

FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' CHOICE TO STUDY ABROAD AT AN OPEN-
ACCESS INSTITUTION: AN ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY

by

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(Under the Direction of Karen Watkins)

ABSTRACT

This action research study examined factors influencing students' choice to study abroad at "Atlanta-Based College" (ABC), an access institution wishing to increase study-abroad opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. Many scholars and practitioners view the national initiative to advance study abroad as an important contributor to graduating globalized citizens. However, only a small percentage of students take advantage of such opportunities—at ABC and at access institutions in general. Therefore, this case study examined students' decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna integrated model of student choice as a framework. A multi-functional action research group was selected to implement the action research project and address the following primary research questions: (1) What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna integrated model of student choice as a framework? (2) How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels? The study showed that the higher education context of layer 2/3 of the Perna model was highly influential in the student-choice process. This suggest that the predominant issue preventing open-access college students from studying abroad is not student interest. Rather, it is the lack of

institutionalization of study abroad. Open-access institutions ought to consider shifting their focus from student barriers to institutional barriers. This study also exemplifies the use of action research to address a systemic problem at an open-access institution.

INDEX WORDS: Collapsed Perna model; Study abroad; Open-access institution; Action research; Globalization; Internationalization

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, who did not have the opportunities to attend college like my brother and I had. Many of the advocacy programs for admitting diverse students to college, especially Black males, did not begin until the 1970s. Through my research, I learned about my privilege and having a chance to receive an education. I'm grateful that my children will have even more educational opportunities as African Americans. My father always told me from a very young age that I had to go to college; through his wisdom, I am now obtaining a doctorate. Rest in peace, Daddy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This action research case study focused on “Atlanta-Based College” (ABC),¹ an accredited, public, four-year, open-access institution with an enrollment in 2016 of nearly 12,000 students. As an access college, ABC’s mandate is to make higher education accessible to all students. The College’s mission is to provide an education to a student no matter how academically competitive. ABC’s goal is to provide students with high impact experiences while attending. One such high impact experience is studying abroad. Thus, this study centered specifically on how to influence ABC students’ choice to study abroad. Colleges and universities across the United States have established initiatives dedicated to increasing study abroad. Moreover, a national program, Generation Study Abroad, aims to ensure that every U.S. student has the opportunity to take part in an international experience. The goal of Generation Study Abroad is to double the number of undergraduate students who study abroad each year by the end of the decade (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2015). As stated in the American Council on Education’s 2011 report *Strength through Global Leadership and Engagement: U.S. Higher Education in the 21st*:

It is the obligation of colleges and universities to prepare people for a globalized world, including developing the ability to comprehend economically, to operate effectively in other cultures and settings, to use knowledge to improve their own lives and their

¹ A pseudonym has been used to mask the identity of the institution.

communities, and to better comprehend the realities of the contemporary world so that they can better meet their responsibilities as citizens. (p. 3).

While, cumulatively, study-abroad numbers are increasing, the rate of study-abroad participation is not evenly distributed across all students in higher education and does not reflect current population and enrollment trends in U.S. colleges and universities (Henry, 2014). However, there exists a uniform belief within higher education that an international experience for American students represents an important contribution to their overall education. Part of this belief stems from society's increasing globalization, along with the realization that most American undergraduate and graduate students are further behind their student counterparts in other countries in understanding this new global reality (Johnstone, 2010).

Understanding Access Institutions

College students in the United States today are choosing to attend many different types of higher education institutions, and the types of students attending college are changing in significant ways. Indeed, 21st-century college students do not fit a traditional profile; statistical reports have revealed that 52% are the first in their family to complete college; 51% are low- to moderate-income; 44% are 24 years of age or older; 42% come from communities of color; 30% attend part-time; 28% care for their children or other dependents while enrolled; 26% work full-time while enrolled; 18% are non-native English speakers; 10% are immigrants; and 5% are active-duty military personnel or veterans (Institute for Higher Education Policy [IHEP], 2014). Higher education's conventional models do not adequately serve some groups, such as first-generation students,² nontraditional students, and those working more than 20 hours per week. Some students may lack family experience with higher education or support systems that would

² As defined by O'Rourke, Mehta, and Newbold (2008), a first-generation student "comes from a family where neither parent/guardian graduated" (p. 49) from college.

position them for success in college. Other barriers may include lack of financial resources, limited academic preparedness, and family and job obligations and responsibilities. However, certain institutions, known as access colleges, were established specifically to help these students to succeed and graduate from college. This study focused on how to influence students at one such access institution to participate in education-abroad experiences before graduation.

According to data from Complete College Georgia, Atlanta-Based College is the only access institution within the state's university system that offers primarily baccalaureate degrees. At the time of this study, the *U.S. News & World Report* (n.d.) ranked ABC as an ethnically diverse regional college among both public and private institutions. The college comprises a student population that includes first-generation, low-income, minority (from a variety of ethnicities), immigrant, and nontraditional students. In fact, almost half of ABC's students are considered first-generation and the first in their family to attend college (Ramey, 2015).

Generally, *open admission*, or *open access*, means that the admission process at a college or university is unselective and non-competitive; the only criterion for admission is that the student have a high school diploma or GED certificate. Most open-access institutions are community colleges or colleges that grant associate degrees; though a few four-year institutions operate under an open-admission policy, they are the exceptions (Nelson, 2013). Open-admission institutions were created in the 1960s to reduce barriers to higher education for some groups of students, including those from lower income or underprivileged backgrounds. However, the open-access movement gained its greatest currency with the now-famous 1970 decision by the City University of New York to allow all high school graduates to pursue college degrees regardless of academic preparation. Other institutions across the country, notably community

colleges, followed suit, adopting similar policies intended to provide a college education to all who desired it.

Access institutions tend to enroll a wider demographic range of students than other types of colleges and universities (Nelson, 2013). Although generally the student population within higher education has become more diverse over the past 40 years, the increased diversity is accounted for largely by nonselective institutions. Specifically, female, Black, Hispanic, and nontraditional students are disproportionately enrolled in open-access colleges (Brock, 2010).

Nearly two thirds of low-income students attend community, access, or for-profit colleges or universities. Blacks and Hispanics, who make up one third of the nation's college-age population, account for 37% of the student population at open-access schools but only 15% at selective four-year colleges in the United States (Fletcher, 2013). Significantly, access colleges have provided links to higher education for nearly half of all minority undergraduate students and more than 40% of undergraduate students living in poverty (Mullin, 2012). They represent a particularly important resource considering that access to higher education not only improves the life chances of individuals but also levels the playing field for entire families and communities, with the benefits accruing across generations (IHEP, 2014).

Despite having one of the highest college participation rates in the world, however, the United States exhibits large, persistent gaps in students' access to and success within higher education, namely among low-income, minority, and first-generation students (Chen, 2005; Engle & Tinto, 2008). For most of the 4.5 million low-income, first-generation students enrolled in postsecondary education today, approximately 24% will not graduate. Moreover, after six years of attendance, only 11% of low-income, first-generation students will have earned a bachelor's degree, compared to 55% of more advantaged students (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

Engle and Tinto (2008) observed that first-generation students disproportionately come from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds with lower levels of academic preparation. These students also tend to be older, less likely to receive financial support from parents, and more likely to have multiple obligations outside of college, such as family and work commitments, that limit their full participation in the college experience. Importantly, these students are also less likely to be engaged in academic and social experiences that foster success in college. Lower levels of academic and social integration among this population are linked closely to inadequate finances and financial aid, and to federal-aid funding not keeping pace with tuition and fee increases. Due largely to a lack of resources, low-income, first-generation students are more likely to live and work off campus and to take classes part-time while working full-time, all factors that significantly limit the amount of time they spend on campus.

Engle and Tinto (2008) described low-income college students as those having an annual household income under \$25,000. Similarly, both Terenzini and colleagues (2001) and Walpole (2003) included parental education, parental income, and parental occupation as factors in determining the economic standards of low income. Paying for undergraduate education has traditionally been considered a family obligation; however, low-income families rarely have substantial savings or assets against which to borrow, and they are unlikely to have enough income to pay for college. Therefore, students from low-income families typically need substantial financial assistance in order to attend college. Most low-income students attending full time for the full academic year receive some type of financial aid, including grants and loans (Choy, 2000). Thus, for low-income students, adding additional expenses, such as study abroad, can pose a formidable barrier to graduation (Choy, 2000). Hembroff and Rusz (1993) listed lower levels of affluence as a reason why minorities may be underrepresented in study-abroad

programs. The direct costs of studying abroad may be eased through scholarships, but for students who have to work, scholarships alone cannot make up for the money lost by taking time off from work to study abroad. Hembroff and Rusz (1993) also found that students' previous travel within the United States correlated positively with the likelihood of their traveling outside the United States, and White students had more experience with both. This suggests that Whites may perceive international education as normal and desirable, while others may view it as "an elusive opportunity, utterly out of reach and even inappropriate" (Dessoiff, 2006, p. 24).

