Morine,

2008). Specifically, social cognitive theory asserts that individuals do not respond solely to their environmental influences, but instead they seek out to interpret information themselves (Nevid, 2009). Furthermore, it is alluded that individuals are the contributors of their own motivations and success (Bandura, 1999).

As social cognitive theory can be placed within a wide array of themes, the most pertinent aspect of social cognitive theory is the belief that individuals are the creators of their own success. Specifically, the student populations in this research are in the driver's seat and although they need assistance when going through reentry, they must be the most active participants in order to reenter at the level they want and/or desire. Additionally, when study abroad students come home they are forced to reenter and unpack their experience. How they make sense of that experience and deal with their reentry transition is reliant on their levels of motivation and self-efficacy.

Bandura states that self-efficacy is the degree at which an individual takes action to deal with and manage their given situation (Bandura, 1995). Lundenburg (2011) simply states that self-efficacy can be thought of as a task-specific version of self-confidence and self-worth.

Collectively, social cognitive theory is the belief that people perform to the level they feel they are capable of achieving (Bandura, 1977). The social cognitive theory framework can specifically be operationalized into three specific components including: magnitude, strength and generality.

- ✓ **Self-efficacy magnitude** refers to the level of difficulty an individual personally feels in reference to the task given to them.
- ✓ **Self-efficacy strength** refers to the level of their personal power in relation to the way they will perform at the given task.
- ✓ **Self-efficacy generality** refers to the level of confidence and assurance an individual has that he or she can utilize what they've learned and achieved from the task at hand and apply it to their next task.

2.3 Behavioral Components

The final component within reentry frameworks and research are the behavioral components sojourners go through. The behavioral components within reentry research were developed in relation to the Cultural Learning Theory (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). It is proposed that in alignment with a student's personal transformation, they learn and internalize a new set of behavioral responses they developed from their host-country. In conjunction with these new behavioral components they have developed, they must reenter to their home country and are expected to continue along the same path they were on, pre-departure. Specifically, sojourners have to become accustomed to their old routines that once felt normal with a new cultural lens that make them question their surroundings.

Theorists believe that proper attention must be given to this behavioral change before students go through during the reentry transitional period. In order to successfully adapt to their home country, students must be aware of the changes that will occur throughout reentry in order to acknowledge and act on these abrupt cultural changes (Brabant, Palmer & Gramling, 1990). Theorists have discussed to which level should students' reentry with their new set of behaviors acquired from abroad in conjunction with their pre-departure behaviors in order to reenter with the least amount of stress. Research on this component varies and there has been limited studies conducted which have found a common framework to implement for re-adaptation upon reentry. Specifically, Sussman's (2002) research suggests behavioral adaptation and reentry are not a part of the reentry process. These findings have brought into question the reliability of the Cultural Learning Theory.

2.4 Study Abroad Demographics and Variables Research in Present Day Study Abroad in the United States

Theorists have also been cognizant of the specific student populations and demographics that make up current study abroad participation throughout colleges and universities across the United States. Studies have been conducted in order to better make sense of reentry and its relationship to various variables including: gender, academics, anxiety and depression and relationships. These are only a few of the characteristics that have been studied, but will be the main focus as they pertain most to the specific study at hand.

In addition to the characteristics of present day study abroad, it is necessary to explore the current demographics of study abroad participation among U.S. college and university students. As shown in figure 2.3, 304,467 U.S. college and university students studied abroad for academic credit during the 2013/2014 academic year. Presently, this total equates to the highest percentage of study abroad involvement to date. Of this total, 65.3% were female in comparison to 34.7% being male. Additionally, 74.3% were white. Academically as seen in figure 2.4, 22.6% of students who studied abroad were studying with in the science, technology, engineer and mathematics (STEM) fields followed by 19.6% being business and management and 18.7% in the social sciences (Institute of International Education, 2015).

U.S. STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS 1989/90 – 2013/14

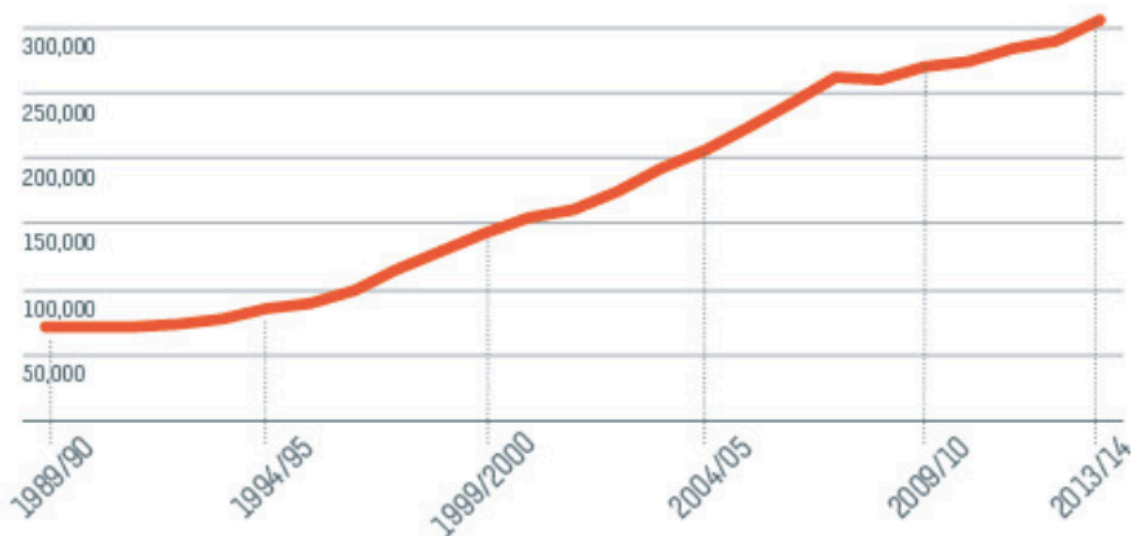


Figure 2.3. U.S. Study Abroad Students 1989/90 – 2013/14

Source: Institute of International Education. (2015). Open Doors Data: U.S. Study Abroad.

Retrieved from: <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/US-Study-Abroad/Infographic>

TOP FIVE MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS



Figure 2.4. Top Five Major Fields of Study of U.S. Study Abroad Students

Source: Institute of International Education. (2015). Open Doors Data: U.S. Study Abroad.

Retrieved from: <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/US-Study-Abroad/Infographic>

Researchers Wielkiewicz and Turkowski (2010) examined the effects of study abroad on a wide array of variables including: anxiety and depression, relationships, grades, alcohol consumption and the feelings of reentry by comparing a large sample of students within two groups including a group of students who had recently returned and were going through the reentry process and another group who had not studied abroad. The researchers' study found that the students who studied abroad and obtained higher grades were more critical of their home country in relation to the development of their intercultural competence. It was also discovered that these students were more focused on their studies upon reentry. Additionally, they found that female participants expressed more anxiety and depression in relation to study abroad in comparison to male participants. They also discovered that study abroad does not lead to the end of relationships. The researchers concluded that students going through reentry would benefit tremendously from having reentry opportunities developed for them helping

them to debrief and unpack their experience. Additionally, they suggest that students should debrief in groups in order to better facilitate their communicable implications. By working in groups with similar students, they can better build a sense of community that might seem foreign to them from those that did not study abroad.

2.5 Reentry Resources, Practices, Programming and Research

The phenomenon of reentry has been explored by numerous researchers in collaboration with the development of frameworks conceptualized by reentry theorists. Most literature on reentry has mainly been focused on the sojourners reentry. There has been little research conducted recently on the relationship of reentry practices and programming and their connection to the students themselves. Furthermore, the limited array of research lacks empirical backing and can only be viewed as suggestions rather than formal recommendations to international offices can implement in their offices (Szkudlare, 2009). Although there has not been a magnitude of studies that have explored this relationship, there have been various publications produced from leading study abroad organizations that have listed and detailed reentry best practices that international offices can implore for use in their offices. Furthermore, these leading organizations have created a vast amount of material for students and their parents.

2.5.1 Reentry Toolkits and Resources to Help Students Connect their Experiences Abroad

Two of the leading study abroad organizations in the United States that have created reentry toolkits that can be compartmentalized and used within international offices come from NAFSA and SIT. NAFSA (2005), the leading international education organization for American education abroad created a manual that international offices can adapt for use in their offices with their reentry study abroad populations. Within the manual, NAFSA developed four goals and objectives for reentry programming including: (1) assist students in their reentry to their home culture and to their academic life; (2) help students both reflect and communicate their study abroad experience; (3) create opportunities for students to help continue their international exposure through international experiences on campus and in the community; and (4) to help students utilize study abroad with their future career endeavors (NAFSA, 2005).

SIT (2008) also developed a reentry toolkit similar to that of the NAFSA manual that can be unpacked and used in international offices as well. The objective of the *After Study Abroad – A Toolkit for Returning Students* is for international educators to help returning students make the most out of their experience through helping them connect the experience through various opportunities (World Learning, 2008). The toolkit focuses on defining reentry as well as addressing the personal and emotional aspects of reentry. It also addresses the importance of civic and social engagement upon reentry as well as academic reentry and utilizing your study abroad experience with career endeavors. All of these components of the toolkit are a way to help the continuation of study abroad, ultimately bringing everything full circle.

In addition to both the NAFSA and SIT reentry toolkits, NAFSA has also created the reference booklet entitled: *What Parents Need to Know!* (Hulstrand, 2007), as a resource to help parents throughout their child's study abroad process. Specifically, they focus on reverse culture shock (reentry) and offer advice on ways to better facilitate their child's reentry transitional experience.

As with culture shock, reverse culture shock varies a great deal from student to student. Some students are completely happy, even relieved to be home again, and experience very little if any reverse culture shock. Others may find it extremely difficult to get back into their routine, and may take a long time to readjust. It depends a lot on the student, and the nature and length of the experience abroad, as well as other factors (Hulstrand, 2007).

In the booklet, they have a specific section about managing expectations after study abroad, which gives three specific tips for parents in order for them to properly help their children through their reentry transitional experience. These tips include: (1) expect change, and expect the change to be positive, (2) expect that your child may take a while to readjust to life at home, (3) acknowledge and appreciate the tremendous changes your child may have gone through since he left home. With these three key points, NAFSA encourages parents to connect with their children in alignment with the changes from the experience. Coincidentally, NAFSA informs parents of the opportunities and resources that may be available to their children at their international offices.

In this period too, the office of international abroad or international education on your child's home campus can be helpful. Study abroad professionals are very familiar with

the difficulties of reentry: some programs offer workshops, seminars, or other planned activities for returning students that can help ease their transition (Hulstrand, 2007).

As the booklet was created to help parents, especially with the initial reentry, La Brack (1999) has stated that opportunities for students to get involved and connect their experience to their academic and career endeavors is best achieved through reentry programming and resources from international offices. La Brack, a present day leading researcher in the field of reentry has written various publications on cultural learning through study abroad and the importance of connecting the opportunity for a holistic experience. La Brack has focused specifically on the linkage of pre-departure orientation and post-study abroad reentry. La Brack notes that many international offices focus mainly on pre-departure orientation; helping to simply get their students abroad, leaving reentry as an afterthought.

Among study-abroad professionals, there is a fundamental failure to provide a linkage between orientation and reentry. The majority of programs are currently conducted as though they existed in a vacuum, separate from the rest of participants' lives, be they students in the midst of their academic careers or businesspeople on the way to overseas assignments. For students, the year abroad is seen, probably unconsciously, as a stage of development, an activity which has a life span of its own, beginning when the individual enters the foreign milieu and ending with the return home (La Brack, 1999).

La Brack notes that there are a lot of reasons to look forward to returning home, but psychological, social and cultural changes can make the transition difficult for returnees. Additionally, these changes can come with surprise when not properly addressed before returning home. In order to help bridge the gap between pre-departure orientation and post-study abroad reentry, international offices need to focus on best practices in order to help their students' reenter.

To help assist with this missing link, La Brack conceptualized all these components into a framework for students to utilize during their reentry transitional periods. The framework entitled the *5Rs of Cultural Change* as seen in figure 2.3, focuses on the changes within self and society and how students can better navigate and unpack their experiences from abroad while ultimately increasing their intercultural competence (La Brack, 2012).

In this newly developed framework, La Brack focuses on the change of routines, reactions, roles, relationships and the reflections students face upon reentry and how people may respond to their cultural change. Students can utilize this framework to better understand and be prepared for the cultural change they will experience during their reentry and how to properly adjust to and respond to these cultural changes at their desired levels. Furthermore, La Brack states that the framework was developed to manage reentry changes in order to move throughout the specific reentry transitions in a smoother manner than previous generations. La Brack also gives a detailed account for ways international offices can incorporate the 5RS of Cultural Change into their reentry efforts, resources and programming. La Brack gives insight into the key talking points for the 5Rs and examples of exercises international offices can prepare for each stage of the 5Rs. These include examples of how people may respond and examples of the “what now”. Some examples include: creating new routines, identifying people who will be able to help with your transition and talk about your experience with people who are willing and able to listen to you.

