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This chapter provides an overview of external and internal changes associated with collegiate study abroad experiences. A brief review of the research literature is included along with recent research that sheds light on potential mechanisms associated with study abroad–related change. Recommendations for enhancing outcomes associated with study abroad are also provided.

Outcomes of Global Education: External and Internal Change Associated With Study Abroad

Cindy Miller-Perrin, Don Thompson

College students in the United States have studied abroad as part of their educational experience since Indiana University first sponsored its summer educational tours in 1881, according to the chronology of Hoffa (2007). Soon thereafter, many schools established programs abroad and by the third decade of the 20th century, there was some kind of study abroad offering for undergraduates available in nearly every college on the eastern seaboard of the United States, complementing an effort by many European universities to offer summer courses for foreigners on their own campuses (Hoffa, 2007). Not only do a significant number of universities currently have students who study abroad, but also the frequency of student participation in these programs has risen dramatically over the last 20 years. According to Bhandari and Chow (2007), there were approximately 44,000 U.S. students who studied abroad for academic credit in 1986, compared to over 223,000 students in 2006. This represents an average annual growth rate of 23%. Indeed, many universities actually require students to obtain an educational experience abroad and the U.S. Congress has expressed a bipartisan goal to include study abroad experiences for one million American students by 2017 (Che, Spearman, & Manizade, 2009; Lewin, 2009).

College students participate in study abroad programs for many reasons, including their desire to travel, to experience another culture, to enhance their language skills, to fulfill degree requirements for their university, or simply to take advantage of the opportunity to live and learn in another setting. U.S. colleges and universities, in turn, have their own reasons for offering study abroad experiences for their students which have

traditionally included the pursuit of a classical education in the arts and literature as well as foreign language acquisition (Lewin, 2009; Meyer-Lee & Evans, 2007). More recently, the goal of colleges and universities has focused on the importance of internationalization, globalization, or efforts to develop “knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences necessary either to compete successfully in the global marketplace or to work toward finding and implementing solutions to problems of global significance” (Lewin, 2009, p. xiv).

The benefits of study abroad are many and varied. Previous research suggests that living and learning in another country is associated with two fundamental outcomes. The first is an increase in external connections, manifested through an increased ability to converse in another tongue, and an increased understanding, sensitivity, and connection to another culture. The second outcome is an internal redirection, resulting in a deepening sense of one’s identity and self-awareness. Joseph Campbell writes about both of these elements. About the external dimension he says: “And this is the basic mythological problem: Move into a landscape. Find the sanctity of that land. And then there can be a matching of your own nature with this gorgeous nature of the land. It is the first essential adaptation” (Campbell, 2003, p. 7). Campbell notes, however, that external change is not legitimate unless it is accompanied by internal change. We leave home and, perhaps for the first time, discover ourselves. We step outside our bodies, so to speak, and accordingly we see our own body anew. As a result of the internal redirection and rediscovery, we are able and willing to adapt to and connect with another culture. Thus, it is critical that the student be exposed to internal change agents and be able to accept the challenges they present, making it possible for external transformations to occur and persist. Since the 1950s researchers have examined both external and internal outcomes of study abroad experiences, their interconnectedness, as well as the various mechanisms for the changes that occur.

Research on External Outcomes

Study abroad experiences and their relationship to several external educational goals have been studied extensively in terms of their effect on enhancing second-language acquisition, intercultural learning (e.g., understanding of cultural differences and cultural interactions and relationships, cultural attitudes and awareness, etc.), as well as disciplinary knowledge. Although early studies suffered from various methodological weaknesses, research over the past decade or so has become more methodologically sound to include explicit research questions, standardized measurements, and appropriate comparison groups (Comp, Gladding, Rhodes, Stephenson, & Vande Berg, 2007). There is ample evidence that students who participate in an educational experience in an international setting demonstrate an increase in second-language proficiency (e.g., DuFon & Churchill, 2006;

Engle & Engle, 2004), in intercultural learning (e.g., Engle & Engle, 2004; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Zielinski, 2007), and in disciplinary knowledge (e.g., Sutton & Rubin, 2004; Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid, & Whalen, 2004).