While no national data exist comparing the family incomes of students studying abroad to those who do not, students consistently rank concerns about finances among the primary reasons why they do not consider studying abroad (Chieffo, 2000; Dessoiff, 2006; Paus & Robinson, 2008). Paus and Robinson (2008) found that family financial contribution is statistically significant in study abroad. Every additional \$1,000 in family contribution with a financial aid package increases the likelihood of a student studying abroad by 0.2%. Thus, a student who does not receive financial aid at all would be about 8% more likely to study abroad than a student receiving a nominal family contribution.

Access institutions also enroll a significant number of nontraditional students. According to Pelletier (2010) that based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), nontraditional students meet one of seven characteristics: They have delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; they attend college part-time; they work full-time; they are financially independent (for financial-aid purposes); they have dependents other than a spouse; they are single parents; or they do not possess a high-school diploma. In the fall of 2008, just over a million of the students enrolled at American Association of State Colleges and Universities

(AASCU) member institutions were 25 years of age or older. The number of adult students on college campuses has grown (Ross-Gordon, 2011).

A key characteristic distinguishing nontraditional students from other college students is that the former often juggle other life roles while attending school, including those of worker, spouse or partner, parent, caregiver, and community member. These multiple roles oftentimes present challenges as students attempt to allocate time for both high-impact academic study and participation in campus-based organizations and activities, including study abroad (Ross-Gordon, 2011). According to Jamie Merisotis, president of the Lumina Foundation for Education, “one problem for adults is the constant, competing tension between life obligations and educational obligations” (as cited in Pelletier, 2010, p. 3). Life obligations often come first, which can make it difficult for nontraditional students to participate in high-impact activities on campus.

In addition, open-access colleges enroll a large percentage of immigrants, some of whom may not be documented to live in the United States. The rise in the need for skilled labor has encouraged many immigrants coming to America to seek postsecondary education. However, immigrant youth whose parents have no college education or who come from low-income backgrounds face significant barriers to enrolling and succeeding in postsecondary education. Their difficulties are compounded by inadequate information about college opportunities and how to access them, cultural differences, citizenship issues, and language barriers (Baum & Flores, 2011). According to definitions included in the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS), first-generation immigrants are foreign-born; second-generation immigrants were born in the United States and have at least one foreign-born parent; third-generation immigrants (or higher) include individuals who were born in the United States and both of their parents were also born

in the United States (as cited in Baum & Flores, 2011). Immigrant students in all of these categories, however, encounter barriers to completing college, including financial barriers and family obligations, finding it difficult to secure adequate financial support without working excessive hours, which can interfere with their studies (Baum & Flores, 2011). Negative parental attitudes and other family issues have also been found to constrain the participation of certain groups of students in study abroad. For instance, Doan (2000) found that Asian-American students lacked family support to study abroad, especially students with parents who were less educated and had lived in the United States for a shorter time. As noted, immigrant students may encounter additional barriers that prevent them from participating in study abroad.

History of Study Abroad

Study abroad within higher education began in the United States in the 1920s and borrowed largely from the tradition of the European Grand Tour. The Grand Tour was perceived as possessing great educational and social-networking value for young men (and some women). “Indeed, from the late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and afterwards, it became fashionable ... to have a few foreign feathers in one’s cap” (Hoffa & DePaul, 2007, p. 13). In the 18th and 19th centuries, young American men, and a small number of women, from prominent American families would study abroad in Europe in order to receive professional training (Hoffa & DePaul, 2007, p. 31).

In the first decades of the 20th century, leaders of American colleges and universities became increasingly conscious of the United States’ position on the world stage. As the country’s geopolitical role changed, it became evident that students would need to become familiar with the world outside of American borders (Lane, 2011). As a result, the first study-abroad programs were developed by Delaware College and Smith College in 1923. These initial

programs provided educational experiences abroad primarily for college juniors (Gore, 2005). Junior Year Abroad, a full-year language and cultural immersion program, was the most common model for study abroad in the early 20th century, with only a few alternative forms such as faculty-led study abroad and summer programs (Lane, 2011). Despite the auspicious beginning of study-abroad programs, geopolitical events abruptly halted them: In 1938, with the onset of World War II, programs were no longer able to continue and were shut down (Hoffa & DePaul, 2007).

During the 1950s and 1960s, there reemerged a growing desire for young Americans to understand the world (Lane, 2011). Beginning in 1954, the U.S. Department of State provided the Institute of International Education with funding to collect data on the numbers of students studying abroad for academic reasons. Since that time, IIE has released an annual report, *Open Doors*, whose title suggests “that both host and home nations and their educational institutions should ‘open their doors’ to welcome international students” (Hoffa & DePaul, 2007, p. 230)

Another organization instrumental in the reestablishment and growth of study abroad during the post-war period was the Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE), formed in 1947. CIEE’s original founders worked to secure space on government troop transport ships for U.S. students. In its initial years, CIEE assisted with transportation and educational programing for a variety of educational institutions, services that ultimately developed into formal study-abroad programs (Lane, 2011). Program types and destinations began eventually to diversify due to the expansion of governmental initiatives, such as the Fulbright-Hayes program and the Peace Corps, and of American global involvement, which helped universities develop contacts in various parts of world (Gore, 2005). Since then, study abroad, or education abroad, has come a long way. In 2005, the U.S. Congress and President George W. Bush appointed a

bipartisan commission of leaders in business, higher education, and government to evaluate the state of education abroad. This Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (otherwise known as the “Lincoln Commission”) made a number of recommendations, including increasing the number of undergraduates studying overseas to one million by the 2016-2017 academic year (Contreras, Jr., 2014). The commission also recommended expanding study-abroad participation and the diversity of study-abroad locations. These recommendations were later incorporated into the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act, which was passed in June 2009 (NASFA, 2009).

Study-Abroad Statistics

Despite the pressing need for intercultural communication skills and the availability of funding to assist with study-abroad participation, many U.S. college students have not embraced education abroad. According to the 2006 *Open Doors* report, student participation in study abroad varies based on the type of institution in which a student is enrolled. In 2006, 59% of all U.S. students studying abroad were enrolled in Doctoral/Research Extensive and Intensive institutions; 21% in Master’s I & II institutions; 16% in Baccalaureate colleges; and only 2% in Associate’s institutions (Obst, Bhandari, & Pickard, 2007). These study-abroad numbers did not change considerably in the intervening decade. For instance, according to the 2016 *Open Doors* report, student participation at Associate’s institutions was still at 2% (IIE, 2016). Considering that community colleges enroll well over 50% of all students in higher education, the very low participation in study abroad by community college students reveals a potentially huge untapped audience—but one that also faces significant obstacles (Obst, Bhandari, & Pickard, 2007). Given the increasing number of students attending access institutions, these colleges can make intentional efforts to create opportunities for students to benefit from international experiences.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 304,467 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit, and according to recent statistics, one out of every 10 undergraduate students in the United States studies abroad before graduating (IIE, 2015). Though the proportion of U.S. minority students studying abroad has increased modestly over the past 10 years, the overall study-abroad participation rate has hovered at about 9% for the past decade, despite the promotional efforts of educators and the U.S. government (IIE, 2013).

This stagnant participation rate suggests that for the vast majority of university students, especially males, ethnic minorities, science majors, and financially disadvantaged students, current recruitment efforts are not significantly impacting students' decisions to study abroad; in fact, they are falling short. This problem suggests that certain underlying factors influencing students' decisions about studying abroad are not being addressed.

The discrepancy between the study-abroad participation of Whites and underrepresented students is enormous. A staggering 74.3% of U.S. students who studied abroad in the 2013-2014 academic year were White. It would appear that the opportunity to study abroad and reap the benefits of global citizenship is still reserved mostly for White students, in particular those with the socioeconomic and cultural capital to recognize the return on investment in global experiences (Cordova, 2016). According to Doan (2002) and Van Der Meid (2002) the percentage distribution of African-American students enrolled in U.S. higher educational institutions increased from 12.7% in 2005 to 14.5% in 2010, but the rate of study-abroad participation grew at a much slower rate, from 3.5% in the 2005-2006 academic year to 4.8% in the 2010-2011 academic year. Similarly, the Latino/a student population increased from 10.8% to 13% during this same period, while study-abroad participation grew from 5.4% to 6.9%. American Indian/Alaska Native students have seen little change in overall enrollment in

institutions of higher education or in study-abroad participation. Additionally, a study found that working-class students were far less likely to participate in study abroad than their middle- and upper-class peers. The working-class students frequently cited concern about jeopardizing their employment as a deterrent to studying abroad (Satterlee, 2009).