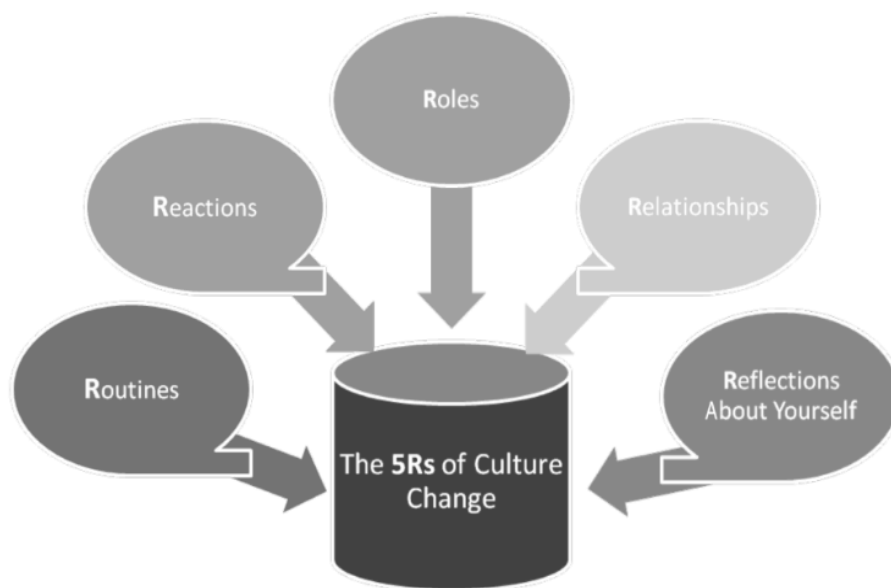


Figure 2.3. The 5Rs of Cultural Change

Source: La Brack, B. (2012). *Different Days – Different Ways: Considering Cultural Transitions Through the Lens of Daily Activities*. In K. Berardo and D. Deardorff, *Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Strategies*, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing

2.5.2 Multicultural Counseling

Research on multicultural counseling has been conducted to explore and examine the specific roles counselors and study abroad professionals can utilize in order to help their students make the most out of their study abroad experiences and their reentry transitions, ultimately connecting the process. Furthermore, NAFSA (Hulstrand, 2007) encourages parents to inform their children to seek out counselor opportunities at either their international office or their campus counseling services. Atkinson and Hackett (1998) developed a set of best counseling practices that can be put to use when working with reentry student populations. They state that the main role and objective of the counselor or study abroad professional is to have an understanding of the various levels their students will be at when meeting with them. This means they must be well-versed and knowledgeable about the various stages of reentry in order to encourage the student to effectively communicate their experience with the end goal of creating a positive and enriching outlet for the student. Atkinson and Hackett (1998) state that the specific role of the counselor and study abroad professional is to encompass all of the following in order to help their students properly debrief, including: encourage positive reflections, understand feelings, challenge negative self-perception and to create a positive and comfortable working environment where the student is in control allowing the counselor to understand the student and help where needed.

Gaw (1999) built up the research on multicultural counseling and conducted research on reentry and its relationship with returning study abroad students and their willingness to use on campus resources to help with them with their reentry transitional process. In his research, he also set out to uncover the main problems students have when returning from their semesters abroad. Collectively, some of the main problems students voiced were feelings of alienation, loneliness, social misunderstandings and insecurities when going through reentry. From these characteristics, Gaw (1999) found that students who experienced high levels of any of the previously mentioned characteristics during their reentry were surprisingly the least willing to utilize any on campus resources to better help them with their transition back. Gaw suggested that these students' reentry transitional experiences were made difficult in relationship to their feelings of alienation; loneliness, social misunderstandings and insecurities leaving students unable to reach out, as the services are voluntary.

2.6 Theoretical Framework of the Study and Summary

This research has been designed to explore reentry perceptions, thoughts and experiences from returning study abroad participants as well as the reentry efforts and resources allotted from their perspective international offices. Moreover, as the interviews with the student populations were developed to understand the students' motivations and rationales for studying abroad, as well as their experiences abroad and their reentry transitional experiences, it is best to operationalize and use the affective, cognitive and behavior components previously introduced to help guide this study through its course. By utilizing all three components, this study can focus on the psychological, social and cultural changes students experience when going through reentry and ultimately help explore and analyze their reentry transitions and the availability of reentry efforts and resources offered to them at their international offices.

The above literature review was strategically composed and structured with relevant theories, studies and empirical findings that are needed for better understanding the significance of change in participants within the phenomenon of reentry. The specific literature that has been selected has strong relevance to this present study and will be utilized in order to better make sense of and understand the findings that will be presented later. Collectively, this research has been designed as a case study to explore students' perceptions and reflections on their reentry and its relationship to the reentry efforts and resources being employed by international offices. As previously addressed, in order to make sense of and theorize the findings, this research will utilize and heavily rely on the affective, cognitive and behavioral components in order to understand and theorize the study abroad processes holistically.

The affective, cognitive and behavioral components of reentry will be explored in the findings section to help guide the study into better understanding the change of environment and self and the way returning students deal with these changes. Additionally, these components will help harbor in the importance of reentry resources and programming to help students better communicate and reflect on their study abroad experiences, dependent on the levels of their motivations and self-efficiency, ultimately helping the link the pre-departure and reentry and the view of study abroad as a holistic process. Moreover, the reentry toolkits that have been introduced in this section will help explore the reentry efforts, resources and

programming that are being utilized within both international offices. Furthermore, the toolkit recommendations from leading officials in international education will help to measure at what extent the efforts are being made by the university international offices to help students with their reentry transition and what experience the international offices have in helping their reentry students.

3 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, the research design and methodology for the study at hand will be presented. Specifically, this chapter will focus on and highlight the choices made throughout this research period. Moreover, this chapter will help bring rationale and understanding as to why the research was designed and carried out in its specific manner. Qualitative research and methodology literature will be utilized in this chapter to help define and give a point of reference to the various components within the research design and methodology section. Additionally, it will help to justify and make sense of the choices made from start to finish; helping hone in on the careful analysis done in order to develop and carry out this research design.

3.2 Research Design

Researchers who utilize qualitative research are the main creators of their research design. The researcher must see their study at different levels throughout its entirety. Additionally, they must decide on the specific processes in which they will carry out their research in order to complete the project (Maxwell, 1996). It is through these processes that the researcher will take action and conduct their research. Researchers must decide on the specific format in which they will conduct, operationalize and make sense of their design in order to successfully let it run its course. Moreover, the researcher must be in control and know when to stop the processes in order to make a justified analysis. This is most important during the data collection processes. Furthermore, a research design must be developed within qualitative research in order to successfully carry out and answer the specific research questions at hand.

3.3 Why a Qualitative Research Approach and a Case Study?

As previously addressed in the literature review, this research will be heavily faceted in descriptive participant communication reflective in the social cognitive realm. Therefore, this

study is best aligned with and guided by a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is exploratory research that helps researchers make sense of and bring understanding to the many reasons, opinions and motivations people have in reference to a given phenomenon. Qualitative research allows researchers to study things in their natural setting allowing them to make sense of the given phenomenon (Denis & Lincoln, 2005). Specifically, this type of research requires the researcher to be an active listener with his or her participants. In this format, the researcher must facilitate the interviews with open-ended questions allowing the participant to tell their individual and unique story; with the end goal of letting the data emerge from the thick, descriptive participant communication that has been collected.

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand (Spradley, 1979).

This study will be setup and administrated using a case study method. Using a case study method for this social science research design is the most appropriate lens to explore the determined research questions. Explicitly, the development of a case study framework was decided and implored with the main objective of helping highlight and focus on the reentry transitional period students go through, post-student abroad in conjunction to what international offices are doing to help students return, reenter and unpack their experiences abroad. A case study is a “research [that] involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Additionally, a case study method is ultimately preferred for this design as case studies are best used when researching an empirical topic in conjunction with uncovering “how” or “why” questions, both reflective in the determined research questions previously provided (Yin, 2013).

By focusing on the cultural transitional reentry processes of returning students, conducting a case study with interviews from the student returnees will not only be beneficial, but necessary and crucial. Moreover, interviews with international educators in the given international offices will be used as a tool to help uncover and explore their approach to reentry for their returning students during the crucial transitional time. Jointly, by employing a case study approach to this research design it will help to fully explore what higher educational institutions and international offices are doing to help their students cope with

reentry; ultimately helping showcase current tactics and efforts from international offices as well as the thoughts and perceptions of reentry from both the international offices and students themselves.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

In order to conduct qualitative research, data must be collected from the most appropriate channel(s) reflective of the developed research questions. The researcher has control as well as various decisions to make leading up to the development of their data collection methods. In qualitative research, researchers can explore their research questions through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observations. When developing this research design, the various fieldwork tactics were looked at carefully in order to figure out which method would be most plausible. With careful analysis, it became evident that semi-structured interviews with both the students and study abroad professionals would be the most appropriate channel in order to obtain rich and descriptive data for this research.

3.5 Semi-structured Interviews

As previously stated, qualitative research requires the researcher to be an active interviewer utilizing open-ended questions when interviewing participants. The decision to have semi-structured interviews as the main source of data collection for this study is heavily reflective of the importance of personal language as data to create an expressive story. Precisely, face-to-face interviews are most appropriate where depth of meaning is an important factor in the data collection process in order to obtain further insight and understanding to the phenomenon (Gillham 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

By formatting the interview guide with open-ended questions, the interviewee is allowed to reflect personally on the given questions. Interviews will also help interviewees to tell their personal stories, which will be beneficial in researching the phenomenon at hand. Thus, semi-structured interviews were decided as the main course of action needed to generate the most appropriate form of data to be collected in the field. Utilizing semi-structured interviews for this study allows the interviewer and interviewee to openly communicate, ultimately helping give thick descriptions to the specific questions. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews can allow interviewees to tell their unique stories.

Interview guides were created, reflective of the samples I would be interviewing which are shown in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. The interview guides were developed and tried several times by participants who had gone through the reentry transitional period as well as from individuals who have worked within international education. This tactic allowed me to edit and redevelop my research guide with the most appropriate and crucial questions related to the research questions. By carefully placing the questions in a theme related order, the questions allowed interviews to run its course in a smooth transitional, storytelling manner.

The interviews were conducted individually in a private room on both universities' campuses supplied by each international office. All the interviews have been audio-recorded and range in length from namely 30 minutes to an hour.

3.6 Research Site

In order to conduct this research in a case study format, two universities were required in order to carry out the interviews and research. Wanting to focus specifically on American students and their reentry transitional experiences after having studied abroad in a foreign country, two universities were needed in the United States to carry out the research. Logistically, it was most conducive to pick two universities that were in close proximity to each other. Additionally, two universities that had an established international office as well as a steady study abroad participation rate were needed in order to carry out this case study. This strategy was employed in order to explore and understand what current reentry issues students are going through and what their international offices are doing to assist them specifically in relation to their reentry. Picking two universities that had a steady annual study abroad rate would help ensure that the international office would have participants with current reentry experiences. Furthermore, by picking two universities who have established⁴ international offices, it allowed me to fully look into the historical perspective of reentry resources in the office.

The research was conducted at two four-year universities located in Wisconsin with the universities being roughly two hours apart in distance. Both universities have their own OIE on campus with staff and resources for their students. Each OIE has been up and running for

⁴ An established international office in this research means that they have been in existence and operation for a minimum of at least ten years.

at least a decade. Additionally, each university has not only had a steady study abroad rate; but also both have seen an increase in their participation rates since their inauguration. All of these characteristics helped to create a case study where the main focus was mainly on the phenomenon of reentry. This tactic allowed for the research to be exploratory and the findings to be specifically on reentry and the reentry efforts, resources and programming made available at each university. Utilizing this tactic let the focus be specifically on reentry, rather than pitting each university and the demographics against each other in a comparative format for examination.

3.7 Sampling of Research Participants

Purposive sampling was the technique used in order to select both the research sites and participants. Purposive sampling is a strategy that allows a researcher to select various components of the research in conjunction to the relevance of the research questions (Bryman, 2008). In this section, the rationales and procedures of selecting the samples will be addressed and rationalized.

As previously introduced and in relation to the research questions, two four-year universities with an established OIE were selected purposively in order to conduct the research. University A and University B are both located in Wisconsin in the United States. In order to design, research and complete this research project, both universities had both the adequate staff and study abroad participants needed.

Interviewing the staff in both international offices was a tactic utilized in order to strengthen the research and give a platform for the stakeholders within reentry to vocalize their current strategies, challenges and resources. I contacted both universities and was given a liaison in both offices in order to successfully get participants to participate in the research. They also helped assist me with various practicalities before and during the fieldwork, including the preparation of offices to conduct interviews and current study abroad research, helping aid my research further. The staff that works directly with study abroad were asked to participate in the research from the perspective liaison. This accounted for three staff members at University A and four staff members at University B, totaling seven international educators.

While creating the research project and determining the appropriate number of student participants needed, I came to the decision to interview 10 students at each university totaling 20 student participants. For a better representation of the collective study abroad practice, I sought out student participants who were both male and female and studied abroad in various continents. Moreover, the students who I desired to participate in this research were to have returned to their university within a period of no more than 10 months from their semester abroad. By conducting interviews with students who recently returned from their semester abroad in the time frame of 10 months or less was a crucial decision to helping uncover their initial and current transitional attitudes and its relation to their communication with their universities international offices. The final requirement for students selected to participate in this case study is that they should have studied abroad for at least one full academic semester. The requirement of spending at least one full academic semester abroad was critical as traditional study abroad is viewed as spending an entire semester or year abroad.

In order to successfully get student participants, I worked closely with both liaisons in each international office. Each liaison was given my criteria for student participation. I also wrote a student participation letter that gave more of a reference to who I am and my relation to this research and both universities and what this study is about, which is shown in Appendix 1. With these formalities, each liaison contacted students on my behalf for participation in the research. Before entering the field, I created an interview calendar to keep my interviews organized, which is shown in Appendix 3. Additionally, the calendar helped to schedule no more than three interviews a day, allowing for the interviews to be descriptive and in great detail as much as possible.