Evidence is also accumulating that suggests the powerful impact of study abroad on the globalization of American students. “Globalization” often refers to student adherence to globally minded attitudes such as viewing events “from a world perspective” and valuing “solutions to problems that will not only benefit them, but that will also benefit the broader world arena” (Che et al., 2009, p. 101). Carlson and Widaman (1988) conducted one of the first studies to examine variables associated with global mindedness in a sample of 450 students who studied abroad during their junior year compared to 800 students who remained on their home campus. Students were surveyed about their awareness of global problems, concern for problems of the developing world, desire for international peace, wish to help find solutions to global problems, respect for other cultures, need for closer cooperation among nations, and desire to travel to other countries. Students were asked to reflect on their attitudes both before and after their study abroad experience and findings indicated that those students who studied abroad showed higher levels of international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and cultural cosmopolitanism compared to students who did not study abroad.

More recent studies also provide evidence of the impact of study abroad experiences on globalization. Douglas and Jones-Rikkens (2001), for example, examined the concept of “world-mindedness,” defined as “the extent to which individuals value the global perspective on various issues” (p. 58). According to these authors, individuals who are world-minded are more likely to see viewpoints that differ from their own perspectives as valuable in terms of ethnic, national, or religious perspectives and to appreciate cultural differences. In this study, the 59 students who completed a study abroad program had a stronger sense of world-mindedness compared to the 61 students who did not participate in a study abroad experience.

Findings from the “Beyond Immediate Impact: Study Abroad for Global Engagement” study demonstrated the long-term impact of study abroad on globalization (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon, 2009). The study examined survey results of 6391 study abroad participants that consisted of student alumni of U.S. colleges and universities covering an approximate 50-year span from 1960 to 2005. Participants were assessed on a variety of different forms of global engagement including civic engagement (commitments in domestic and international arenas), knowledge production (of print, artistic, and digital media), philanthropy (volunteerism and monetary donations), social entrepreneurship (involvement in organizations to benefit the community), and voluntary simplicity (living a simple lifestyle). Results of this self-report study indicated that participants perceived their study abroad experience to be significantly influential in their subsequent

global engagement activities, with large numbers of participants reporting participating in the five forms of global engagement.

Finally, there is growing evidence of the importance of study abroad programs on other external higher education goals such as “high-impact” practices that engage college students to a greater extent than traditional classroom-based instructional experiences. The National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), for example, recently described evidence of the most significant activities that impact student success in and beyond the college years (Kuh, 2008). Study abroad was one of these “high-impact activities,” identified as affecting such areas as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, knowledge of human cultures and the physical/natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, deep/integrative learning, and postcollege performance (Gonyea, Kinzie, Kuh, & Nelson Laird, 2008).

Research on Internal Outcomes

Although much attention in the research literature has focused on external outcomes, internal changes that occur in the lives of students who study and live abroad are also important. In the words of Joseph Campbell (2003), the interior world drives the exterior. In effect, external change does not last unless it is rooted in internal change: “The seat of the soul is where the inner and the outer worlds meet. The outer world changes with historical time, the inner world is the world of *anthropos*” (Campbell, 2003, p. 181). Thus, the internal and external aspects of a person intersect in the soul, where human identity resides. Despite the importance of internal change, research addressing higher education goals associated with them and their redirection has not received as much attention in terms of their connection to study abroad experiences. As students encounter another culture and build relationships with its members, they may also gain a deeper understanding of themselves, leading to various forms of personal growth. Based on the writing of Pausanias, an ancient Greek traveler and geographer, living and learning abroad may contribute to one of the oldest cultural aphorisms, as inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: *γινωθι σαυτου* (“know thyself”; Habicht, 1985).

There is some evidence in the literature attesting to personal growth, including emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Investigators using both surveys and interviews, for example, have documented increases in self-understanding and awareness in terms of self-esteem, self-concept, and self-confidence (e.g., Carsello & Greiser, 1976), interpersonal communication skills (Pfinister, 1972), and tolerance for people from other cultures (Pfinister, 1972), associated with study abroad experiences. In terms of intellectual development, similar studies have demonstrated the development

of liberalization of attitudes, values, and interests as well as increases in critical thinking and tolerance for ambiguity (Carsello & Greiser, 1976; Marion, 1980). Although many of these studies used longitudinal designs and various comparison groups, few of these studies used standardized instruments.