Given the global nature of modern society, colleges and universities should prepare their students for multicultural experiences. As U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said at an International Education Week event in 2004:

The more we ... understand each other ... the more effective we will be in creating a world of global citizens.... The more dialogue we have ... at the academic level, where opinion makers are located ... the better off we are. (as cited in Ungar, 2008, p. 6).

Hurtado (2004) concluded that students who socialize and interact primarily with people of the same race are far less prepared to enter the global workforce, as determined by standard measures of open-mindedness and other critical-thinking skills. Braskamp and Engberg (2011) argued that young adults are graduating from institutions of higher learning with very little preparation either as citizens or as professionals for the intercultural challenges confronting graduates in a diverse environment. Employers have begun advocating for additional academic disciplines around knowledge of global issues that will help foster intercultural competence as a key learning outcome.

With increased institutional emphasis nationwide on both the importance of study abroad and the need to increase the number and diversity of participants, it is critical that the participation of students of color and other underrepresented students be more closely examined. Understanding more fully the decision-making process around and the pathways to study abroad for different types of students is crucial to eliminating barriers to participation.

According to previous research on the choice process for students studying abroad, many decisions inform a student's final determination to study abroad. For instance, financial concerns range from paying for a program to accounting for wages lost due to study-abroad participation. Therefore, researchers have tended to focus more intensely on the intention and choice to study abroad. Research around intentions to study abroad has indicated that when beginning college, minority students plan to study abroad at the same rate as their majority peers (Kasravi, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011). This finding is concerning because it suggests that minority students enter the higher education context with a desire to study abroad but encounter barriers to participation during their college experience. The current study further examined these barriers as well as the study-abroad choice process for students at an access institution.

Importance of Study Abroad

Colleges and universities in the United States are facing a growing imperative to internationalize students, preparing them to live and work in a globalized world. Comprehensive internationalization strategies include the integration of international content within curricula and increasing study-abroad participation, among other campus initiatives. As Pandit (2009) enumerated, there are many positive outcomes of study abroad, including becoming more proficient in a foreign language and becoming more comfortable living and working in a different culture. Higher education institutions are noting the importance of American students understanding and having the tools to adapt to the complexities of globalized society; there is a consensus among these associations that comprehensive internationalization can help to develop a globally competent citizenry and workforce (Olson, 2005). Due to the increasing interconnectedness brought on by globalization, international education has risen in prominence

and importance in higher education. Indeed, globalization is impacting higher education in many ways and will undoubtedly continue to impact the decisions made by institutions of higher education around the world (Bell, 2014).

There are many different forms of study abroad. Some programs are developed and sponsored by colleges or universities, while others are created and facilitated by program providers. Since there are many options from which students can choose, there is no single, consistent definition of study abroad. However, researchers have highlighted key characteristics of study-abroad programs. Engle and Engle (2003) identified seven defining components of overseas programs. Interlocking and interacting in varying and complex ways in the context of countless programs worldwide, these variables constitute an essential starting point for any form of level-based program classification:

1. Length of student sojourn
2. Entry target-language competence
3. Language used in course work
4. Context of academic work
5. Types of student housing
6. Provisions for guided/structured cultural interaction and experiential learning
7. Guided reflection on cultural experience. (p. 8)

According to *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* (2014), there is no one-size-fits-all approach to study abroad; rather, there are four primary models. "Model 1: Faculty-led programs," describes a variety of study-abroad programs involving on-site faculty involvement; "Model 2: Exchange programs," which was the backbone of study abroad for many years, involves students from a U.S.-based institution studying at

another for a specified length of time, while, in turn, students from the other institution come to the United States to study; “Model 3: Island programs,” refers to self-contained programs developed exclusively for U.S. college students (the term *overseas branch campus* and *study centers* are also used in relation to this model); “Model 4: Hybrid study-abroad programs” involves combining aspects of direct matriculation and mediated programming (Sanderson, 2014), and integrates elements of exchange programs along with elements of island programs.

Sachau, Brasher, and Fee (2010) sought to provide a definition of short-term study-abroad programs. They defined summer semester abroad as a six- to 12-week program during which students live on campus and take multiple classes. The basic format of the summer session includes class sessions four days per week and free time for independent travel three days per week. The second type of short-term study-abroad program is known as the study tour, a seven- to 28-day trip in which participants travel (usually by bus or train) from city to city, visiting sites along the way and staying at hotels. The course is normally tailored to a specific course theme. Sachau et al. also defined the service-learning trip, a two- to six-week study-abroad opportunity that includes international travel and volunteer work. (Service-learning is a form of experiential learning that integrates coursework and community service.)

Many colleges and universities have made international education a top priority within the comprehensive education process. Brookfield and Holst (2011) maintained that “a radical adult education must place diversity at its core. The more diverse our work and educational practices ... the more that people’s different passions and individual interests are encouraged, then the healthier a society will be” (p. 216). International and cultural education expand a people’s cultural and global awareness. American students often have questions about their beliefs and values; studying abroad can help students learn about themselves and about what it

means to be an American (Penn & Tanner, 2009). According to the American Council on Education's Public Opinion Poll of 2002, 50% of college-bound high school students expressed an interest in studying or participating in an internship abroad while pursuing their program of study, while 75% indicated that this was important (Teague, 2007).

Extensive discussion has occurred among educators regarding the benefits of diversifying study-abroad programs. One such benefit is that residents of the host country have the opportunity to develop perspectives on Americans that may differ from the negative ones often presented by foreign media. Also, diversified study abroad, such as short-term programs, allows for the participation of more nontraditional students, who may face various constraints, many of which their peers do not experience (Brux & Fry, 2010). The Lincoln Commission (2005) identified the major underrepresented groups in study abroad: racial and ethnic minorities; males; students majoring in science, engineering, and related disciplines; students attending two-year colleges; and students with disabilities. As the commission concluded, it is important that students from all backgrounds have the same opportunity to study abroad.

Booker (2001) surveyed study-abroad applicants and interested non-applicants, and examined the preferences and decisions expressed by each respondent, concluding that study-abroad participants are more likely to be middle class, non-minority, female, and non-business majors. Booker also noted that the factors determining participation in study abroad fell into five main categories: financial, social, academic, personal, and institutional.

Parsons (2009) concluded that students who had studied abroad demonstrated greater foreign language skills; more knowledge of specific regions and countries; attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors reflecting greater international awareness, openness, cooperativeness, and curiosity; and greater cross-cultural skills. Parsons also found that both curricular

internationalization and friendships with international students had a positive impact on U.S. students.

Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgarner (2007) identified a number of factors that foster cultural transformative learning, the first of which comprise cross-cultural relationships, which expose students to different ways of thinking and being in the world. Second, educators should be culturally grounded in order to promote authenticity in students so that transformation can occur. Third, transformative learning provides different modalities that offer different kinds of experiences for students. Finally, the learning environment should allow for exploration at the cognitive, affective, relational, and symbolic levels.

Study-abroad programs represent the most common form of experiential international education, which is relevant to academic, cultural, personal, and career goals. Brux and Fry (2010) study utilized a survey and focus groups, examined constraints on multicultural students' participation in study abroad. The results indicated that institutional factors, including academic scheduling difficulties, absence of relevant programs, and lack of information, as well as other factors, can prevent diverse groups of students from studying abroad. However, these factors can be mitigated by institutional efforts designed to provide encouragement, address financial issues, and respond to family concerns. Not surprisingly, as U.S. campuses diversify their study-abroad offerings for students whose major or personal or family obligations restrict their ability to spend a summer or semester abroad, more students are selecting short-term or mid-length programs.

As noted previously, the number of Asian, Hispanic, and African-American students studying abroad shows small but steady growth (Farrugia, Bhandari, & Chow, 2013). Brux and Fry (2010) discussed the benefits of study abroad for Native American students. The researchers

pointed out that traditional study abroad contrasts in some ways with Native American values, and they suggested that “pan-national alliances can be developed to serve the mutual needs and that well-designed programs, such as the one that brought Native American students to study abroad in Southwestern Siberia, can benefit both American Indian students and the natives of other countries” (p. 510).