3.8 Fieldwork

Having communicated with both international offices well before the scheduled fieldwork helped me to organize and prepare for the fieldwork experience. It also allowed me to get an adequate amount of interviews scheduled before returning to the United States. The fieldwork itself was carried out between October 1st, 2015 and November 6th, 2015. In total, 20 days were spent conducting and working on my data collection research. Specifically, 10 days were spent on both University A and University B working in their OIE.

Prior to entering the field, I contacted the directors of each international office and presented my research proposal to them with the appropriate documentation from both the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Upon receiving permission from the universities and their affiliated Institutional Review Board, I created a consent form with detailed information about the study that both of the offices sent out to students who met my prerequisites for participation in the study, which is shown in Appendix 2. The consent form will be addressed and elaborated on in the next section. Additionally, both the directors of the office helped schedule the interviews of the respected staff that work directly with study abroad.

Before entering the field, I had only received e-mails from a handful of students interested in participating in my study. As participation signup was limited, I heavily relied on the snowball method once I was in each international office. Through the assistance of students and staff, I was able to successfully get 10 students to participate in my study at both universities. However, I had to readjust some of my prerequisites I originally implored for successful participation.

I stated that students must have returned from their semester abroad no longer than 10 months prior. This timeframe proved to be a challenge to get participants from as I went into the field in the fall semester and a lot of the students who went abroad in the fall of 2014 or spring of 2015 had already graduated. To combat this problem, I lifted the time constraint and replaced that prerequisite that students must still be enrolled at either university. This was done strategically to have a strong focus on the academic change students faced during reentry. Additionally, at University A their study abroad population is heavy in short-term study abroad programs⁵ and not semester long programs. Therefore, I ended up interviewing three students who participated in a short-term program.

As stated previously, I tried to get a diverse selection of student participants who were both male and female who studied in various locations and came from different educational programs in order to get a varied sample for data collection and analysis. A difficulty that arose during the research participant recruitment process was the dominating amount of female participants in relation to male participants. At first this limitation seemed to be a

⁵ A short-term study abroad program is categorized as a faculty led overseas experience that is usually run over semester breaks and or summer session. Usually the program is no more than a few weeks to a month in length.

barrier as I was looking for an even distribution of females to male, but when reflecting back on the current study abroad statics, female to male participation in study abroad was the main ration present in both universities study abroad populations.

Collectively I interviewed 21 students while in the field with 11 students interviewed at University B and 10 students interviewed at University A. Out of this sample, there were 16 female students and 5 male students. Additionally, I interviewed four study aboard professionals/staff at University B and three at University A totaling 28 interviews. Upon returning back to Norway, I met with my advisor and shared my fieldwork experience and initial findings. As I interviewed some students who did not take part in a semester long program, I decided to remove those three interviews from University A and use the seven that fit my criteria and choose seven from University B that were the most informative and comprehensive for proper analysis. This resulted in the total of 14 study abroad participants with 11 being female (78%) and 3 (22%) being male as seen in figure 3.1. Although female participation was high in this study, as previously stated, the current breakdown of female to male study abroad participation in the United States is 65.3% female and 34.7% male resulting in my sample to be in accordance to the national average.

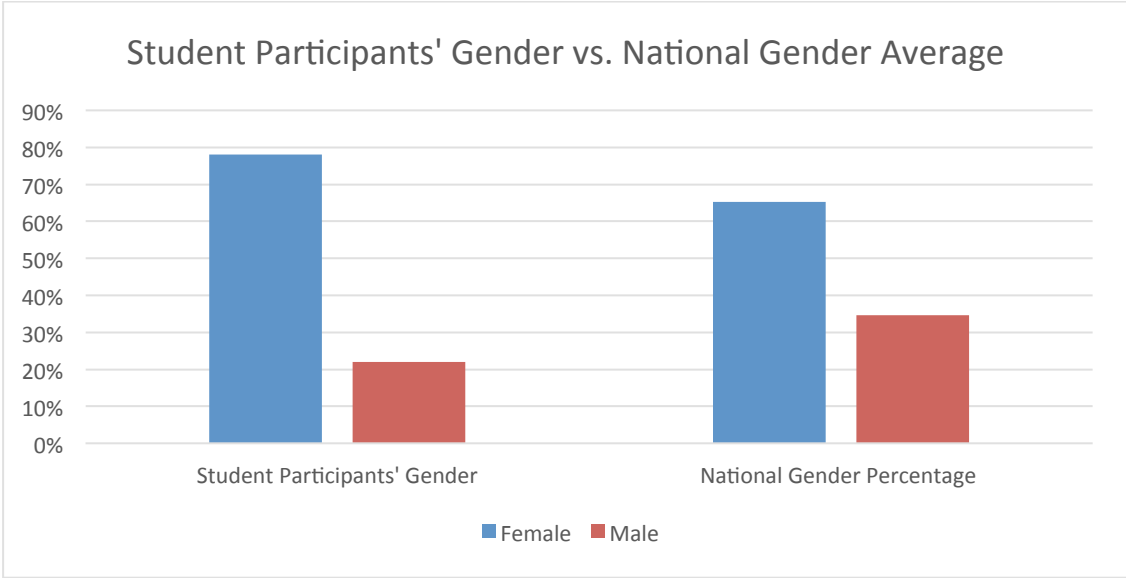


Figure 3.1. Student Participants’ Gender vs. National Gender Average

3.9 Negotiating Consent

As previously stated, there was a total of 28 interviews conducted while in the field. Of this total, 21 were used for further data analysis as they were the interviews that were the most comprehensive and contained rich data needed for proper analysis. With two samples created containing both student and staff participation, the student population was the population that needed to be most aware of their consent and role in partaking in this research.

Although this research is not a sensitive topic, it was still highly important to maintain ethical standards when conducting the interviews and negotiating participant consent. According to Annas and Grodin (1992), “The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely necessary.” The consent form that can be seen in Appendix 2, was a tool used in order to gain trust and consent when interviewing participants. It was also used as a way to efficiently explain what the research was about before the interviewee gave their consent and participated in the interview. Before each interview, I gave every participant a consent form and had him or her read through the document closely and carefully in order to gain his or her compliance. Additionally, I asked the interviewees if they had any questions before starting the interview. Furthermore, I got verbal consent from them too as the interviews were recorded on an audio recorder for further analysis. Exerting all these measures before starting the interviews was carefully done in order to uphold ethical standards as well as a way to gain trustworthiness and help make the participants feel comfortable and relaxed.

With the research not being a sensitive subject, the student participants were eager to open up and discuss their study abroad experiences with me. However, as the interviews were held in the international offices on both universities campuses, select students were hesitant to truthfully open up and talk to me about their experiences working with their international office during their reentry transition. This conflict arose seeing they were physically in the same office as the staff who worked with them during their study abroad process. Although each international office prepared a private room for the interviews, select students were hesitant as they thought their interviews would be exploited. To deal with this concern, I had to reassure student participants that their interviews would remain confidential and not be discussed with their study abroad advisors. Furthermore, even with the students who gave their full compliance and were eager and willing to discuss their reentry transitions in depth, I still took the extra measure of informing them that their interviews would remain confidential.

I also informed everyone that they would receive a pseudonym securing that their interviews would always be one hundred percent confidential.

3.10 Rapport and Reciprocity

In order to carry out qualitative research, establishing rapport and reciprocity throughout the research process must be done in a careful and conceptualized manner. Marshall and Rossman (2011) discuss that in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. Moreover, the researcher is invited into the lives of the participants and their presence and involvement is fundamental to the methodology.

Although the presence of the researcher in semi-structured interviews is brief, the researcher still enters the lives of the participants and needs to create a rapport with interviewees in order to create a strong connection and obtain rich data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Creating rapport with the interviewees was highly important to me as I wanted to demonstrate my understanding and interest into their unique and personal stories. Specifically, as I have personally gone through reentry myself, I wanted the students to feel comfortable with me and view this as an opportunity to communicate their experiences with someone who can relate to their experiences. Furthermore, I encouraged students to actively reflect on their experiences as I was someone that was interested in their unique story. This strategy however, was exerted with caution as I wanted the students to reflect on their personal study abroad and reentry experiences and not view the interview as an advising session. To combat this, I tried to keep the interviews professional and proceeded cautiously if the conversation was not related to the topic. In addition, students wanted to connect personally with me to hear about my own experiences and ask for advice as I have studied and worked abroad. I used this as an opportunity to create reciprocity with the participants.

I informed participants that if they had specific questions about opportunities to continue their education or careers abroad that I would willingly hold an informal conversation with them after the interview in accordance to the given time limitations. Developing this form of reciprocity helped the students and myself keep the interviews professional and on track. Additionally, this informal conversation with participants was a way for me to give something back, helping show gratitude for their involvement in my study. Having communicated with several students who wanted advice on ways to further their education and careers globally, I

received e-mails from select participants thanking me for my time and advice. Furthermore, several students who participated in this research thanked me for my time and thanked me for allowing them to connect with and communicate with someone who has also gone through the reentry process. These connections that were created help show that respect and ethical connection was created during the interview process.

3.11 Experiential Knowledge and Research Ethics

As previously addressed, the phenomenon of reentry is something that I have gone through personally myself. Having studied and worked abroad, I have gone through the reentry transition period several times. What is more, through my drastic change of self during my study abroad process and the connection and relationship that was created with my international office upon reentry; I became more engaged and mindful of my intercultural competence and the plethora of global opportunities available to me during my reentry process. Through my self-motivation to keep the study abroad experience alive, I was able to take advantage of reentry resources and programming that were needed in order to further my intercultural competence. In addition to taking advantage of resources from the OIE, this connection that was created with the study abroad advisors in my OIE are what drastically changed my career path as I wanted to follow in their footsteps and work with international education and study abroad at the higher education level.

My experience of working in both international offices is what initially led me to research and focus on students' study abroad reentry and the efforts, resources and programming their international offices have created for them. What is more, having worked in the field of international education and having experiential knowledge on the topic of reentry, I knew reentry was a recently legitimized and researched topic within study abroad. Furthermore, I knew that many international offices were interested in finding out why students do or do not take advantage of their reentry resources and programming. This initial relationship to the research sites and topic caused me to proceed with explicit caution in order to not create any bias. Strauss (1987) states that traditionally what the researcher brings to the research from their background and relevance to the topic has to be treated as bias and is something that has to be eliminated from your research design. However, there has been recent theoretical and philosophical support of the use of experiential data and knowledge in a researcher's research. "Using this experience in your research can provide you with a major source of insights,

hypotheses, and validity checks” (Maxwell, 1996). With recent support for the use of experiential knowledge in creating your research, I decided to take advantage of my interest, background and knowledge with the study abroad process, specifically with reentry. Additionally, being able to work with both international offices was a way to secure two well-established international offices as my research sites and gain further insight into their reentry efforts, resources and programming making this research plausible.

As I have connections at both participating research sites, I exercised caution throughout the entire research period in order to not create biasness. Having received my undergraduate degree from the University A and participated in a study abroad program through their OIE. In addition, I worked as an intern in their office upon reentry from my semester abroad. Also, I have worked in the OIE at University B. It is through my involvement on both university campuses that I was eager to conduct this research, but with having connections on both campuses I made sure I was extra cautious in order to not create any biasness. Even as I have affiliation with both universities, it was necessary to not let any biases occur and to let the research develop naturally in order to fully explore the study purpose at hand. Additionally, I let myself be open to the unexpected in the field which has let me ethically share all appropriate results and data.

3.12 Data Analysis

While in the field, I started the transcription process instantaneously. Initially I transcribed all data verbatim. This strategy helped for proper analysis of the interviews. Additionally, this tactic helped me cultivate best practices for future interviews. As themes started to immerge from open coding (Creswell, 2007), I was able to heavily focus on them; ultimately giving me initial themes needed that helped me redevelop a necessary framework reflective in student reflections on the social, cultural and academic level. After the transcription and open coding process for all interviews was complete, I began the axial coding process in order to create various categories based on similarity of opinions, ideas and issues raised by the participants (Creswell, 2007). This process took a copious amount of time because all the transcripts had to be re-read multiple times in order to appropriately categorize the codes that emerged. In addition, the coding process was looked at closely and carefully constructed because of its significance and importance with linking the similarities found to the theory and its reference to the reentry phenomenon.

The findings and specific themes that will be presented in the next chapter have been created in a historical context helping portray the holistic study abroad process. The findings have been carefully operationalized into substantive categories that have been given theme related topics. This has been carefully constructed to help the reader easily follow along and make sense of the presented findings. Furthermore, all participants have been given fictional names to conceal their identities, which can be seen in figure 3.2 and figure 3.3. Giving them specific names will help readers follow along with their stories as well as a tactic to help better visualize their reflections, ultimately bringing life to the research.

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Home University	Study Abroad Location
1	Amanda	F	University B	Chile
2	Ashley	F	University B	Germany
3	Chelsea	F	University B	Ireland
4	Eileen	F	University A	Puerto Rico
5	Emily	F	University A	Scotland
6	Hannah	F	University A	Scotland
7	Heather	F	University A	Spain
8	Kalvin	M	University B	Australia
9	Katherine	F	University A	Mexico
10	Nia	F	University B	Chile
11	Pamela	F	University B	Spain
12	Sam	M	University B	South Africa
13	Stephanie	F	University A	Scotland

14	Tyler	M	University A	Scotland
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Figure 3.2. List of student participants

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Role within the Office of International Education	University
1	Andrea	F	Study Abroad Coordinator	University A
2	Gwen	F	Study Abroad Coordinator	University A
3	Ian	M	Director	University B
4	Jake	M	Director	University B
5	Kari	F	Associate Director	University B
6	Molly	F	Study Abroad Coordinator	University B
7	Scott	M	Study Abroad Coordinator	University B

Figure 3.2. List of OIE participants

3.13 Reliability and Validity

It has often been contested that there is a lack of trustworthiness within qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). In order to create more credibility, qualitative researchers can adapt various techniques that can help ensure that their study tests and produces what is actually proposed. The use of triangulation within qualitative research helps the researcher to test their research questions with various participants and multiple data collection methods. By selecting various participants and or data collection methods, the researcher maximizes the reliability and validity of the findings. This technique can help showcase various viewpoints and experiences and their relation to the phenomenon (Shenton, 2004).