Evidence from more contemporary literature, which has improved on various methodological limitations of past research, also provides some evidence of the impact of study abroad on various internal outcomes. The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), for example, conducted a study of 3400 college students that had studied abroad, spanning a 49-year period. Student feedback revealed deep personal growth including focused education and career goals at the conclusion of their study abroad (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Results of a study conducted through a Midwest school indicated that a study abroad experience led to gains in confidence, maturity, and empathy among the student participants (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002). In narrative interviews, Sindt (2007) found that American college students reported significant personal growth in the form of maturation, autonomy and self-reliance, and increased desire to apply themselves to their field of study. Many colleges and universities have asked students to specifically describe the personal spiritual transformations that they experienced. For example, St. Olaf College students who were interviewed during their living and studying overseas described experiences of “intensification” as they underwent transformation from tourists into pilgrims (Barbour, 2010, p. 57). Students interviewed at Gordon College described their self-discovery experiences, brought on by cultural dissonance, as God-appointments, allowing them to practice monasticism and draw back to their “Orvieto self,” where the world slows down, leading to simplicity and spiritual focus (Skillen, 2010, p. 96). Finally, the impact of an overseas, one-year study abroad program in England upon U.S. college students was measured via results from a four-part questionnaire that participants completed. Substantial changes were reported in attitudes, specific knowledge levels, beliefs, values, behaviors, open-mindedness, personal growth, and general appreciation of other cultures (Thomlison, 1991).

Most recently, Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) examined several unique internal outcomes associated with study abroad. These researchers studied three important elements impacting internal change resulting from study abroad experiences. The first element was students’ developing sense of life purpose, or vocational calling. Questions about life meaning and purpose often surface during the college years as students consider issues associated with both faith beliefs and career options. The second element was students’ developing sense of faith and spirituality. College students are increasingly interested in matters of religion, faith, and spirituality. Studies on beliefs and values among college students (Higher Education Research Institute, 2005), research projects focusing on youth and religion (Smith & Denton, 2005), and the surge in enrollments in religiously affiliated colleges

and universities (Riley, 2004), for example, evidence a movement toward a greater focus on faith, spirituality, and religion in the academy. In addition, Paloutzian, Richardson, and Rambo (1999) suggested that religion is the only area in which one encounters commitment to an ultimate concern or purpose and, as a result, might inspire the development of life purpose or a sense of vocation. The third element studied was students' identity development. These researchers proposed that academic study abroad contributes to helping students gain their sense of identity, which in turn contributes to both faith development and a deeper sense of vocational calling.

Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) therefore sought to examine significant development in the areas of identity, faith, and vocational calling in a random sample of 300 undergraduates who were surveyed each of their four years as undergraduates. Of these students, 99 completed the survey during both their first year and senior year, and of these students a subsample of 37 college students who participated in an international program experience was matched on age and gender to 37 college students who did not participate in such a program. Results indicated that importance of faith and practice of religious behavior both decreased from the first year to the senior year, regardless of whether or not students participated in an international program experience. In contrast, findings suggested that faith application to daily living and decision making increased for students who participated in a study abroad program and decreased for those students who did not participate in a study abroad program. This study also found that understanding of one's sense of vocational calling and having the inclination to serve others were both significantly affected by a study abroad experience as sense of calling and desire to serve others increased over time for those who participated in a study abroad program and decreased for those who did not participate in a study abroad program. Finally, this research demonstrated some of the potential effects of study abroad on identity development as significant increases in identity achievement were observed for the study abroad students but not the nonstudy abroad students.

Change Agents

As we have noted, most of the extant research has focused on various external outcomes of study abroad programs and, in particular, the acquisition of a second language. More recently, researchers have begun to examine not only the external outcomes of study abroad but also the specific mechanisms or conditions that might contribute to such change. Evidence suggests that external outcomes are influenced by several variables such as program duration, institutional grading policies, type of program, degree of contact with host-country nationals, and demographic variables (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1993; Brecht & Robinson, 1993; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004; Trooboff, Cressey, & Monty, 2004). Depending on the specific external outcome studied, these variables

exhibit varying effects, which can sometimes challenge conventional wisdom with regard to study abroad experiences (Comp et al., 2007).