Brux and Fry (2010) investigated the impact of a study-abroad program in Ghana on 18 African-American students. From an analysis of student essays, they concluded that the program helped the students to reject stereotypes, make an emotional link to the history of slavery, examine critically American cultural values, and foster an ethnic identity. African-American students represent a much larger share of students in African programs than in other locations; as Brux and Fry (2010) explained, heritage-seeking multicultural students, including Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans, view study abroad as a chance to explore their own identities. Consequently, heritage seekers often expect to feel a sense of homecoming and acceptance where they study abroad.

A study conducted at the University of Georgia showed that students who participated in a study-abroad program during their undergraduate experience were 10% more likely to graduate in four years, and 25% were more likely to finish their schooling in five years compared to their peers who did not participate (Cordova, 2016). Similarly, Young (2008) found that study-abroad participation contributes to student persistence and engagement, while Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates (2005) demonstrated that activities such as study abroad engage students in their educational environment and contribute to increased retention and graduation rates. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities tracked retention of study-abroad participants and non-participants and found that participants were more likely to remain enrolled at the institution

(Hamir, 2011), findings that were corroborated at the University of California, San Diego. The studies at the latter two institutions included analysis of data related to gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, and parental income—all of which showed higher graduation and retention rates for study-abroad participants compared to other students. Sutton and Rubin (2004) also found that study-abroad participation increased the probability of graduation from a doctoral institution. All of these analyses suggested strongly that study-abroad participation increases participants' likelihood of graduation. Study-abroad experiences have also been shown to help U.S. students develop intercultural communication competence, empathy, diverse problem-solving and analytical capabilities, a tolerance for ambiguity, and foreign-language fluency (NAFSA, 2012). Study abroad has even become a national goal of the Institute of International Education, which hopes to see 600,000 students studying abroad in credit- and non-credit-bearing programs by the end of the decade—a movement known as Generation Study Abroad (IIE, n.d.b.).

Barriers to Studying Abroad

Many research studies have focused on barriers to student participation in study abroad. For instance, Brux and Ngoboka (2002) surveyed primarily racial and ethnic minority students and found that the most significant constraints preventing them from participating in study abroad were finances, family disapproval, safety concerns, work responsibilities, family responsibilities, program length, lack of desirable programming, and academic scheduling difficulties. Other studies have noted that financial concerns extend beyond actual expenses because the opportunity costs of foregoing earnings while studying abroad can be a major constraint. Parents of multicultural students also have questions about not only their children's safety and health, but also whether their children will experience racism in the host country

(Brux & Fry, 2010). Research has shown that a major factor in recruiting multicultural students for study-abroad programs is ensuring that there are openings in host regions corresponding to students' ancestry. Additionally, to increase the number of multicultural students going abroad, institutions can develop special outreach programs to target these students, their families, their instructors, and their advisors; confer with advisors of multicultural students; expand international program options to include heritage locations; include short-term travel options; and use marketing materials that feature multicultural faculty and students (Brux & Fry, 2010).

A major area of concern regarding study abroad for U.S. students has been funding opportunities, especially at colleges and universities with large populations of nontraditional students. It is important that open-access institutions also consider funding students interested in studying abroad. Although the percentage of universities funding student mobility has increased, the value of sending more students abroad can be prioritized since a relatively small number of students receive the opportunity to participate in exchanges. A larger percent-age of institutions in all sectors are providing institutional scholarships for student education abroad. Nine in 10 doctoral institutions have such funding available, compared with approximately two thirds of master's and baccalaureate institutions and one-quarter of associate and special focus institutions (American Council on Education 2012, p. 17).

Parker (2015) found the majority of study-abroad programs at community colleges did not appear to be highly accessible to all students, and the overall mission of accessibility was not congruent with the information presented on community college study-abroad websites. No institution in Parker's study published information about inclusion and diversity related to their study-abroad programs, nor did they express a commitment to carrying out these principles. The omission of this information about diversifying study abroad does not bode well for the

accessibility efforts of these institutions. After a review of the selected university websites, Sison and Brennan (2012) found the following barriers to student mobility:

- there is no global credit transfer system, which makes it harder for students to apply credit to transcript
- college advisors may have difficult time critiquing the quality of an internship or work-based experience
- significant increase in costs associated with mobility, plus the opportunity cost of not working in home country
- study abroad is associated with higher socio-economic status
- language remains a barrier for students studying abroad
- for semester- or year-long programs, fundamentals—such as the semester dates and academic years—do not match across all countries.

It is evident from previous research that higher education institutions that send the largest numbers of students abroad are predominately large research institutions.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework comprises the underlying structure or scaffolding of a research study (Merriam, 2009), while a conceptual framework includes the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the study—a key aspect of the overall study design (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a product that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18). According to Maxwell (2005), the researcher

should understand that the conceptual framework is primarily a model of what he or she plans to study, and of what, how, and why separate elements interact.

Previous research studies have applied college-choice theories in order to understand students' choice processes related to study abroad (Dyken, 2013; Kutsche, 2012; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2010; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). Indeed, the process of deciding whether or not to study abroad is virtually identical to the process for choosing a college. Both comprise three sequential decision-making steps: (1) the development of the predisposition or intent to study abroad, (2) the search for an appropriate study-abroad program, (3) and the selection of a departure for a particular location and program. The predisposition stage occurs when students develop tentative plans or aspirations regarding possible education-abroad opportunities. In the search stage, students examine the options and requirements of various colleges or study-abroad programs and evaluate them with respect to their needs, expectations, and preferences. Finally, students choose to enroll in college or a study-abroad program. Consistent with the college-choice construct, study-abroad participants progress through a sequence of decisions that begin with considering the option of studying abroad and conclude with selecting a particular destination in a particular study-abroad program (Salisbury et al., 2009).

Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2009) believed that the college-choice model could be applied to the decision-making process for study abroad. They concluded that

our application of Perna's [2006a] integrated model of student choice to a student's propensity to study abroad suggests that this construct can be applied to the decision to study abroad—one of the many of decisions students make regarding the possibility of participation in educationally important activities during a college experience. This

suggests that the integrated model of student choice could plausibly be applied to examine the factors that encourage or hinder student participation in service learning opportunities, living/learning communities, first year transition courses, and the many campus involvement programs that have been shown to influence the postsecondary educational experience. (p. 139)

High-impact learning experiences such as study abroad may be better understood by applying college-choice models to the process of deciding to participate in a study-abroad experience (Dyken, 2013). For this reason, the conceptual framework that I, as the lead researcher, chose for this study to identify and understand the multiple factors that ultimately inform a student's decision to study abroad at an access institution was the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice.

In addition, this study examined the empirical research around the study-abroad choice process. The method of inquiry was action research, a collaborative, active, inquiry approach to problem solving that uses continuous cycles of planning, acting, and evaluating in order to address a practical problem and affect some form of change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Stringer, 2007). Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study. The figure provides an overview of the research process and how the stakeholder's needs and interest are kept at forefront of research process. In addition, the Perna model is at the center of the evaluation of all the issues. Eventually creating appropriate interventions to influence the choice of students to study abroad at ABC an open-access college.

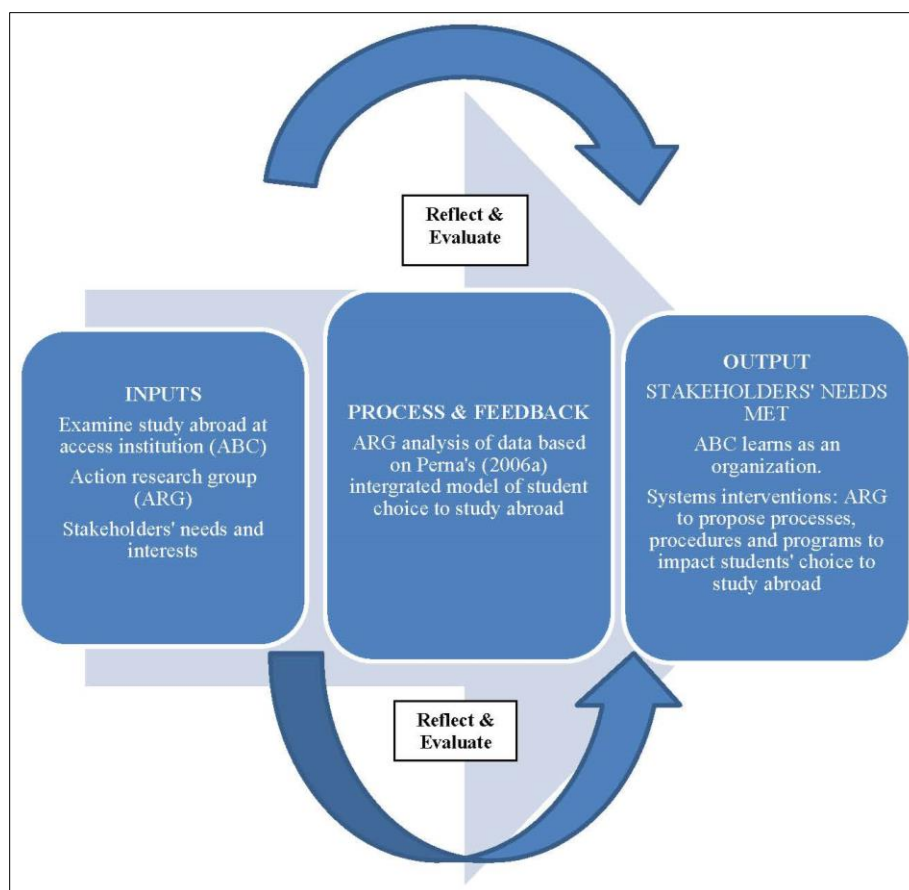


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the action research case study.