In order to achieve triangulation within this study, participants were selected from diverse backgrounds. The research showcases both genders as well various regions across the world where they studied. By selecting a diverse group of participants, this helped tell varied stories and showcase several viewpoints and experiences participants had with their study abroad and

reentry experiences. Additionally, selecting two universities helped to display the reentry efforts and resources being made available by two universities in the United States. Collectively, the case study format allowed the research questions to be tested to best exploit opportunities and research the various information needed from participants (Van Maanen, 1983).

4 Presentation and Analysis of Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the qualitative data collected through face-to-face interviews at both universities will be presented, analyzed and discussed. The findings from the student informant interviews will be presented with the overarching themes found in the study abroad process: pre-departure, during and reentry. Introducing the themes in alignment with the study abroad timeframe will help navigate the holistic process of study abroad. This strategy will be implored to help align the study abroad pre-departure and during processes with the reentry, post-study abroad transformations students experience and the relationship, significance and importance of reentry resources and programming.

The findings from the interviews with the study abroad professionals at each university will be presented after the student findings, which will help bring rationale and understanding to the specific role reentry currently plays in both of their international offices. The findings from both international offices will help serve as a reference point for the current reentry efforts, resources and programming being implemented at two universities in the United States. Furthermore, the staff informants' accounts about the daily inner operations of an international office will help give another reference point to reentry efforts, resources and programming and the current limitations present in both universities international offices.

4.2 Reentry Student Population Themes

The process of study abroad encompasses three specific periods as mentioned above. The interviews were aligned and formatted with this specific timeframe and processes as a framework to tell the stories of the participants and their study abroad experiences and processes. Within these processes this study found four overarching themes. Each theme will be supported with detailed sub-themes that will be presented, analyzed and discussed throughout this chapter. The introduction of themes in chronological order will help highlight the transformation of the affective, cognitive and behavioral components study abroad

participants specifically experience during their reentry transitional periods, post-study abroad.

The pre-departure and while abroad processes will be analyzed first through the students motivations to study abroad and their overall experiences during their cultural and educational immersion abroad. The main phenomenon at hand, the reentry process, will be introduced through the social and cultural changes experienced by sojourners while reentering. Additionally, the academic changes experienced by sojourners will also be introduced in the reentry process. In alignment with reentry, communication as a coping mechanism will be introduced with the students' perceptions of communicating with their friends, family and their international offices. Lastly, their interactions and involvement with their international offices will be introduced to bring attention to the current reentry efforts, resources and programming international offices are utilizing to help their study abroad students, post-study abroad. These findings will be specifically addressed to the extent at which the reentry students have drawn on these findings during their interviews. This theme will also serve as a resource to let the students' voice their strong recommendations for their perspective international office; as the students themselves were eager to reflect on their past experiences. Furthermore, the students utilized this portion of the interview as an opportunity to offer advice to their international offices as a way to reflect on their experiences in order to help future returnees with their reentry transformations and experiences.

4.3 Study Abroad Experiences

Without studying abroad, there is not a phenomenon of reentry; therefor it was both crucial and essential to explore the experiences the students had during their semesters abroad. The interviews were guided to help highlight, explore and ultimately understand the study abroad processes sojourners go through. By understanding the holistic process of study abroad, it is more tangible to understand the phenomenon of reentry, which study abroad sojourners go through when returning home and unpacking their wide array of experiences from abroad.

Overall, the study abroad experiences vocalized by students can be broken down into two separate sub-themes that include their motivation for studying abroad and their overall experiences while abroad. The motivation to study abroad can be articulated through various rationales for choosing to study abroad, as well as the goals students hoped to achieve through

spending a semester or more abroad. In conjunction with their motivation, experiences abroad can be presented through their challenges, cultural adaptation and learning outcomes acquired through their semester abroad.

4.3.1 The Longing for a New Experience

When interviewing students, the interviews started with a general open-ended statement asking the students about their study abroad experiences. From this section of the interview, the students reflected on their motivations and rationales for choosing to study abroad. Within the interviews, two groups emerged; those who were longing for a new experience and those who had already planned to study abroad even before entering university.

In the first case, the students expressed their longing to explore and get out of their comfort zones. During this section of the interview the students within this case reflected on study abroad being an opportunity for them to experience something new, exciting and different. Explaining their main motivation for deciding to study abroad, a student said that he had been working and living at home while studying at university and wanted a chance to do something different in order to challenge himself. Another student had a similar remark and stated the following:

I was just really bored and frustrated with my job because it was really boring to start off with. I felt like I needed to do something different because I worked all of last summer and the entire fall semester, so I was somewhat of removed from the whole school scene for a couple of months. I felt like I needed to do something completely different here (Kalvin).

In the second case, the students expressed that study abroad was always a priority of theirs before entering university. One student expressed that when she was touring universities she listed study abroad as a high priority and that ultimately helped her make the decision on what university to attend. She expressed that when she was touring universities, she made an effort to ask what study abroad programs the international office made available for students. This tactic not only helped her achieve her goal of studying abroad, but also helped her study abroad in a program most relevant to her studies. Another student had a similar story and stated that she ultimately chose her university because of their study abroad options. She stated:

Growing up, I always wanted to study abroad and Ireland was my number one place. I'm a nursing major and for nurses it's not really common for many nurses to study abroad because our program is intense and you can't just take elective classes when you're abroad and so when I was looking at schools, University B was one of my top choices because they had the study abroad in Ireland program; so really before I even entered university I was looking at the program and when it actually came down to it, an underlining reason I chose my university was because of the study abroad program (Chelsea).

In both cases the students saw study abroad as an opportunity and experience for themselves. The opportunity itself can be related to the desire for an experience that was not available at their home universities. Furthermore, the students' study abroad motivations and experiences can be directly linked to various research that concludes that study abroad is an opportunity for students to have an international experience and education; ultimately helping them think and act globally in order to help prepare them as future global leaders (Dwyer & Peters, 2012; Stearns, 2009). Additionally, the opportunity and experience of study abroad inherently gives students an internationalized higher education experience that they can carry with them long after graduation (Brew & Cunningham, 2010). Collectively, although their motivations and goals varied, all participants shared a common relationship and interest of wanting to go abroad for an opportunity and experience that was not available at their home universities. Their motivations will be translated into their experiences and will be presented in the next few sections helping bring rational and justification to the importance of, and benefits of study abroad.

4.3.2 Overcoming Differences and Succeeding in Another Culture

During the interviews, the students opened up about their experiences while abroad; resulting in the student informants sharing many of the same experiences students go through during their study abroad programs. The students articulated these experiences through the initial section at the start of the interview as well as in a new section that focused on the challenges they faced while abroad. Within these two sections the most prominent findings the students expressed and reflected on were how they overcame differences and their abilities to be

adaptable to their new environment. The following section will highlight the obstacles they faced and how they succeeded and successfully navigated through another culture.

Eileen reflected on this theme and said, “I came here not knowing anyone. I didn’t know the language and not only did I survive, but I feel like I flourished”. Another student expressed that she had challenges with adjusting to the new environment including the diet, schedule and being pickpocketed, but stated that with every problem she faced, she overcame it. She also stated that although these initial problems challenged her, they ultimately helped with the enriched development within her. These students addressed that being in a new environment forced them to get acclimated, become more outgoing and take initiative in order to go about their daily lives abroad.

Two other students expressed that through study abroad, their levels of confidence were developed and now they are planning to further their education by attending graduate school abroad. They reflected on the specific challenges of studying abroad and the positive changes within themselves that developed as a result of the experience. One student addressed the challenges of having to figure things out on her own and not being able to rely on her friends and family. Since she was able to succeed and become more independent, she has started to research graduate programs abroad in order to continue the development of her intercultural competence through additional international education abroad. Another student reflected on this development and explained the following:

I always kind of thought that it is so far away and I am really close with my family, especially because of that component. I think that was the special thing about study abroad; I showed myself that I could do it, that I could navigate another country and culture. It is obviously hard to be away from people whom you are closest to, but I knew that I could do it after coming back from studying abroad, which has reaffirmed the interest in attending graduate school abroad (Ashley).

The experience of navigating another culture through an American lens was another sub-theme students reflected on. These intrinsic skills received from study abroad ultimately helped develop the students’ intercultural competence through immersion abroad. Specifically, students talked about their trials and tribulations of navigating through another culture. These students talked in detail about their daily lives abroad and their living

accommodations that heavily helped contribute to the development of their intercultural competence through these specific experiences abroad.

The student informants had to navigate through another country that resulted in them being immersed in another culture. Their daily lives abroad forced them to get acclimated with another countries systems and culture, ultimately helping them become more cognizant of other cultures. One student addressed culture shock as an initial challenge and addressed how her school helped students with this challenge.

I would say the last challenge was just adapting to their culture. At first we would get frustrated because we did not understand cultural differences, but we had a culture shock seminar with somebody who is from the United States, but now lives in Spain (Pamela).

Pamela addressed that the culture shock seminar helped her get more acclimated with life in Spain, which allowed her to take advantage of the opportunities and experiences that were presented to her, ultimately helping enrich her experience.

As study abroad is meant to be an experience where students are offered the opportunity to grow, one student reflected on the opportunity stating that:

I always say that it was the best decision I ever made while being here because you get to see so many things and it is learning out of the classroom, which I really value and appreciate. And I met so many special people that it was a really rewarding experience (Ashley).

Ashley's experience resonates with international educators and researchers that have addressed study abroad as a time for personal growth and intercultural development (Dwyer & Peters, 2012).

Living arrangements also proved to be an asset that helped students not only get accustomed with their host country, but also allowed them the opportunity to get introduced to other cultures. Katherine reflected on this and said, "I lived in an international house so I got the culture not only from Mexico, but from their countries too which was amazing". Another student had a similar experience to Katherine and explained that:

I got to live with six other people who were really interesting and I got a lot of different aspects of different cultures by living with them, so I got a very wide variety of mixtures of culture. I was involved in the Christian Union too, so I got to meet a bunch of other people from Scotland and Ireland and England and from all around the world (Hannah).

Together, overcoming differences and succeeding and navigating through another culture are themes that are inherent skills students have the ability to obtain through their study abroad opportunities. Both themes were heavily reflective of the students' experiences throughout their interviews, reaffirming the various benefits of study abroad ranging from personal growth, intercultural development, education and career and internships opportunities. Similar benefits were mentioned by the benefits of studying abroad (Dwyer & Peters, 2012). Specifically in this study, students were reflective on study abroad being an eye-opening, life-changing experience that challenged them and helped them grow in ways only study abroad can do.

4.4 The Transformation of Self and Perspective

With reflection on their experiences abroad, two major components can be acknowledged when analyzing their transitional reentry experiences. With reentry being the core of this research, the previous findings and analyses were both necessary and carefully crafted in order to present the holistic study abroad process objectively, helping link the reentry findings from the student informants at both universities. Furthermore, the pre-departure and while abroad processes were crucial in helping navigate through the study abroad processes and support the previous research on the benefits, opportunities and experiences which participants are able to obtain from study abroad. Ultimately, the students' experiences abroad and their reentry work together as a cause and effect relationship, jointly helping make sense of their transitional reentry experience. In the student sample, the dominant findings were contemplative on the social and cultural changes they experienced during reentry.

Motivation for studying abroad can vary, however the process itself opens students up to a new environment in which they cultivate into their own experience. Bringing home their experiences is where the reentry transformation resonates with students, often not even being aware of the transformative process they are going through (Selby, 2008). These specific

transformations have been classified as the affective, cognitive and behavioral components of reentry. As introduced in the literature, previous researchers have focused on the singular aspects of these components. In this study, all three components will be explored and operationalized collectively within the following reentry findings as students experience all three components when returning home.

According to the Cultural Learning Theory reflective of the behavioral components within reentry (Furnham & Bochner, 1986), sojourners must reenter home and are expected to continue life as it was before they went abroad. Reentry researchers have utilized their work to better understand at which level a sojourner reenters. Reflection can serve as a tool to help students better process and unpack their experiences abroad in a constructive, positive way, specifically by reflecting on their experiences abroad and preparing themselves for the reentry transformations they are about to embark on (Sussman, 2000). Additionally, within the SIT framework (World Learning, 2008), the level of reentry students partake in is heavily reliant on their self-efficacy and self-motivation upon reentry.

In this study, all students addressed their transformation of self and perspectives as a result of studying abroad. Throughout the interviews, this proved to be a common theme that students reflected on as an asset of studying abroad. One student reflected specifically on studying abroad pushing her out of her comfort zone and the inherent changes that occurred within her. She stated that:

So it went from just staying in my bubble to being very independent. I had to be independent in Scotland. I had to go to the store by myself. I had to go to class by myself. I wasn't always latched onto someone here, but I was comfortable. Over there I had to make new friends otherwise I was going to sit in my room the entire time. I think I had such an enjoyable experience that I wanted to talk about it. Then when I came home I was so much more apt to seeking out other individuals that had the interest that I had (Emily).

Another student said that study abroad allowed her to become more outgoing and less self-conscious. She stated the following:

It for sure pushed me out of my social comfort zone. I am also someone who can tend to be passive and let people come talk to me, but while I was studying abroad I just found it so much easier to approach people and make friendships. That definitely

applied to coming back with just being more outgoing and less self-conscious (Amanda).