Although research has examined various factors that impact external outcomes associated with study abroad experiences, little research has focused on potential variables that might shed light on the specific mechanisms through which internal outcomes occur. In their work, Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) speculated about potential mechanisms of internal change by invoking the concept of the “hero journey,” as described by Joseph Campbell (2003) and Richard Rohr (1994). The purpose of this journey, in the context of a study abroad experience, is twofold—first, for the hero to grow up and move into adulthood, realizing his/her “name” and identity, and second, to discover his/her purpose in life (that is, what they love most and where that love meets the world’s needs). This journey involves three key phases based on the classic anthropological rite of passage: (a) separation and departure, (b) exploration and discovery, and (c) return. These milestones occur, for the most part, when a young adult goes away to college, ultimately bringing about the sojourner’s self-discovery and sense of life purpose. Moreover, these events are compressed and accentuated when that young person leaves their homeland to live and study in another country and culture. Thus, according to Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) there are potentially three underlying reasons for the internal changes related to study abroad—(a) departure: the dislocation of leaving home; (b) initiation: experiencing the differences of other cultures and seeking out mentoring and community; and (c) return: returning to the United States within a limited timeframe, requiring the student to assimilate their international experience into their ongoing domestic life.

Departure. Departure or separation is the first step in students’ transformation and conversion. This is a fragile moment, the moment of committing to the adventure. Students must initially make the decision to go and for many it is simply the willful decision to take up a kind of personal “vision quest” (Tyler, 1984), or simply an inexplicable internal urge to explore and discover. Once that decision has been made, students board the train, car, airplane, or bus in order to find their places on the road. Upon arrival in the foreign land, students’ senses tell them that they are not home any more. Language, food, scenes, even simply their tactile senses, as well as their overall sensory input all tell students that this is a real adventure, a dive into the unknown. Students leave one climate and time zone and, in a kind of out-of-body shift, wake up in a new place, soon to be greeted by the unknown.

Regardless of the reason for departure, this step is essential because we cannot see who or where we are until we leave and gather perspective. Wittgenstein (1994, p. 45) says it well: “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. If there is a value which has value, it must lie outside all happening and being.” In other words, we cannot know ourselves or our country or our story unless we leave it, go outside, go beyond, and then

look back. Marcus Aurelius says: “He who does not know what the world is does not know where he is. And he who does not know for what purpose the world exists does not know who he is nor what the world is” (Black, 1945, p. 52). Thus, the first phase of the study abroad experience creates a new environment and the prospect of new experiences for the typical college student. What follows is a kind of immersion into a radically different world filled with unforeseen challenges and opportunities for internal and external change.

Initiation. This phase of the journey is, like Dante’s passage through the three canticles of the *Divine Comedy*, a pilgrimage and an unfolding story whose narrator is the student. This is what sojourners of the Camino de Santiago experience (Coelho, 2008). They live as pilgrims and as writers of their experience, undergoing spiritual transformation as they travel. And, as with Dante, the physical, sensory aspects of the journey are vital to the process. The sojourner must drink in all input from the senses: tasting, seeing, hearing, touching, and smelling the landscape. Moreover, the tactile senses and the haptic elements of being in a new place must be internalized. This is the only way to ingest the culture, geography, history, and sense of this new place. New sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches bring it all to bear in a way that makes it absolutely clear that this is NOT home. The new sounds of language on ear and tongue, the new foods and flavors, and the varieties of color and music form a new environment. This is beyond a virtual experience; it is wholly sensory, emotional, and intellectual. The student is beginning to feel some disequilibrium as they realize that this distant land does not look and feel like Omaha or Seattle.

Time and space have completely changed. This is culture shock in full bloom (Pedersen, 1995), representing the unique character of the study abroad experience, as opposed to visiting a nearby town in the states or traveling from West Coast to East Coast, or surfing the World Wide Web. Everything is new and fresh, radically so. Soon the great mystery settles in—the student is not simply “reading” this new land, but the new land is “reading” the student. The new land is placing a story inside the student, forming an impression with their character as its wax. The student plans to experience A and is unaware, until the journey unfolds, that they will also have experiences B, C, D, and E. It is therefore no wonder that the student begins to experience “constructive disequilibrium” (Che et al., 2009), an unavoidable and necessary ingredient to the growth that they will experience through this study abroad rite of passage. In this vein, Thompson and Miller-Perrin (2013) interviewed students who attended a study abroad program, asking what kinds of challenges they faced because of their travel to another land. One student commented: “This has been the hardest but also the best year of my life. Living overseas forced me to either embrace or reject what I have believed all my life. It removed my safety nets.”