Statement of the Problem

Study abroad and other high-impact learning experiences have been found to have many benefits for all college students. However, most students who participate in study abroad have high socioeconomic status (SES) and possess high social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Dykens, 2013; Salisbury et al., 2011). Research studies have shown that some student groups, such as first-generation and nontraditional students, are less involved in high-impact activities that could expand their college experiences (O'Rourke et al., 2008). Within the story of the overall numbers lies a real and growing concern that subpopulations of students traditionally served by open-access institutions, such as low-SES students, ethnic minorities, and

first-generation students, will continue to be underrepresented in international education experiences (Dessoiff, 2006; Salisbury et al., 2009, 2011). Although it is difficult to involve all student groups in high-impact experiences like study abroad, it is important that access colleges provide students with opportunities to participate in such programs. Atlanta-Based College, the site for this action research case study, has recognized the positive cognitive and psychosocial benefits of education abroad for its students and has set out increase the number of students studying abroad annually from 75 in the 2014-2015 academic year to 300 by the year 2018 (ACE, 2013).

Statistics from the 2013-2014 academic year have shown that the number of students at Georgia's colleges and universities who studied abroad was much lower than national averages, with only 1.86% of students studying abroad in that academic year (NAFSA, 2014). The U.S. Department of Education's International Research and Studies Program, however, sponsored a study using data from the University System of Georgia (USG) to determine if study abroad could improve graduation rates. Results indicated that the graduation rates for study-abroad students improved and increased the likelihood of timely college completion. Specifically, using regression models, the research discovered a 10% advantage for the probability of graduating in four years and 25% for five-year graduation (O'Rear, Sutton, & Rubin, 2012) for study-abroad students. Responding to these data and wanting to graduate global citizens, ABC wanted to understand how it could focus its efforts to increase the number of students on campus studying abroad.

Beginning the Research on Increasing Study-Abroad Numbers

In 2013, Atlanta-Based College's Office of Internationalization (OI) received permission to hire an additional staff member whose responsibilities centered on increasing the number of

students studying abroad, and in May 2014, I was hired as the assistant director for education abroad. During the hiring process, the senior leadership agreed to allow me to lead an action research project to examine how to increase study-abroad participation at ABC. As the primary researcher, I formed an action research group (ARG) consisting of a members who understood the ABC culture. The study problem was refined during the action research cycles until, ultimately, the ARG determined that the problem would center on identifying how to influence students' choice to study abroad using the Perna (2006a) model of student choice.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to understand how Perna's (2006a) model of student choice could be used to guide and explain institutional efforts to influence students' process of choosing to participate in a study-abroad program at an access institution. According to the Open Doors (2011) national data there has been overall tremendous growth in study abroad numbers, however, diverse student demographic representation in study-abroad experiences has changed slightly, showing a consistent dominance of White female students participating in study-abroad programs (Miranda, 2013). According to the recent Open Doors report (2016), the racial and ethnic diversity has improved modestly each year since 2004-05, with 27 percent of U.S. students who studied abroad in 2014-15 identified as racial or ethnic minorities, up from 17 percent a decade ago, but there is still need for improvement with diverse groups of students studying abroad. Open Doors reports that about 5 percent of those who studied abroad were people with disabilities. (Institute of International Education [IIE], n.d.). ABC is committed to graduating global citizens; one way the college proposes to do this is by increasing and diversifying study abroad. Thus, this study addressed this issue by examining the

decision-making process used by access students in choosing to study abroad. To investigate this problem, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?
2. How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?

Significance of the Study

This action research study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the education-abroad field. It expands upon the knowledge base of studies using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) conceptual model to understand the process students adhere to in choosing to study abroad. While scholars have suggested that this framework is potentially useful in explaining a wide range of student decisions, few have empirically tested this assertion beyond the decision to enroll or persist in college (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009; McDonough, 1997; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2000, 2006a; Salisbury et al., 2010; Wells, 2008). Perna, (2006a) suggested that qualitative methodologies are critical for developing theoretical understandings of the student college-choice process and for understanding the ways in which college-choice processes affect individual students and their decisions. The existing literature, however, includes few studies that address the choice process as it relates specifically to study abroad. Student engagement research has classified study abroad, both short- and long-term, as a high-impact educational experience having a positive influence on student learning and choices regarding meaningful college experiences and overall success (Astin, 1984; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dykens, 2013; Kuh, 2006). This study helps to fill the gap in the knowledge

base, especially around special groups such as first-generation, minority, low-SES, and nontraditional students. Research has found that first-generation students and low-SES students actually derive more benefit than non-low income students from their involvement in high-impact activities while enrolled in school (Filkins & Doyle, 2002; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Pascarella, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2003, 2004).

The study was conducted at and situated within the context of an access institution. Perna's (2006a) proposed conceptual model of student choice framework is used to understand the complicated issue of increasing enrollment in study-abroad programs and, more specifically, the enrollment choice process for students at access institutions. In practical terms, the study contributes to the field of adult of leadership, learning and organizational development by providing administrators at access institutions with information about the choice process that relates directly to enhancing study-abroad participation. The study also contributes to improvements in educational practice by offering guidance to college administrators around diversifying the student population studying abroad. The research demonstrates the use of an action research project to assist access institutions with solving problems that it faces.

Additionally, this action research study will provide campus stakeholders with insights about how to influence the decision of students to study abroad. Moreover, the results of the study will help ABC to more readily identify persistent barriers that have historically prevented students from choosing to study abroad.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses key theories underpinning the action research case study, including a history of study-abroad choice-process research, and examines studies that have utilized the Collapsed Perna (2006a) model. The literature review explores the specific needs of different types of students (i.e., first-generation, low socioeconomic status, minority, and nontraditional students) who are likely to attend access institutions and the process they follow in deciding to study abroad. The review helps to contextualize the primary research questions of the study: (1) What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework? (2) How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels? To answer these questions, this study examined the choice process that students at Atlanta-Based College—including first-generation students, low-SES, minority, immigrant, and nontraditional students—underwent in deciding to study abroad. Figure 2 depicts the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad which comprised the conceptual framework of the study.