Cognitively, the development of their intercultural competence and their ability to become immersed in another culture plays a crucial role to their change of self, self-awareness and their cultural identity when going through their reentry transition. Students in both samples expressed both of these developments within themselves and gave detailed accounts to the obstacles they were met with when reentering. This was evident through their reflections of their time abroad through comparing and contrasting things, becoming more cognizant of the world around them and their overall understanding of another culture through cultural immersion. With the development of their cultural learning and competence, students have gained a wider cultural lens helping them take advantage of opportunities that they might not have necessarily taken advantage of pre-study abroad. This was evident with students reflecting on their wider sense of culture after returning home. One student stated that:

It has changed my traveling perspective. I went to the geysers in Chile and they said we have some really nice ones here in the United States and I have never been there. We have the mountains, we have the Grand Canyon and it is the little things I never take the time to do, so it has changed my perspective in the fact that I want to appreciate home and the beauty that home has (Nia).

Another student had a similar reflection as Nia and said:

I think when you go abroad every opportunity seems like something you want to take advantage of because you are in a completely new city and everything is a little more interesting. And I feel like trying to apply that mentality to a familiar city like Milwaukee. It brings that same exciting feeling to your life (Amanda).

Within the initial and transformative stages of reentry, behavioral and cognitive components play a strong role in the reentry of study abroad sojourners. Cognitively, the student informants experience a change in their self-identity and self-awareness that helps shape their cultural identity upon reentry. As the students brought home their new self and perspectives of the world around them, the students were able to view experiences as an opportunity for them to continue to grow and experience things with a new perspective at home. Behaviorally, the student informants came back with a new set of behavioral responses that they developed abroad. The students expressed personal and behavioral growth through their

study abroad programs. Becoming more outgoing played a critical role into the development of their behavioral reentry. Obstacles were met during this period, as the students reentered with the new behavioral components to an environment that had not changed, causing frustration and isolation. These findings will be explored in the next section of the study abroad process.

4.5 Communicating and Unpacking the Experience: A Longing for Resources and Community

As uncovered in the previous section, students faced social and cultural changes when going through the reentry transitional process. These changes the students went through specifically fall into the behavioral and cognitive components of reentry. The affective components of reentry are mainly reflective of the individuals' feelings and emotions in reference to their reentry back home. To combat or deal with these changes, returnees have to make sense of and cope with these changes, if desired. In order to better understand how the students dealt with these changes within themselves and the development of their intercultural competence, the students were asked to reflect on the specific coping mechanisms they sought out to help them unpack their experiences abroad. Two specific themes emerged throughout this section of the interview. The students attributed communication as the primary tool and outlet to help cope with their experiences abroad. Additionally, the students attributed their relationship with their international office and the resources offered to them as a beneficial tool to help them cope with their transitions upon returning home during their study abroad processes.

Communicating the experience abroad can be an initial way to help cope with and make sense of your time abroad while going through the reentry process. All of the students expressed that they participated in conversations with friends and family to help initially unpack their experiences abroad. Although students initially used communication as a coping mechanism, they were met with obstacles because of limitations from their audiences. This specific form of communication failure directly lines up with the second stage of the W-Curve Hypothesis in which participants have difficulty navigating through their new setting and the withdrawal of interest from friends and family (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). The following excerpts give a detailed account of this coping mechanism and the obstacles they faced when talking about their experience with their friends and family.

It was great because all of my family came over to see me, but in a sense, it was kind of overwhelming at times. I found myself trying to tell stories or talking about things that happened but people didn't understand how these experiences were interesting to me. And of course you dealt with the people who said, "We've heard a lot about this, we don't want to hear about it anymore". So you were sad in that sense. It's almost like it didn't happen with the way people act and talk (Heather).

I had really such a wonderful time abroad that I had a very hard time coming back readjusting and not being with my friends that I had been with for six months every single day, day in, day out. I had my friends here and they just did not understand that I had gone through all these experiences and it was hard for me to understand that. I had such a wonderful time, but they're not necessarily excited about the adventure I was on (Emily).

As students faced communication barriers from family and friends they were also reflective of their longing for a sense of community at home in comparison to the bond that was created with friendships that formed while abroad.

And when you are trying to explain those experiences to people here, they can kind of understand it, but not in the same way other people from your program can when you are trying to describe a place or something. But someone from your program can get it right away and understand it, whereas someone here tries, but they'll never really get it and after a while of talking about it, they get a little annoyed too (Ashley).

To combat the lack of enthusiasm, interest and or understanding of their time abroad, I explored the coping mechanisms returnees used to help communicate their experience to an engaged and interested audience. Specifically, the students talked about their experiences with volunteering in their international offices. This tactic helped them find the appropriate audience, an appropriate communication channel and their specific place during their reentry process. One student reflected on taking the initiative to volunteer in her international office and stated the following:

This fall I sat in on a question and answer panel for studying in Scotland. They reached out to us and asked us if we wanted to do that. They reached out and asked if we wanted to help out with the study abroad fair, which I did because they had a Scotland booth and they wanted students who had actually studied abroad there to go

around and talk to those other students that were walking through the fair and who might be interested in it so it was kind of just a plug for Scotland in general (Hannah).

Other students who volunteered with their office wanted to connect their experience with the incoming international students allowing them to continue the growth of their intercultural competence and cultural understanding. Two students utilized this opportunity and reflected on it being an opportunity for them to be on the other end of the process as they can sympathize with and help them with various questions and concerns when needed. They stated the following:

I told my university that if there are any international students that need a friend that they could get in touch with me because I know what it feels like and I know how difficult it can be (Eileen).

I did sign up to be a volunteer for when the international students came in, just because I wanted to meet them, I wanted to talk to them, I wanted them to feel welcomed. I just really wanted to be on the other side of it and kind of welcome them (Pamela).

During the reentry process, specifically the affective components of reentry, the students faced various obstacles. These students at first felt defeated because of the withdrawal of interests from their families and friends. They also felt that no one really understood their experiences abroad. In these stages of reentry, students are longing for a community to help reflect on and share their stories. This specific component of reentry is the linkage point La Brack (1999) has addressed that can make or break a students' study abroad experience.

Among study-abroad professionals, there is a fundamental failure to provide a linkage between orientation and reentry. The majority of orientation programs are currently conducted as though they existed in a vacuum, separate from the rest of the participants' lives, be they students in the midst of their academic careers or businesspeople on the way to overseas assignments. For students, the year abroad is seen, probably unconsciously, as a stage of development, an activity which has a life span of its own, beginning when the individual enters foreign milieu and ending with the return. Understandably, advisors and intercultural trainers are concerned with promoting a successful time overseas and therefore work hard to prepare students for the impending immersion into a new social setting (La Brack, 1999).

La Brack argues that there is a failure from international educators to link the study abroad processes. As the majority of students in this research utilized reentry resources, the majority of the student informants had a stronger understanding of reentry and drive to keep the experience alive in comparison to the traditional study abroad students at both universities. This dilemma will be further explored and addressed in upcoming sections of this chapter.

4.6 Academic Change Upon Reentry

Not only do students experience social and cultural change upon reentry; students also face academic change. Academically, students bring home with them an education from a foreign educational system. By attending lectures, working in groups, taking exams and the overall immersion in a foreign education system, the students must adapt to their host-countries educational system in order to perform adequately. When students return home, they bring with them an educational experience that can help them think and act globally, but putting that education into practice is solely up to the student (Dwyer and Peters, 2012). However, after their study abroad experience, students need to re-adapt back to their home-universities swiftly in order to take advantage of their newly acquired education and perform properly.

The students interviewed presented a wide array of academic reflection that students process after spending a semester or more in a foreign academic system. Two specific cases emerged within this section of the interview. In the first case, students experienced higher academic results and educational motivation to keep achieving success upon reentry. In the second case, students addressed that the workload upon reentry compared to their host-country caused stress during their reentry transitional period. Both of these cases will be addressed in depth in this section.

Statistics have shown that students who study abroad achieve higher academic success and this was evident with a number of students who participated in this research (Institute of International, 2012). One student expressed that she succeeded abroad more than she had imagined and since coming back has received a 4.0 grade point average every semester since returning. Other students' said that they have become more dedicated to their studies in reflection to their time spent abroad. One student expressed this in great detail:

The semester in Chile definitely presented many opportunities for me to grow as a student. My freshman and sophomore year I was the one who did the bare minimum

and skidded by with just fine grades, but there was no way that was going to work in Chile, not just with school but staying on top of all my documents, papers and visa things so I feel I became more timely and organized by getting myself where I needed to be at certain times. I also grew with my ability to be independent and that definitely helped me out with the spring semester that I returned because the academic pressure really rationed it up a notch (Amanda).

Another student used the educational experiences abroad to help enrich her studies by discussing the similarities and differences with her cohorts and professors at her university. She stated:

I was able to discuss the different texts in class with my fellow students and professors. My English advisors were really excited because I kept all my work from Scotland because they wanted to see the difference of how it was taught there compared to how it was taught here. Another thing we had to do was study a saint or a martyr from the United Kingdom so I picked one from a place I actually visited because we had to give a presentation and I was able to talk a little more about the history because I was physically there, which was something a lot of the other students weren't able to do because they weren't there, they didn't have access to that kind of information that I did (Hannah).

Studying abroad opens students up to another educational system that can vary quite differently compared to the United States. Within the United States, classes at the university level are often comprised of various assignments throughout the semester that make up a final grade. In comparison to the typical American university format, other educational systems may have a lesser amount of assignments and the course will consist of one final exam. This proved to be the case with many informants who took part in this research. They mainly addressed that the heavy workload they received from their home university caused them to experience stress upon reentry. Pamela specifically addressed that in comparison to her host-country, and reaffirmed the heavy workload and said, "We have so much homework; multiple tests a semester, multiple essays and assignments. So that was stressful and I had to hit the ground running". Two other students expressed this in detailed and stated:

I just go to class and then everyone once in a while I'd have to write a paper or take an exam and that was about it and I had so much free time to myself, and then I get back

and it's the complete opposite where I have absolutely no free time whatsoever. I go to a counselor because I'm not really good at dealing with my stress so we've been talking about what I miss about Puerto Rico and how my schooling is (Eileen).

I feel it has been a rough transition because in South Africa I could take notes, read over the PowerPoint presentations and then go over the readings, which aren't as extensive as here, and then I was fine for the examination at the end. Here it's been a struggle keeping up with the readings because I didn't have to do that for an entire semester and there's been times where I've forgotten I've had an assignment due just because I haven't had those assignments for a whole semester (Sam).

Both cases, from an educational perspective can be placed as well in the behavioral components of reentry. Specifically within the behavioral component, sojourners must reenter with an internalized set of new educational behavioral responses they have developed from studying in their host-country; upon reentry, they must get acclimated back to their home universities educational format. In this study, the educational reentry process brought out two cases experienced by the informants. Because of their success abroad, they came back with motivation to keep their academics strong. In comparison, this was the opposite for other students who experienced trouble with reentering back to their previous universities. The students experienced stress and had a hard time getting acclimated and coping with the drastic change. This theme will be explored in the next section in its relationship with the current reentry efforts and resources being made available to help students reenter.

4.7 Working with the Office of International Education after Study Abroad

As discussed previously, students had a hard time communicating their experiences abroad to the appropriate audience. Specifically, those that did not participate in similar programs had a hard time understanding their experiences abroad. Additionally, students voiced that many of their friends and families got bored with their stories and lost interest after a while. To combat this common dilemma that returnee's experience, international educators in the United States have brought attention to this problem and have created reentry toolkits and reentry best practices that international offices can adapt to implement resources and opportunities for their students to utilize when going through their reentry transitional period. NAFSA

developed four goals and objectives for reentry programming including: assist students in their reentry to their home culture and to their academic life; help students both reflect and communicate their study abroad experience; create opportunities for students to help continue their international exposure through international experiences on campus and in the community; and to help students utilize study abroad with their future career endeavors (NAFSA, 2005). These goals and objectives can serve as a framework for offices to implement in their offices. Most importantly, the offices can create an internationalized community where students can continue their international exposure from talking about their experience to getting connected with international students. These tactics can additionally serve as a vessel where students can communicate their experience to an engaged and appropriate audience. Specifically, both universities are cognizant of the importance of reentry and do utilize resources for the students. Additionally, they professionally and personally take specific measures and efforts in order to help their students' reentry. For this very reason it was highly important to include the international educators in this study as a tool to help bring insight into study abroad from the international offices themselves. This will be explored further in depth in the international educators' sample interviews.

During the interviews, the theme of reentry resources was explored through asking participants what reentry resources were made available to them upon reentry and what resources they utilized, if any. Furthermore, the students were asked about their communication with the international office upon reentry. This specific stage of reentry fits into the cognitive components linking their pre-reentry expectations and its effect on their reentry (Martin, Bradford & Rorhlich, 1995). From the students that took part in this research, 10 out of the 14 students utilized the resources made available from the international offices. Their stories about wanting to participate at events and talk with their international offices agrees with the previous theme of communicating their experience and the longing for a community by having a high degree of self-efficacy strength. By taking advantage of reentry resources, these students were able to reflect on their experiences with an audience who was engaged, interested and able to understand their stories. Additionally, the international offices were able to help guide the students further in their educational adjustment and career endeavors.