Fortunately, it is not necessary to live in complete disequilibrium, and students can discover some equilibrium, rooted in two elements:

mentoring and community. Thompson and Miller-Perrin (2013) also asked students studying abroad how they found a sense of grounding and balance after being thrown off course in their international setting. With regard to faculty mentoring, one student confided: “When I felt weak, my faculty ‘mom’ knew and was someone that would come up to me and ask what was wrong. She would help me understand and trust in God.” Another student commented on the importance of spiritual support gained from the living and learning community in their study abroad program: “Simply by living and engaging with such incredible individuals, who have not only helped me through difficult times, but who have encouraged me to seek God more, I’ve experienced incredible growth in spirituality.” Skillen (2010) attests to the importance of both elements for students living in a form of Benedictine monastic spiritual advisement and community in the hills of Umbria. He reminds us that monasticism is about connection to a spiritual advisor and accountability to a small community, allowing students to recover a healthy, morally grounded social life that offers authentic self-acceptance and the courage to take risks.

As the student reaches the end of the initiation phase, they are ready to more fully embrace a clearer vision of their life purpose. This involves the discovery/rediscovery of themselves that they have known all along. This is the *Ouroboros* realization (Hornung, 2002; Tyler, 1984), the moment of stepping outside of oneself to see the self that has been present all along. As a result, the student pilgrim is able to draw two important conclusions through this incredible personal transformation, first: I belong to this world as one of its citizens; second: Life is not just my story or our story, but it is THE story (Rohr, 1994).

Return and Reentry. Eventually the student returns home and reintegrates into the home culture. They are simultaneously ready and not ready for the return. Soon after the return, another surprise sets in: There is just as much shock going back home as there was in the dislocation. Reverse culture shock sets in (Global Links Abroad, n.d.). The student comes home and everything is exactly the way they left it. But they, as transformed pilgrims, are exactly not the same and as a result do not seem to belong as they once did. Moreover, they are bursting with the effects of the study abroad experience, eager to tell their story. Then, a nagging question sets in: Why do I feel so foreign in my home country? This is another fragile moment—the student has “gold” they have acquired from their time abroad, and to reintegrate they simply need to tell their story. They had an incredible experience and have a newly regained sense of self. This is precisely what one of the Grimms’ fairy tales describes (Rohr, 1994). A traveler who goes to a faraway land, finds gold, and then returns with the zeal to tell the first person he meets about the adventure, only to be unexpectedly robbed of his hard-earned treasure. The moral for the student who has just returned from abroad is this: There is a danger that telling the story too quickly, to deaf ears, may cause one to lose part of the “gold” they have acquired. Instead,

the return is the time for reflection and silence. Then, after the student has had time to internalize their transformative experience, they can tell their story. Paradoxically, the best things cannot be talked about, but must simply become part of their character and emerging identity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There are several lessons to be learned about study abroad for those students and institutions who wish to engage in this invaluable transformative life experience.

1. Students should seek to participate in situations in college life, both at home and abroad, where religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity may be found, as these experiences force the examination of one's beliefs and values, causing a healthy, constructive disequilibrium. Learning to embrace cultural, spiritual, and intellectual diversity and conflict will broaden students' horizons, enhance respect for others' views, and deepen their sense of place in the world (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010).
2. Students should be provided an opportunity to seek diverse experiences in a context that also provides nurturance and support. A state of disequilibrium can promote change, but most effectively only with the proper support. Students need mentors who can provide support, wisdom, challenge, and counsel (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010). As William James (2002) reminds us, all forms of conversion and transformation require "precisely the same psychological form of event—a firmness, stability, and equilibrium succeeding a period of storm and stress and inconsistency" (p. 196). It is the mentor, then, who provides part of this framework of stability for the protégé who is experiencing the stress of growth and development.
3. Institutions should encourage students to geographically and culturally leave their comfort zones in order to experience the deepest and most powerful internal and external change. This is the key first step to their rite of passage into adulthood. Accordingly, we need to be prepared to guide them in all phases of the study abroad experience, including their return stateside, thereby helping them both find gold and keep it.
4. Further research is needed to examine the "why" behind the changes that occur in students who study abroad and the precise mechanisms through which the changes occur. In particular, the detailed dimensions of these mechanisms should be examined in future research.

In conclusion, it is evident that the study abroad experience represents an exciting extension to the academic enterprise. By stretching college campus borders across the globe, we avail students the opportunity to transform

internally and externally in ways that will last a lifetime. These challenges make work in the academy more vibrant than ever before, providing the means to make an even deeper, long-term impact on students' lives.

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CINDY MILLER-PERRIN is a professor of psychology and Frank R. Seaver Chair in social science at Pepperdine University.

DON THOMPSON is a professor of great books and mathematics at Pepperdine University.