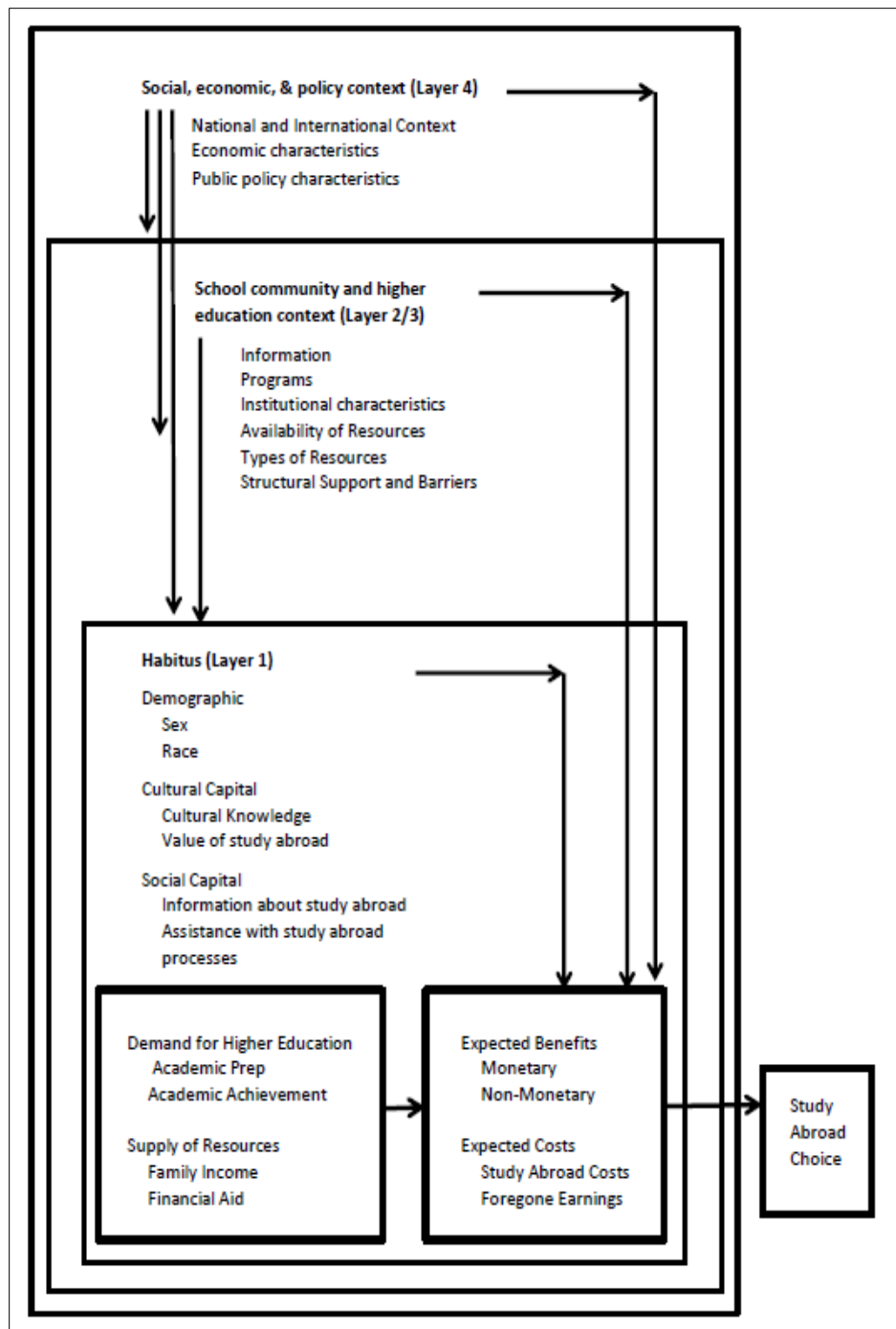


Figure 2. Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad.

Theoretical Framework for Students' College Choice

The Perna (2006a) model originated from an effort to determine how students decide to attend college and to examine student gaps in enrollment, which persist among certain groups in the United States. Researchers have sought to identify the reasons for these gaps. Many argue that continued inequities in educational opportunities are due primarily to the inadequacy of existing financial aid programs (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2004; St. John, 2003). Others have acknowledged the importance of student financial aid but stress the barriers created by inadequate academic preparation (Ellwood & Kane, 2000; Perna, 2004). A third predominant explanation among theorists for the continued gaps in college enrollment relates to the lack of information about financial and academic requirements for attending college, as well as the limited availability of student financial aid to offset the high costs of attendance (Kane, 1999). Bourdieu (1977) contended that it is limiting to assume that the acquisition of material wealth is the only way that social-class groups consolidate and perpetuate access to power. According to Bourdieu, another way that social groups, particularly the dominant class, perpetuate access to power is by establishing and maintaining social networks. Bourdieu viewed cultural capital as representing the unique knowledge imparted to a student by parents and the community, including language, customs, shared experiences, and social norms. Bourdieu also claimed that cultural capital takes the form of deeply engrained behaviors such as patterns of speech. Indeed, understanding Bourdieu's construct of cultural capital, suggests that various social strata consolidate power not only by passing on economic wealth, but also by cultivating preferences for the arts and music (Saterlee, 2009).

Increasingly, theorists have adopted conceptual models that draw on multiple theoretical perspectives to understand students' choice to attend college, and recent research has centered on

the college-choice processes of particular groups, such as African Americans, Hispanics, and students from low-income families (Perna, 2006a). Perna (2006a) proposed an updated conceptual model of college choice, incorporating cultural and sociological influences within contextual layers that contribute to the choices students consider and eventually make. As noted by Dykens (2013), college-choice research has focused on the influence of cultural capital in students' decision to enroll in college (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Perna, 2006b) and, more recently (Perna, 2006a; St. John, 2006), on sociological areas such as habitus, which refers to an individual's cultural capital as it relates to the social construction of class.

Collapsed Perna Model of Student Choice

The original Perna (2006a) model was developed to examine the process that a student undertakes in choosing to attend college. Perna's purpose was to design a conceptual model for studying college choice that integrates economic and sociological approaches. The model assumes that an individual's assessment of the benefits and costs of an investment in college is shaped by the individual's habitus as well as the school and community context, the higher education context, and the social, economic, and policy context. The model is grounded in the economic theory of human capital and the sociological constructs of habitus and social and cultural capital, as well as the student-choice construct. "Just as the student-choice construct views students as making decision situated contexts, this model views students' college related decisions as shaped by layers of context" (Salisbury et al., 2010, p. 617). Four separate layers make up Perna's conceptual model. Layer 1, the habitus layer, includes demographics, cultural capital, and social capital. Layers 2 and 3 are collapsed into both the school community and higher education context. Layer 4 includes the social, economic, and policy context.

Habitus, or Layer 1 of Perna's (2006a) conceptual model, refers to the enduring beliefs, attitudes, aspirations, perceptions, and values an individual acquires through his or her home and school environments and social class—all of which frame and limit their choices (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977). At the individual level, habitus is manifested as values and beliefs, and affects how information is processed and knowledge constructed (Perna, 2006b). "Habitus is the internalized set of dispositions and preferences that are derived from one's surroundings and that subconsciously define what is a 'reasonable action' to take" (Perna, 2006b, p. 113). Habitus influences not only the choices a potential study-abroad student might make but also serves to constrain the options that he or she considers (Dyken, 2013).

In the conceptual model, human capital lies within habitus and refers to an individual's productive capacities such as knowledge, skills, and abilities. An investment in higher education can represent a form of human capital since it has the potential to enhance individual productive capacities, including future earnings and occupational status (Salisbury et al., 2010), but the amount of earning potential exceeds the costs of attending.

Cultural capital, which also lies within habitus in Perna's (2006a) conceptual model, describes an individual's cultural knowledge, language skills, educational credentials, and school-related acquisitions all derived largely from his or her parents' class status. Additionally, cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements—for instance, skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings and credentials—that one acquires in a particular social class (Routledge, 2016). Individuals who lack the required cultural capital may lower their aspirations or self-select out of particular situations or activities because they do not know the cultural norms for those situations or activities (Perna, 2006a).

Also situated within habitus in the conceptual model (Perna, 2006a) is social capital, which encapsulates an individual's access to information through networks and support systems. An individual acquires social capital through relationships with others, particularly through membership in social networks and other social structures. A primary function of social capital is to enable an individual to gain access to human, cultural, and other forms of capital, as well as institutional resources and support (Perna, 2006a). She also stressed that the role of social capital is to communicate the norms, trust, authority, and social controls that an individual should understand and adopt in order to succeed (Perna, 2006a). Coleman (1988) further suggested that social capital is derived from two types of relationships: the relationship between children and their parents, and the relationship between a parent and other adults, especially adults who are connected to the school that the child attends (Dika & Singh, 2002). Both Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu and Passerson (1977) recognized that "social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structures, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action" (Lin, 2001, p. 24).

Use of Perna's Conceptual Model in Empirical Studies of Study Abroad

Salisbury et al. (2010) were the first researchers to use the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice to understand the factors that influence students' predisposition to study abroad. The Perna model was adapted by Salisbury et al. (2009) using the Wabash National Study (WNS) of liberal arts education and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to examine students' intent to study abroad. The NSSE included a direct question regarding students' intention to study abroad that allowed subsequent quantitative analysis of student choice. Salisbury and his colleagues found that during the first stage of the sequence of decisions necessary to participate in a study-abroad program—namely the decision

regarding intent to study abroad—the probability of a student's intent to study abroad was significantly influenced by socioeconomic status and social and cultural capital acquired both before and during the student's first year of college.

Salisbury et al.'s (2010) adapted model includes three broad groupings of theoretical factors that show the complex relationships among institutional type (i.e., liberal arts colleges or research or regional universities), higher education contexts (i.e., college culture and learning environments), and the layers of students' financial, human, social, and cultural capital as these factors relate to the intent to study abroad. Salisbury et al. (2009) stated that their model derives from college-choice models developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987), Paulsen and St. John (2002), and St. John and Asker (2001), as well as Perna (2006). The model also derives from research from Simon (2007). The model suggests that the four contextual areas (Habitus, School community and higher education, Social, economic & policy) overlap and that a student's decision to study abroad involves intense planning, occurs over time, and is based on institutional factors and the accumulation of various forms of capital (Salisbury et al., 2009).