The first reentry opportunity students took advantage of were the reentry mixers where students were invited back to debrief with staff and other study abroad participants in a

lighthearted manner. Tyler said, “One of the things that the office does is they setup a get-together. They had a general one, which was a reentry event where everyone could come in and hang out”. Tyler also followed up by stating that the get-together created opportunities for meeting his friends, which helped him throughout the reentry process. He stated that:

Meeting up with them and comparing experiences has helped, and talking about what kind of experiences we each had and then just comparing it to the United States. But also keeping in contact with different students from the program. We each went through very similar experiences while we were there and they’re probably the people that know the best what we’re going through (Tyler).

Another reentry resource students reflected on were the opportunities to volunteer with the office at various events in their office and on the university campus. Although this was previously discussed as a way for students to communicate their experience, the international offices do reach out to study abroad alumni to help volunteer at events in order for them to help the OIE better demographically engage with students and as a way for returnees to talk about their experiences. Calvin expressed his motivation for wanting to get involved with his international office, post-study abroad. He said, “I just want them (perspective students) to know that going abroad can be such a life changing experience for anybody, that I wanted that opportunity and role to share that with someone”.

The self-motivation presented from the student informants in alignment with their involvement with their international offices and their reentry resources have uncovered the theme self-motivation in to keep their study abroad experience alive. Additionally, the students utilized their self-motivation and international offices as a way help encourage perspective study abroad participants to take advantage of the opportunity to study abroad. These findings will be explored further in the next section.

4.7.1 Students’ Self-Motivation to Keep the Experience Alive

A major finding in this research was the self-motivation of participants to keep the experience alive. All these students expressed motivation in order to keep their study abroad process ongoing after they came back. In four specific cases students displayed high levels of self-efficacy strength and made the first contact with their international office. By being proactive and self-motivated, these students were able to communicate with, volunteer with and access

internship opportunities within the international office at their home university, post-study abroad.

Hannah, who previously mentioned that she sat in on a study abroad question and answer panel and volunteered at the study abroad fair, stated that she volunteered with the office to help communicate her experience as well as to motivate more students to take the opportunity to study abroad. Emily had a similar experience as Pamela by volunteering, which later led to an internship opportunity. She stated that:

I decided to do it because I just wanted to encourage other people to study abroad. It was nice because I wanted to keep as much of my study abroad experience in the here and now rather than, I did that once. I wanted to continue it and I had a passion for traveling so I thought I want to know more about studying abroad, I want to encourage other people to do it, I want to know what my options are. I thought maybe they could help me with my options after school (Emily).

Additionally, when analyzing the student population that took part in these specific interviews, there was a core theme of wanting to communicate their experience in order to help relive their experiences in addition to having a new audience to reflect on their time abroad with. Students were eager to communicate their study abroad and reentry experiences with me, as I have taken part in study abroad programs in addition to working abroad and being an international master's student at the University of Oslo. The students were respectful and conducted appropriate behavior during the interview process, however after the interviews ended, students were curious to hear about my previous reentry transitional experiences, as well as how I obtained working experiences abroad and the opportunity to be an international master's student. These students again showed high levels of self-efficacy strength to not only partake in this research, but to take initiative to keep the conversation going after the interviews were finished in order to further their curiosity on ways to continue their international experiences and intercultural competence. Furthermore, the motivation and rationale for participating in this specific research can effortlessly be classified as the participants exerting high levels of self-efficacy strength in order to partake in this research. Moreover, self-efficacy generality can be attributed to these interviews because the students saw this interview as another communicational opportunity to talk about their study abroad experience.

In contrary to the students that had self-motivation to keep the experience alive, the other students interviewed did not partake in any reentry resources. These students also did not make any initial contact with their international office. These students voiced that there was no formal communication with their international office upon reentry. Stephanie and Tyler did not recall any formal reentry resources that were made available to them. “I think I got one e-mail saying, welcome back to the states. We always look for pictures to use” (Stephanie). “I want to say it’s like, we’re here if you want to talk but there wasn’t anything formal like we want you to meet with us either in a group or singular” (Tyler). Another student reflected on her feelings that the office did not reach out to her once she was back. She stated the following:

I don’t know, I might not have looked close enough; there could have been some resources. As far as them reaching out and addressing what’s next, I don’t recall anything. I think that is something that really needs to be worked on through this program because I would have liked to have resources when it was that hard for me coming back. It would have been nice to be connected with somebody who had those similar experiences to help me understand what I can do personally to make it easier (Katherine).

Additionally, a student who did take advantage of the reentry resources feels that the office does not offer any supportive resources to students to help them make sense of and deal with their transition. She said, “They’ve e-mailed me about a couple of events, but not supportive events like, to help you with the transition” (Nia).

Collectively, these students can be classified as displaying low levels of self-efficacy strength when going through the reentry process. In addition, these findings show high levels of self-efficacy magnitude because the students expressed they were longing for reentry efforts to help them, but failed to be motivated enough to take make the first contact or display high levels of self-efficacy strength in order to transition at a more effective level.

Together, these findings align with the reentry suggestions from Wielkiewicz and Turkowski (2010) where students need both guidance and support in order to better facilitate their reentry. Students who do not engage and communicate with their international office upon reentry will continue to experience their reentry transitions individually. By bringing student together, international offices can help students debrief and help them connect their

experiences in a constructive environment with their engaged peers and mentors. Furthermore, this opportunity can help build a sense of community in which many participants in this research were longing for during their reentry transitional experiences.

4.8 The Future of Reentry: Advice from Study Abroad Alumni

One objective of this study was to explore the reentry efforts and resources higher education international offices are making for students upon reentry to better help them unpack their experiences abroad. With students divided on their reentry experiences, the two groups were able to reflect on and give ideas, suggestions and advice for their international offices to improve on and or focus on in order to help future returnees unpack their experiences as communication proved to be a crucial coping mechanism for the future returning students.

As students develop themselves and bring home an enriching experience, they can feel lost and unable to cope with their reentry processes alone, ultimately needing help and guidance from their international offices that helped them go abroad. The findings showed that students from both universities shared mixed experiences with their reentry transitional experiences and the relationship with their international office. The students themselves addressed this concern and gave detailed ideas on how to help future returnees cope with reentry better. This was uncovered during a section of the interviews that helped explore the ways in which the international office could have better helped them throughout their reentry as well as how to better assist future returnees during their reentry.

Unanimously, all the students interviewed addressed communication being the crucial factor that is needed to help students make the most sense of their experience in order to get the most out of their semester abroad. Students expressed that the office needs to reach out to the returning students first and invite them back into the office to debrief, if needed. One student expressed that by engaging in communication first; students will feel more invited back into the office. She said, “OK, now you’re back, do you want to come in and have a session with us” (Eileen)? Another student expressed this same opinion and urged the offices to make the first move. She said, “Get in contact with them right away” (Emily).

Other students believe that having a mandatory meeting when students are back would help get everyone back into the office. By mandating a meeting upon reentry, the office can reach

those students who are not comfortable in making the first move and or meeting one on one. Additionally, having a reentry meeting and or get together can help students connect with others in order to make sense of their time abroad with a receptive audience. One student stated that:

I think having at the beginning of the next school year a get together the first week of school because you're not busy, it's just syllabus week and everyone is back, unless they graduated obviously. But having a mandatory meeting. Make it mandatory that they all have to come and that is part of the process because there were mandatory meetings before we left talking about culture shock. By having a mandatory meeting after the students get back they could decompress what happened and talk about it to other people that went other places. They could also talk about their experiences with those people (Hannah).

Other prevalent recommendations that the students addressed were the need to form connections during the reentry process with those who have shared a similar experience. This case aligns with the previous theme introduced where students were reflecting on their longing for a sense of community. Students said the creation of connections from alumni would help them. Nia, who had a difficult reentry, stated that having events throughout the semester would help students reenter at their own pace. She said the following:

I would have a couple more events during the semester because they have an event the first week, but the first week you haven't been here for such a long time that you want to be with your friends. You want to see other people. Once you start actually having schoolwork and you start dealing with the transition, they don't have anything anymore (Nia).

With students from both universities addressing ways to enrich and make sense of their study abroad through reentry resources, the students viewed communication as the most important coping mechanism component of reentry. Additionally, mandating resources for students similar to those of the already mandatory orientation meetings present at both international offices was addressed as a way for students to come together, debrief and compartmentalize their experience.

What we greatly need today is to construct bridges between the orientation and reentry experiences, between the pre- and post-sojourn ruminations, which use the actual

overseas experience as a behavioral/social text to be deciphered, analyze, and finally melded with the student's ongoing academic pursuits and personal development. The entire notion of orientation as a one-time, rather static set of prescriptions, simulations, and do-don't lists needs to be revised, using the more dynamic and inclusive idea of orientation and reentry as twin reflections of the intercultural process (La Brack, 1999).

4.9 Reentry Staff Population Themes

There were seven staff members from the student populations' international offices that participated in the research. As previously mentioned, in order to better understand where reentry efforts, resources and programming currently stand at both universities, it was crucial to interview the international educators themselves. By conducting these interviews, the staff were able to bring attention to the significance of reentry. Additionally, the interviews were beneficial to explore where reentry currently fits into their priorities and the specific limitations their offices face when executing reentry resources for their returning study abroad students.

The breakdown of themes from the staff were organized orderly into three specific themes. The staffs' personal and professional relevance with reentry will be introduced to help highlight their understanding of reentry and their personal experiences helping with the utilization of practices in their offices. The exploration of current reentry resources will help give a detailed account to the current tactics both international offices are employing for their students. Moreover, this theme will explore the limitations offices face when implementing resources. Lastly, the exploration of the future of reentry will be broken down to help articulate what the offices would like to mandate, ultimately helping students make the most out of their study abroad experiences processes.

4.10 Experiencing Reentry Firsthand

Professionally, individuals in the international education field share a common bond with their experiences in working with study abroad through their personal experiences and relevance with reentry. The staff members were interviewed at both universities to bring attention to their relevance, expertise, understanding and perceptions of the phenomenon of

reentry in their offices. In order to better understand reentry, it was necessary to interview the international educators implementing reentry efforts for their study abroad students. The first theme to immerse was their relevance with reentry themselves through their personal experiences and accounts. The staff members addressed their own relevance with reentry through talking about how they got into the field of international education, specifically study abroad.

All of the staff members interviewed stated they took part in study abroad programs during their undergraduate career and or lived abroad and have experienced the reentry process themselves. The director at University A stated:

When I was in high school, my brother studied abroad in London and I sort of did a spur of the moment visit to him and it opened my eyes. I had traveled to almost every state in the U.S. at that point, but getting across the pond really opened my worldview a bit and I was a little older too and it ignited a passion. So then I studied abroad as a student. I struggled with reentry coming back and dreamt about going back overseas so I actually arranged to do an internship that led to my first professional job overseas in London (Jake).

A study abroad coordinator at University A also reflected on her study abroad experience as well as living and working abroad after graduation. She stated:

I ended up spending a semester abroad in Scotland and after I came back, I interned in the Office of International Education for a year and when I was getting ready to graduate I was pretty sure I wanted to go into international education and this job, but I wanted to be sure that is what I wanted to invest my time in by doing a masters so I thought I should try something different before I do the master's degree and so that is how I ended up teaching in Japan (Andrea).

Moreover, to having experienced studying and working abroad, the staff members were asked to reflect on their personal experiences and how it helps them when working with their study abroad students. Gwen, a study abroad coordinator at University A focused on being able to create connections with students. She said, "I think in particular, if students are going to a place I have been personally, it's easier to make a connection for the students" (Gwen). She elaborated on this by stating that if she has not been to the location either, she can still create

the travel connection with her students. Jake and Andrea elaborated that their personal background resonates with their student population at University A. They stated:

Well, I was born and raised here so I understand the local culture and the very regional focus that is pervasive in this area. So I understand the hesitation that students feel, particularly those who have not traveled a lot before in terms of the hesitancy or the uncertainty involved with making the decision to study abroad. But then I also understand the transitions they go through when they are there because I have lived it; I have experienced it. And then I understand what it is like to come back here and that sense of boredom that maybe comes along with being back home. I think just by experiencing that myself, helps me relate (Jake).

Well I think a lot of my personal experience relates to the students. Part of what I was looking for when looking at schools to work at was that I wanted a school where the students might be coming from a background that I might understand. So when I was searching for a job, I was looking for a public institution, which I went to a public institution. I was looking for a school where everyone did not necessarily study abroad (Andrea).

In addition to the staff members in both offices, Scott, a study abroad coordinator at University B addressed his reliability to students and his overall mission for wanting to get involved in international education. Scott said “Part of my mission, personally, is to give people that same opportunity and make them believe it is possible if they do not think it is and secondly to support them throughout the process”.

International education and study abroad professionals have experienced reentry firsthand and that has ultimately helped them empathize with their returning students in order to help provide them with all the aspects of positive intercultural and multicultural counseling. As the international office is the focal unit for study abroad on both university campuses, the rest of the chapter will explore the specific efforts, resources and programming that are being implemented in their offices as well as their limitations of providing best reentry practices to their students.

4.11 Current Resources and Efforts for Reentry Students: Communicating and Connecting the Processes

One of the main objectives of this research has been to explore the reentry resources and efforts international offices are utilizing for their study abroad participants. This objective was set out to get the perceptions from not only the student's perspectives, but from the international educators themselves. In order to better understand the role reentry plays in the international offices, the staff were asked questions about the specific position reentry plays in their office as well as some of their successes and challenges with implementing reentry resources in their OIE.

Within both universities, study abroad professionals stated that reentry does not play the largest role in the study abroad process. Both universities have allotted time to help their students reenter, but their reentry is not facilitated through mandatory events helping connect the pre-departure, during and post-study abroad timeline. Both offices stated that their main challenges are staffing and financial allocation. Kari, the associate director of the OIE at University B addressed this concern and stated that:

I would say that we are understaffed in comparison to the number of students we are sending abroad. But I would say that is quite true for a lot of universities. So some universities who are sending 200-300 students abroad may have one or two staff members. We sent 650 students abroad last year and there are sort of industry standards of a numbers of advisors to student ratios that are recommended. One advisor for 150 students (Kari).