Perna's (2006a) conceptual model of student college choice provides a framework for understanding the complicated issue of increasing enrollment in study-abroad programs and, more specifically, the enrollment-choice process of students at access institutions (Dyken, 2013). In the context of intent to study abroad, examples of social and cultural capital informing students' decisions might include the availability of information about study abroad, its perceived educational importance, social or family constraints, comfort in negotiating multicultural environments, awareness of and interest in international events and issues, previous travel abroad, and second-language proficiency. All of these factors influence a student's college-related decisions and shape his or her accumulation of social, cultural, human, and

financial capital. Therefore, a student's habitus will likely influence whether he or she believes study abroad is a plausible or preferred option during college (Salisbury et. al, 2009). As indicated earlier, research has shown that students with low cultural capital benefit most from study-abroad programs and are excellent candidates for both short- and long-term study-abroad opportunities, but they are less likely to enroll in these experiences (Dessoiff, 2006; Salisbury et al., 2009; Walpole, 2003). Walker, Bukenya, and Thomas (2010) surveyed study-abroad applicants and interested non-applicants, examining the preferences and decisions indicated by each respondent, and concluded that study-abroad participants were more likely to be middle-class, non-minority, female, and non-business majors. Penn and Tanner (2009) found that, historically, many Black students have struggled to arrive to college financially and educationally prepared; they have also tended to lack the academic and social connections that allow international education to be a vital aspect of one's college experience. The findings from this research indicate clearly that more education, mentoring, and support are needed to increase the number of Black students participating in international education. Having a conceptual framework to further examine these issues is important to making study-abroad opportunities available and appealing to diverse populations.

Layer 1: Habitus

Habitus represents Layer 1 of Perna's (2006a) model and comprises an individual's cultural and social capital. Habitus is manifested as values and beliefs, and it affects how information is processed and knowledge constructed (Perna, 2006b). In the Perna model, all decisions related to human capital take place within the context of habitus. "Habitus is the internalized set of dispositions and preferences that are derived from one's surroundings and that subconsciously define what is a 'reasonable' action" to take (Perna, 2006a, p. 113). Habitus

influences not only the choices a student makes but also the options a student considers (Perna, 2006a, 2006b). Relating habitus to study-abroad choices, a student may never seek information about available programs or reach a decision in the choice process because his or her habitus may not have made study abroad seem like a viable option (Salisbury et al., 2009). The importance of habitus in the decision-making process is elevated when examining underserved groups that historically have chosen not to participate in short-term study-abroad experiences (Dessoiff, 2006; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2006b; Salisbury et al., 2010; Walpole, 2003).

Many of the students attending Atlanta-Based College fit the demographic profile of access institutions in general. The mean high school grade point average of ABC's fall 2014 entering freshman cohort was 2.79, among the lowest in the state university system. Generally, at least 30% of the entering students require remediation in at least one core subject (i.e., math, English, or reading). Recent survey results have indicated that 40-50% of ABC students are the first in their families to attend college. ABC is classified as a majority-minority college, with race and ethnicity data showing that 38.7% of the students are White, 31.4% are Black or Non-Hispanic, 15.6% are Hispanic, 9.3% are Asian, and 3.8% are multiracial. In addition, according to Complete College Georgia, many ABC students work over 20 hours per week. In light of this demographic data, it is likely that individuals within a typical ABC student's social circle (including parents and friends) may have limited or no experience with study abroad. Consequently, ABC students may not perceive the value of studying abroad during their college enrollment. Expected costs of enrolling in college, include tuition, fees and other direct costs, the opportunity cost of foregone employment while enrolled, and the psychological cost of effort; expected benefits include both monetary and non-monetary returns on education. (Salisbury et al., 2009).

Page and Scott-Clayton (2016) held that students from lower-income, immigrant, and/or non-college-educated families, may lack helpful information about the costs and benefits of enrollment, as well as about the process of preparing for, applying to, and selecting a college. In addition, students at access institutions often lack information about the study-abroad process. Arguably, informational gaps such as these are particularly damaging as program and financing options have multiplied over time. As cited in Page and Scott-Clayton (2016), Thaler and Mullainathan's and Casey et al.'s work in psychology and behavioral economics, respectively, demonstrates the ways in which human decision-making often departs from standard models of economic behavior, especially when faced with complex options and when the decision makers are young and inexperienced. Yet, along the entire pathway from college consideration to matriculation, students face complicated choices and may lack sufficient support and structure to navigate burdensome processes and institutional bureaucracy. Similarly, the decision-making process around studying abroad can also be difficult to navigate and sometimes filled with bureaucratic hurdles. Over the past several years, informational and procedural barriers have become increasingly highlighted in discussions about college access (particularly as they relate to financial aid applications), and recognition of their intersection with broader behavioral barriers has become more prominent.

Some students may lack access to information; others may be overwhelmed by the volume of postsecondary options or by the process of attending college. For high-achieving, low-income students who are geographically isolated from other high-achieving peers, college application choices mirror those of peers who are socioeconomically, rather than academically, similar (Hoxby & Avery, 2012). Research has shown that students entering college with higher social and cultural capital (e.g., those whose parents, family, or friends have traveled and/or

studied abroad) consistently expressed their intention to study abroad at higher rates than classmates with lower social and cultural capital (Salisbury et al., 2009). Specifically, low-SES and first-generation students were found to have a significantly lower intention to study abroad. As mentioned previously, ABC has a high population of low-SES and first-generation college students. Study-abroad choice-process research has indicated overwhelmingly that in order to increase participation in study abroad among these groups, institutions can address not only financial and human capital concerns, but also social and cultural barriers (Salisbury et al., 2010).

Layer 2/3: School Community and Higher Education Context

In Perna's (2006a) college-choice model, Layer 2, which represents the school and community context, is separated from Layer 3, the higher education context. This separation is based on the assumption that the model will be applied to high school age students who are considering a transition from their local secondary school to a higher education institution. However, when focusing on students' choice to study abroad after entering college, the two layers are collapsed into a single higher education context layer (Dyken, 2013); a student's prior high school and community experiences are incorporated into habitus and, though still considered influential, no longer represent an active, stand-alone contextual layer. Much of the existing research on students' intent to study abroad utilizing Perna's model is based on data collected at the beginning and end of students' freshman academic year (Salisbury et al., 2009, 2011); however, the current research study applied the model to the choice process that takes place after matriculation. Based on the research available, the study's action research group recognized that students entering ABC—and access institutions in general—may have had less social and cultural capital than students attending other colleges or universities. Specifically,

many ABC students have significant financial need when they enter college, with most relying on federal financial aid and receiving Pell grants (54.5%), according to data from Complete College Georgia. Additionally, recent College Board data indicate that 88% of ABC students have financial need.

According to Salisbury et al. (2009), research on the relationship between a student's socioeconomic status and his or her attendance at a community college suggests that investment in study-abroad participation among community college or access college students may be the most efficient use of resources, especially if the ultimate goal is to enhance global awareness and increase intercultural skills. One study found that community college students were 30% less likely to intend to study abroad than students at liberal arts colleges (Salisbury et al., 2009). More research is needed to examine the significant differences across institutional types regarding the intent to study abroad.

Collectively, these findings offer a possible explanation for why minority students are underrepresented in study-abroad participation. Moreover, they reinforce the importance of further research on the decision-making process related to studying abroad and its implications for access not just to initial college enrollment, but to the full array of educationally important activities available throughout the college experience, such as study abroad.

The school community and higher education context layer of the Collapsed Perna (2006a) model (i.e., Layer 2/3) addresses information, programs, institutional characteristics, availability of resources, and structural support and barriers. Several institutional constraints can negatively affect budgets, staffing, and services for study abroad that are essential for reaching a critical mass of potential study-abroad students. The Center for Global Education at California State University in collaboration with California Colleges for International Education was awarded

funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies Program, for the California Community College Student Outcomes Abroad Research (CCC SOAR) Project. This project builds upon recent research that confirms a significant impact from study abroad on student international learning as well as overall retention and progress towards degree completion at four year colleges and universities. Fifty-two percent of the respondents indicated that more encouragement from the college administration is critical to study-abroad growth. In addition, nearly two thirds of the survey respondents reported that increased funding to expand development and support for new study-abroad programs is critical. Furthermore, they indicated that community college study-abroad offices are often understaffed, and in many cases coordination responsibilities are given to a single faculty member or administrator with limited time to complete his or her assignment load (IIE, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, I was hired in 2014 as ABC's assistant director of study abroad. At the start of the study, I had just assumed this full-time position, with a focus on promoting study abroad. At that time, few formal processes and procedures had been put in place to promote or increase study abroad on the ABC campus, especially faculty-led, short-term programs, due to lack of office support. Though ABC has since invested resources in study abroad by hiring more full-time, dedicated study-abroad personnel, structures (e.g., mechanisms for faculty to create study-abroad programs) have still not been established. There were only three faculty-led study abroad programs at the time of this study. Previously, faculty leading these three programs promoted them on their own, with no centralized support. Furthermore, there was limited visibility on the ABC website promoting these programs; the study-abroad page is hidden within the academic affairs page, making it hard to find unless students or faculty know exactly where

to search. According to ABC's fall 2014 student survey, 26.7% of students wanted to learn more about study-abroad opportunities through the college website.