Additionally, the director at University A addressed this concern too and stated the following:

Well the biggest challenge is resources. If you look at Forum on Education Abroad they recommend a student to advisor ratio of 42 to 1. We're currently operating a little over 300 to 1 and that does not factor into account that those same individuals that are in the 300 to 1 ratio are also responsible for advising 120 international students and they are also responsible for advising 40 scholars and they are also responsible for 25 National Student Exchange students and they are also responsible for three grant programs so resources are by far the most challenging issues (Jake).

With these challenges presented, they have not forgotten about the importance of reentry and have utilized the time and resources given to create resources both informal and formal for study abroad returnees. Communicating personally with the students when they are back can be a pivotal moment in order to reach out and help the students if they want to debrief and reflect on their study abroad program. Gwen has taken this initiative to reach out and stated that:

The last couple of years when students return, I send a big, long e-mail to them just welcoming them back and things to keep in mind, what to expect, bullet points of what to do for graduation sashes, kind of nitty gritty details and one of the items on there is, I called it a debrief. So if students want to come in for a debriefing session, per say, we can go over some of that reentry information, we can go over how to write about their experience on a résumé, how to condense their experience into an elevator speech. It's optional. I encourage students to do it (Gwen).

In addition to the e-mail Gwen sends to returnees, she also has a reentry welcome back folder for interested students. In the folder there are resources for students on the specific reentry adjustment periods and tips to help them combat some of these challenges. One of the articles in the folder is a list of the top ten reentry challenges students face when reentering (La Brack, 2003).

These include: boredom, “no one wants to hear”, you can't explain, reverse “homesickness”, relationships have changed, people see “wrong” changes, people misunderstand, feelings of alienation, inability to apply new knowledge and skills and loss/compartmentalization of experience. The folder also has tips on ways to properly include your study abroad experience on your résumé and information on masters programs abroad and working abroad. Gwen said that the folder is a resource she utilizes with students if they take the initiative to schedule a meeting with her.

Molly, a study abroad coordinator at University B addressed the importance of reaching out when the students are back to keep them updated on relevant events they can utilize on campus. She stated the following:

The first e-mail is welcome back, we hope you had a successful time, here are some resources for the kind of emotional/reentry piece then we start gravitating towards

ways to get involved on campus, ways to get involved with the OIE and then the career/vocational piece (Molly).

As uncovered in the previous findings, students are longing for a sense of community in order to communicate their experience to the right audience. The staff was reflective of this theme and addressed how they are able to link their personal reentry experiences with the students they counsel. Andrea addressed this important linkage point and stated the following:

A lot of things and questions I get from returning students is how they can work abroad. I've got a flyer I can give students with work opportunities abroad and different careers possibly related to international education with the U.S. Department of State or working at embassies. They don't even know that that exists and what's the process to get there. Teaching in Asia is a very common one too, but again students don't even know that exists (Andrea).

In conjunction with giving opportunities for students to talk about their experiences, the OIE offices addressed the allotment of volunteering opportunities for returning students to partake in if desired. Gwen and Molly have utilized their study abroad students to be a resource for study abroad fairs on campus. They stated that this opportunity allows the students to engage with perspective students and share their story, helping create a connection that can help both students. It can help the reentry student communicate their experience to an active listener and let the perspective student get detailed information about specific locations, ultimately helping them view study abroad in a more tangible way.

Formally, at University B, another communication resource allotted for students is a reentry event held in the OIE for each returning group of study abroad students. Kari stated the following about this resource:

We do a reentry event where we invite students that has appetizers and food and music to just give students an outlet to talk about their programs. It's also a good opportunity for us to get feedback on the programs (Kari).

In addition to the reentry event, another formal resource University B offers is a reentry course for students to take upon reentry where they can receive two credits. The course however has not run every semester because there needs to be a minimum of 10 students enrolled in the course. The staff addressed this limitation and explained the following:

We offer a reentry course that has not gotten a lot of student attraction, but the students who have taken it have felt very grateful for that opportunity and I'm still connected with several of those students who write me and tell me where they're at and what they're doing (Molly).

With resources at both universities not required from students, both offices have experienced low participation rates from their reentry student populations. Although the student findings showed high levels of student participation, these students are a minority population who actively seek out reentry resources and programming themselves. Furthermore, the students who took advantage of the initial resources were met with greater opportunities in their international offices that helped them reenter at a higher level compared to the average study abroad student. This finding will be explored in the next section.

4.12 Reentry Resources are not for Every Student

In contrast to the informal and formal resources available to all returning students, a major finding within this research that was uncovered through interviewing both the students and staff was the presence of both study abroad alumni roles in each international office. These roles vary from study abroad ambassadors to interns and student works. Both offices have created specific roles for study abroad alumni to get back into their offices and help them with the various tasks needed in order to combat their lack of staff and financial restraints as addressed previously. These roles are not open to all students and the offices are searching for candidates who mirror their principles in order to effectively help with the daily operations of the OIE and successfully communicate with perspective study abroad students. Furthermore, these positions are not always maybe visible to all study abroad alumni. It is through initial contact and self-motivation that students become aware of these formal opportunities in both international office. Specifically, within the student sample itself, some of the participants were currently fulfilling and/or had served in one of these given roles. This finding however was unknown to myself before the interviews were conducted. This was revealed when the students talked about their formal positions in the office during the middle section of the interviews which focused on the reentry resources the interviewees took advantage of and participated in during their reentry transitional experience. The director at University A addressed this finding and stated the following:

We hire three or four interns a semester and most of them are study abroad alumni or international students. But that's not necessarily open to everyone. We are looking for students that are really star students (Jake).

University B has also allotted specific roles for their study abroad alumni in order to help them run their office more efficiently. These positions include a study abroad ambassador program and student works. These positions require interested study abroad alumni to apply for these positions and applicants are not guaranteed admittance into either position. The staff at University B stated the following:

There is one that is in its infancy and that is our ambassador program initiative that we just started this semester. So we have just piloted that with six students who are volunteering to be contact points for students who are going next semester. So we are just starting to build that initiative. I think as it grows with more alumni we will have more success with it (Scott).

So the student works they also do some of that because most of them have studied abroad before. We have a general e-mail account that they are responsible for checking and responding to basic questions. We also have peer advisor walk-in hours, so two of our return students have set hours so students can come in and talk to them about the very initial steps of the application process with basic questions. Then the rest of is a lot of administrative work, helping us prepare for the orientations or when we get an e-mail from someone asking about the study abroad statistics we have them put the sheet together (Kari).

Formal opportunities to get involved with the OIE upon reentry are heavily reflective of students who exert high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy in order to keep their experience alive and get more connected within the international education field. As previously mentioned, half of the participants in this research have served in position roles at their OIE. These students had to apply for the positions, which requires high levels of self-efficacy in order to obtain such a position. Furthermore, as these positions allow for one-on-one communication and coordination with their international offices, these students are more likely to have personal success with their reentry in comparison to those who are not able to obtain these positions.

4.13 Trouble Getting Students Back into the International Office

As previously addressed, both offices attributed being understaffed as one of their biggest limitations and challenges they face. The director of University B said, “I think it’s a disservice to both the advising and to the students” (Ian). Another limitation both offices addressed was the lack of understanding from university officials of the daily operations of an international office. With the lack of understanding, the universities have not been able to properly staff the OIE, which has resulted in both offices failing to meet national standards. Scott, a study abroad coordinator at University B said that:

I don’t think universities at a higher level (presidents and provosts) recognize that it’s longer than that. It’s longer than when you just get on the flight and come back from the flight. It’s the preparation before. If something does come up while you are abroad and when you return. I think to do that adequately and help people have a platform to express things takes staff and I do not think universities understand that so they understaff international offices and then they wonder why satisfaction surveys that go out about our office are sometimes... sometimes students just aren’t satisfied and articulate that, they are saying they need more support” (Scott).

In addition to staffing numbers, they also addressed they have had a difficult time in getting students back into the OIE to fully unpack and connected their experience. With no formal requirement after they have returned, reentry is left up to the sojourner and their degree of motivation and self-efficacy. This is a crucial period for the sojourner as it reflects on how they make sense of and unpack their experience. The associate director at University B stated:

I think in general there is just sort of not a real involvement of the students with the office once they get back. They kind of see it as they are back and they don’t really have anything to do with us anymore and there really isn’t anything we hold to that. It’s not like we say you have to come to this session or we’re not going to transfer your credits back. A lot of students just get back and get back to their own lives and then they’re done with their study abroad experience. That’s certainly not how we want them be seen (Kari).

University A also reflected on this pivotal moment and stated the following:

The hardest thing we ever found was getting people to show up to it (reentry workshop). I think they needed it, but sometimes I think after their programs are over, they're not even necessarily understanding or cognizant of why they might want it or why they might need it (Andrea).

In attribution to the non-requirement of utilizing reentry resources when back, the staff also stated that getting students to participate in their allotted resources requires a lot of prompting and reaching out on their part. Their personal communication with the students is voluntary and with a lack of staff, this requires a lot of time in order to reach out to every student. With this being the case at both international offices, students need to be self-motivated and display levels of high self-efficacy in order to want to continue their study abroad process when they return home. This was evident from both offices. One of the study abroad coordinators reflected on the lack of self-motivation of students upon reentry and said, "There are resources available, and they have to seek them out" (Molly).

Having to seek the resources out themselves could in fact be the answer as to why both offices experience low participation rates. As Gaw's research (1999) has shown, students voiced feelings of alienation, loneliness, social misunderstandings and insecurities when going through their reentry. These students specifically were the least likely to utilize any reentry resources and programming offered by their international offices as the previously addressed variables made it difficult to overcome leaving the students to reenter on their own as the services from their international offices were voluntary.

As previously addressed in the self-motivation student theme, self-motivation is a key factor to the degree in which students cooperate with their OIE during their reentry. Students who display high levels of self-efficacy in wanting to unpack their study abroad experience with the help of their OIE must seek them out as addressed by Molly. Furthermore, students who experience isolation and other key variables during their reentry may find it too difficult to seek out resources. Ultimately, in both cases the student is in control and has ultimate control in their reentry transitional experience at both universities.

4.14 The Future of Reentry: Enriching the Study Abroad Experience through Reentry Participation

Both offices were reflective and critical of their reentry approaches thus far. Additionally, the study abroad professionals addressed the importance of reentry and its significant role in connecting the study abroad experience, ultimately turning the experience into a process. Furthermore, no requirements of the students upon reentry, both offices expressed unanimous interest in creating a reentry resource that would require mandatory attendance, similar to that of when students are required to attend pre-departure meetings and workshops. The staff at both universities acknowledged that creating a mandatory resource for students would help students, especially the ones who are most distant in being able to reflect on and make the most out of their time spent abroad.

Coincidentally, both offices expressed that they would like to introduce a three part course where students would get one-credit for pre-departure activities, seminars and or workshops, followed by one-credit while they're abroad, then bringing together the three stages of their study abroad with participation in a reentry resource when they have returned home. The directors at both University A and B addressed this format and stated that it would enable students to get the most out of their study abroad.

It would be something if they want the certificate that I would sort of embed within the certificate program as part of the process because I see the pre-departure as a one-credit course, the actual experience and the two-credit reentry is sort of making up a three-credit and then embedding in the middle your semester-long program (Ian).

I thought one idea we could have would be your first year seminar courses which is a cohort of students that have a class together and I would love to have a first year seminar course to prepare for the study abroad experience, and then have a second year experience with those students who study abroad or do an international internship or research project abroad, followed up by a third year so you're keeping that high impact practice and the cohort model which has proven to be successful for retention and academic success, but incorporating an international experience in that over a three year period (Jake).

With both offices interested in creating more reentry resources for their study abroad participants, specifically mandatory resources both students and professionals will be able to successfully link the pre-departure, while abroad and post-study abroad processes. In addition, as uncovered in the student informants' findings section, the majority of students who participated in the reentry resources and programming made available to them expressed high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy in order to keep their experience alive and connect with other students. Furthermore, students who participated in this research utilized the opportunity to communicate their experience to an interested audience. These participation rates however, are ironically the minority when it comes to student involvement with both offices after their semesters abroad. Both offices have addressed that there is a large student population that do not utilize any reentry resources and programming. Additionally, they stated that there is a student population they never hear from again, leaving the data undetermined as to why students are not utilizing reentry resources.

Collectively, with both offices admitting there is a lack of participation in their reentry resources and programming, there is clearly a missing linkage point. Both universities require student participation in pre-departure orientations and meetings prior to studying abroad. However, with no post-study abroad reentry requirements mandated for students at either university, the population of students who take advantage of and communicate with their office upon reentry will continue to be at a minimal rate. Both offices will continue to work with and hire the same type of study abroad student. This pattern will continue to disservice students who experience alienation, loneliness, social misunderstandings and insecurities. Furthermore, students who reenter with and display high levels of self-efficacy magnitude will continue to experience reverse culture shock and feel it too difficult to be motivated enough to get the appropriate support they need.

Respectively, both offices have acknowledged this gap and are both cognizant and positive when it comes to the future of reentry resources and programming. As both offices hope to create and mandate some form of a course, there is hope that future study abroad participants will be able to connect the study abroad processes in order to take advantage of the various opportunities study abroad presents its participants. This shift in reentry however cannot be left up to only the international office. The international office needs support from the entire university and provosts in order to create more cohesive study abroad programs for their students.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

Before beginning this thesis, it was my goal to offer insight and analyses that would contribute to a deeper understanding of the reentry process as well as the importance and need for reentry efforts, resources and programming on college and university campuses international offices. I wanted to further inspire future researchers to investigate the relationships between the level of reentry study abroad participants' experiences and its relationship to the reentry efforts, resources and programming offered by their international office. Lastly, I wanted to inspire future study abroad participants to become active and engaged with their international office throughout the entire study abroad process in order to gain greater and deeper intercultural competence throughout their study abroad program. Additionally, I wanted to bring attention to the unique stories and experiences from the participants themselves in order to create open dialogue about the realness and importance of the phenomenon, reentry.

5.2 Thesis Reflections

Since entering the Comparative and International Education master's program at the University of Oslo, my main goal has been to study, understand and to get more acclimated with international education; specifically with my strong interest and experience in the study abroad processes. Having experienced reentry both through studying and working abroad, I have been fascinated by the influence others can have on sojourners and the decisions they make throughout their reentry transitional experiences. These initial experiences are what led me to furthering my intercultural competence through working abroad in South Korea and being an international master's student at the University of Oslo.

My background and experiences greatly helped me research study abroad heavily throughout this program. When entering this program I knew I wanted to incorporate my interest and knowledge into a thesis that could help explore and expose the current phenomenon of reentry; in addition to ultimately helping encouraging international educators and higher education stakeholders to realize the importance of viewing reentry as a significant period of

the study abroad process. By making reentry resources and programming available to students, international offices can be a focal point and major component to the level at which sojourners reenter. Furthermore, by exerting the same energy into the reentry process as international offices use for pre-departure preparations they can help link the pre-departure and reentry processes with the end result being a complete, holistic study abroad experience and process. The international office can be the deciding factor of how a student unpacks, makes sense of and uses their newfound intercultural skills and intercultural competence.

Personally, it was through the efforts, resources and planning from my international office upon returning from my study abroad program that ultimately gave me the support and advising needed to encourage insightful discussions, thoughtful reflections and a list of endless opportunities available to those seeking an international career. Without their efforts, guidance and support, I would not have up and moved to work abroad in South Korea or come to Norway to further my education. Both of these decisions were carefully crafted in order to pursue a career within international education as it was through the guidance from my mentors upon reentry that I was inspired to pursue a career in higher education.

In reflecting back on the fieldwork, interviews and findings, it remains clear that reentry efforts, resources and programming and participation in them are still at a minimal rate and unfortunately are not connected to the study abroad process. While participation in reentry resources proved to be well attended and taken advantage of in this study, the participants highly valued their study abroad experiences and sought out a way to connect their experiences upon reentry. Furthermore, the majority of students who used their OIE as a resource made the initial contact to receive guidance and support throughout their reentry process.

In order to continue to get students to think and act globally, sending them abroad is just the beginning. Students need to connect their study abroad experiences through more reflection of their time abroad. In order to help students connect their experiences, international offices need to be more equipped with proper resources and support in order to tackle this problem experienced at many international offices on colleges and universities campuses throughout the United States.

5.3 Overarching Themes

This study shows that students study abroad for an internationalized education for various reasons, including the opportunity for personal and professional growth and as a unique opportunity that is not available at their home universities. Additionally, this study reveals that students bring home an international education and experience that has the ability to transform students academically, culturally and socially. As students came home with a new sense of self and perspective, they were met with the affective, behavioral and cognitive components of reentry. As their international offices do not mandate any participation in reentry resources and or programming, the students were faced with the decision to be proactive and utilize their international offices at their own will.

As previously addressed, this study also reveals that the international offices in this case study both have addressed the importance and need for reentry programming and resources within their offices. Moreover, in accordance with the NAFSA reentry toolkit, both international offices have allotted sufficient time and resources for their students, however due to time and budget constraints, both offices are faced with the difficult decision to keep reentry resources and programming at a minimal rate and let the decision for participation be in the hands of their students. Additionally, neither office has an employee whose main job nor role in the office is reentry. If they want to implement reentry resources and programming for their students, they must find the time to fit it into their already busy schedules.

Without any requirements from the students upon reentry, participation in reentry resources and programming at both universities will continue to be of minimal attendance and only taken advantage of by a certain population of students. Moreover, participation in reentry resources and programming will continue to be stagnant as students less cognizant of their reentry transitions will fail to connect the dots in order to fully take advantage of the many benefits study abroad allows participants, including the academic and career endeavors, post-study abroad.

5.4 Relationships between Findings and Theory

By focusing on and addressing the affective, behavioral and cognitive components students endure during reentry, this study has shown the significant changes students experience during their reentry transitional period, post-study abroad and the linkage point between taking advantage of and utilizing reentry resources and programming made available from their international offices. With both international offices operating equivalently to the NAFSA toolkit, the international educators have allotted time, effort, resources and programming to their returning students in order help their student body with the reverse culture shock they experience and the continuation of their intercultural competence. As the students in this study experienced the affective, behavioral and cognitive components of reentry, they were able to get adequate guidance and support from their international offices. Students were able to utilize advising sessions, volunteer opportunities, mixers etc. to help with their reentry upon returning home from their semesters abroad.

Although a high percentage of participants in this study experienced positive reentry efforts and resources from their international offices, these students are classified as having high levels of self-efficacy strength and generality. These students had the personal power, confidence and assurance to connect with and reach out to their international office throughout their reentry transitional period.

The students in this study who showed levels of self-efficacy magnitude were met with uncertainty and had a difficult time reaching out to their international offices for reentry resources. This finding has shown that in order for students to properly connect their study abroad experiences in a supportive and encouraging environment, international offices need to work diligently to reach student populations who need their assistance the most. Furthermore, these students addressed that they were longing for a sense of community and connections in order to unpack and make sense of their experiences abroad. Students addressed these concerns and limitations through extensive suggestions of what would have helped them with their reentry transitional experience. These suggestions included: connections with previous study abroad alumni, more reentry events throughout the school year, opportunities to get involved both on and off campus and the creation of a post-study abroad community through mandating reentry resources and programming to help students unpack their experiences abroad.

Getting students back into the office has proven to be a difficult task, however the main question that still has yet to be determined is why are the international offices not connecting the experience through post-study abroad involvement in their offices? If attendance pre-departure is required, something must be mandated to help students become more cognizant and accountable for their reentry through reentry resources and programming in order to bring the holistic study abroad process full-circle. Additionally, as addressed by the staff, international offices need the proper support from their college and university in order to be fully equipped with both staff and resources in order to tackle this problem many international offices currently face across the United States.

5.5 Recommendations and Final Thoughts

La Brack (1999) has stated that international educators fail to meet the linkage point between orientation and reentry. In this study, both international offices were cognizant of the importance of and need for reentry resources and programming for their students. Moreover, both international offices agree that study abroad is a holistic process.

Coincidentally, both international offices addressed how a three-credit study abroad course would not only benefit their students pre-departure, but help them reenter in a way that would enable them to fully reflect on and take advantage of opportunities that follow study abroad participation. Moving to this format would significantly help students connect with the development of their intercultural competence. Furthermore, creating a credit-barring study abroad course would significantly increase the meaning of study abroad and enable students the opportunity to compartmentalize the various stages of study abroad and effectively unpack their experiences. However, in both instances, the likelihood of this being mandated and implemented in the near future is less likely as both international offices have limited funding, support and resources from their university and provosts. In order to implement something of this magnitude, both international offices would need full-support from their university, something that both are currently struggling with. What is more, both offices are still working diligently to simply get students abroad, not to mention getting students interested in studying abroad altogether.

As study abroad has been redefined by the key stakeholders in international education, in due time, reentry will be taken more seriously in order to give all students a holistic study abroad process that they will utilize throughout their career and personal lives, post-graduation. By taking reentry more seriously, international offices will help to prepare and transform their students to think and act globally and be more effective than previous generations (Dwyer & Peters, 2012; Stearns, 2009). Additionally, as research has shown that study abroad has only gained popularity since its inauguration, I firmly believe reentry will follow in its footsteps and become more recognized and valued by both students and international educators together helping connect both the processes and experiences throughout the study abroad process.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

Student Participation Letter

September 27, 2015

Dear Study Abroad Participants,

My name is Nicholas Favero and I am a master's candidate at the University of Oslo. Currently I am in my second year of the program and I will be conducting fieldwork for my thesis this fall at two universities in Wisconsin. For my thesis, I will be focusing on the reentry and transitional period students go through, post-study abroad. I am looking for participants who have recently returned from their semester abroad to take part in my research. Participants from all backgrounds and study regions are encouraged to participate in order to develop a well-rounded qualitative thesis. Research will be conducted through in person interviews in accordance with the Office of International Education. If you have recently returned from your semester abroad and want to share your overall experiences, please contact your Office of International Education for further information about how to participate. In addition, attached is a detailed participant information form where you will find all the necessary information if you choose to participate in this research project. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Nicholas Favero

Appendix 2

Participant Consent Form

Request for participation in research project "Post-Study Abroad Reentry Efforts from Higher Education International Offices"

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the reentry efforts international offices are making for their returning students and how these efforts have helped students during this significant transition period, post-study abroad from the perspective of returning students as well as from the international offices perspective.

This study will take place within cooperation of the two selected Offices of International Education that will be used for the developed case study. Respectively, 10 students will be selected to participate in the case study from each university through cooperation with their respective Office of International Education. In addition, four staff in each international office will be interviewed. In total there will be 20 student participants who will have recently returned from their semester abroad.

For a better representation of the collective study abroad practice; it will be advised that student participants are both male and female and studied in various continents. Moreover, the students who will be selected to participate should have returned to their university within a period of no more than 10 months from their semester abroad. Finally, students selected to participate in this case study should have studied abroad for at least one full academic semester.

What Does Participation in the project imply?

Data will be collected mainly through interviews. Utilizing interviews for this study will help the interviewer and the interviewee to openly communicate ultimately helping give adequate information to the developed research questions. Interviews will also help interviewees to tell

their personal stories, which will be beneficial in researching the reentry phenomena. The interview guide that has been created will reflect relation to the research questions for both students and staff. Specifically, students will be asked questions about the role their international offices played in their semester abroad, their overall study abroad experience and their reentry transitional experience. Staff will be interviewed about their professional background in study abroad, the reentry efforts their international offices utilize and the challenges and future of reentry and study abroad.

The interviews will be done individually, in person, on both universities' campuses upon approval from both universities. All in-person interviews will be audio-recorded once approval is given from the participants. Interviews will be transcribed for further data analysis, but all personal information from participants will be confidential and will be assigned fictional names in order to fully protect the confidentiality of the two universities and participants.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. Additionally, all data will be stored and saved on the researcher's personal computer that will be with them at all times. The computer has a set password for login to ensure all information is safely stored and inaccessible from outside parties.

The project is scheduled for completion by August 2016. Once the project is complete, the data will be anonymized and all personal information will be discarded.

Voluntary Participation

It is voluntary to participate in this project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Nicholas Favero at 262-893-6463.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Consent for participation in the study

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 3

Interview Calendar

October 2015						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Interview 9:30AM	2 Interview 8:45AM Interview 12:30PM	3
4	5 Interview 11:00AM	6 Interview 10:00AM Interview 11:00AM Interview 4:00PM	7	8 Interview 1:30PM	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Interview 10:00AM Interview 3:00PM	20 Interview 9:00AM Interview 10:00AM	21 Interview 9:00AM Interview 1:00PM Interview 3:00PM	22	23	24
25	26	27 Interview 2:00PM Interview 3:00PM	28	29 Interview 11:00AM Interview 2:30PM	30	31

November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Interview 10:00AM Interview 11:30AM	3 Interview 9:00AM Interview 10:00AM	4 Interview 9:00AM Interview 10:00AM	5 Interview 11:00AM Interview 2:00PM	6 Interview 10:00AM	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	Notes:				

Appendix 4

Student Participant Interview Guide

Interview guide for reentry, post-study abroad participants

1. Study abroad experience

- A. Tell me about your study abroad experience.
- B. What role did the Office of International Education play in your study abroad experience?
- C. Explain the communication you had with your study abroad advisor pre-departure?
- D. What challenges did you face during your study abroad program?

2. Reentry transitional experience

- A. Tell me about your reentry process.
- B. Explain the academic and social change study abroad brought upon reentry.
- C. How do you think study abroad has changed your future plans?
- D. How was the communication with your study abroad advisor and international office post-study abroad?
- E. What resources were made available to you upon returning from your study abroad experience?
- F. What resources did you take advantage of and why?

3. Ideas, suggestions and advice

- A. Overall, what helped you the most when going through the reentry process?
- B. What resources made available from your international office helped you the most during your transitional period?
- C. What resources would you recommend your international office to make available for future returning study abroad participants?
- D. What would you have done differently, if anything and why?

Appendix 5

Staff Participant Interview Guide

Interview guide for international office study abroad advisors and staff

1. Professional background

- A. How did you get into the field of study abroad?
- B. What is your role as a study abroad advisor?
- C. How do things from your personal experience help your study abroad students?

2. Reentry efforts and resources

- A. What are some of the main challenges students face during reentry?
- B. Tell me about the role reentry plays in your office.
- C. How does your office communicate with returning students?
- D. What reentry efforts and resources does your office make available for returning study abroad students?
- E. From the allotted reentry resources made available from your office, what have been the most successful and why?
- F. From the allotted reentry resources made available from your office, what have been the least successful and why?

3. Challenges and suggestions

- A. What are the biggest challenges the office faces when creating and implementing reentry resources for returning students?
- B. What resources, not in existence in the office currently do you wish to implement for future reentry students?
- C. What are the future plans for the international office?