As indicated in the school community and higher education context of the collapses Perna (2006a) model, availability of information is important. At ABC, in addition to there being no strong online presence highlighting study-abroad opportunities, there are no marketing posters displayed on the campus. At ABC, there is only one full-time employee dedicated to enhancing study-abroad outreach to over 12,000 students.

As Perna (2010) noted, support from counselors may be especially important when parents do not have the knowledge, information, prior direct experience, or other resources to guide their children through college-related processes. Generally, however, many community colleges and access colleges do not have the financial resources to hire full-time advisor/counseling staff in the area of study abroad. ABC has limited study-abroad staff to advise students about options available to them.

Atlanta-Based College is fortunate to be one of five institutions within the University System to receive approval to institute an "international education fee" that all students pay in support of international education such as study abroad (D. Dumas, personal communication, November 11, 2015). A portion of ABC's International Education Fund (IEF) is used for study-abroad scholarships or stipends, ranging from \$500 to \$2,000. Many of the other university system institutions do not have this type of scholarship funding available for study abroad (D. Dumas, personal communication, November 11, 2015). Variations in both the prevalence of and the criteria for awarding institutional grant suggest that colleges and universities may also mediate the effects of financial aid on college enrollment (Perna, 2010). Based on the Perna (2006a) model, information on financial aid options for study abroad is important in the choice to

enroll. In researching community colleges, Parker (2015) revealed a notable lack of robust scholarship and financial aid opportunities across institutions. Such sparse information highlights an overall discrepancy between the mission of accessibility and affordability of community colleges and what they actually provide in relation to study-abroad programs.

The Perna (2006a) model also addresses the importance of structural support for and barriers to studying abroad. ABC does not have a formalized process in place whereby faculty can develop study-abroad programs, nor is there a formal training program for new faculty to create a study abroad program. As a result, only a small number of ABC faculty led such programs.

The financial management process for developing and maintaining a study-abroad program is quite cumbersome. For instance, ABC's finance department requires considerable documentation to manage its study-abroad programs, a difficult task for faculty to manage along with their teaching and other academic responsibilities. The Office of Internationalization has only one full-time employee to assist faculty with the management of these processes. A study-abroad office can increase faculty-led study-abroad programs on campus by helping faculty navigate institutional processes, policies, financial management, trip-fee deposits and reconciliation, logistical arrangements, and enrollment application management (Tuma, Chieffo, & Burrell, 2014).

ABC learned about the student barriers to studying abroad that are outlined in the habitus contextual layer (Layer 1). (For instance, because ABC is relatively new to study abroad, there is no solid registration and payment system in place for students to pay study-abroad fees.) To gain an understanding of the barriers students may encounter in studying abroad, the action research group decided to conduct interviews with students who had previously studied abroad.

As these interview confirmed, the process of gathering information, registering, paying, and finally preparing for an overseas trip, and being safe abroad, can be a complex, overwhelming process for students (Dyken, 2013).

Dyken (2013), concluded that institutional culture is an important factor in students' choice to attend college or study abroad. ABC has a very distinct culture, which is a source of great institutional pride. It became clear to me, as an insider researcher, that ABC was very risk averse, due mainly to its status as a relatively new school in the university system. The college has therefore prioritized maintaining a good representation as the student body grows and as ABC gains support from state government. There are student and institutional risks associated with participating in study abroad. Faculty-led study-abroad programs often pose higher risks to institutions because program leaders are generally ill-equipped to prepare for, or respond to, emergencies. Therefore, establishing a study-abroad office to develop policies is a natural outcome of risk assessment and is important in creating sustainable study-abroad programs (Friend, 2012).

Layer 4: Social, Economic, and Policy Context

Layer 4 of the integrated model of college choice comprises the larger policy and economic environment surrounding student choice (Perna, 2006a, 2006b). The conceptual model is designed in part to illustrate the multiple ways policy makers may intervene to promote college enrollment (Perna, 2006a). Many aspects of the broader social, economic, and policy context may mediate students' perceptions of financial aid and the effects of aid on enrollment in college programs (Perna, 2010). Research has also suggested that state merit-aid programs have varying impacts on college enrollment. For example, Dynarski (2004) found that the Georgia HOPE scholarship has a greater effect on enrollment in public four-year institutions than other

types of institutions. The scholarship program also had larger effects for Whites than for Blacks and Hispanics, suggesting that the program contributes to the racial and ethnic stratification of enrollment in the state (Dynarski, 2004). Additionally, in 2004, the Georgia state legislature tightened academic eligibility requirements to receive the scholarship, effective for students entering college after May 1, 2007. Because of this change, the number of high school seniors eligible for the HOPE scholarship declined by approximately 18,000 (Fisher, 2007).

Although ABC students can use HOPE scholarships for study abroad, a Georgia college or university has to sponsor the program; if a student uses a study-abroad program provider that does not have a relationship with a Georgia school, the student will not be eligible to use his or her funds for the program. Over the past two decades, higher education costs have increased dramatically, leaving less room for students to finance activities outside of tuition, such as study abroad (College Board, 2008). Thus, at ABC (and elsewhere), the availability of more grants or federal loans could entice students to be more interested in study-abroad opportunities.

According to data from ABC's 2015 study-abroad returnees' interviews, finances were the number one barrier to students studying abroad. Although these students overcame this barrier, many suggested that additional funding for study abroad could be crucial to increasing the numbers of students who participate.

Another relevant state-level policy is the System's Board of Regents' Strategic Imperative 2. According to the imperative, "is committed to increasing international education opportunities through student and faculty exchanges and to ensuring that all students in the system graduate as active and aware participants in the global economy and society" (University System of Georgia, n.d.). Thus, study abroad for students has emerged as an important statewide initiative, making it easier for higher education institutions to pursue support for study-abroad

opportunities. However, the actual level of support by the university system for these types of internationalization efforts should be examined more closely.

According to Smith and Larimer (2009), federal, state, and institutional policies work to frame the factors students consider in the choice process. The federal government, for instance, has committed to increasing the number of international exchanges at both the high school and college levels to further young people's knowledge of foreign cultures and languages. In the last decade, the U.S. Congress has expressed its support for study-abroad programs by developing several legislative acts and funding sources devoted to these initiatives. As noted previously, in 2005, Congress established the Lincoln Commission, with the ultimate goal of sending one million U.S. students abroad annually by 2017. Also in 2005, the Senate passed a resolution (S. Res. 308) declaring that year to be the "Year of Study Abroad." The Congress subsequently introduced a bill to establish the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Program to create a pathway to study abroad reflecting the "demographics of the United States undergraduate population, including undergraduate students in technical and scientific fields of study (Commission, 2005). In 2009, President Barack Obama launched the first "100,000 Strong" initiative, designed to increase the number of U.S. students studying abroad in China (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a), followed by the 2011 launch of the "100,000 Strong in the Americas" initiative, focused on study-abroad participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. In January 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry highlighted a major milestone of this latter initiative with the "100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund," which raised \$3.65 million to support the expanded capacity of universities in Latin America and the Caribbean to receive students from the U.S.

Another example of U.S. governmental support for study abroad is the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program, a federal program designed to make grant money available to low

socioeconomic students in order to increase participation (IIE, 2011). Similarly, the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs offers scholarships to increase the number of study-abroad participants and to diversify study-abroad destinations. These scholarships include the Gilman Scholarship Program and the Boren Award for International Study. The Boren Award is designed specifically to attract future professionals in the area of national security. As mentioned earlier, the Institute of International Education launched its Generation Study Abroad initiative with the goal of 600,000 American students completing study abroad in credit and non-credit programs by the end of the decade (IIE, n.d.b). Such national policy initiatives can be influential, if not instrumental, in increasing the number of students studying abroad at access institutions.

It is important that federal and state government, as well as higher education institutions recognize the short- and long-term significance of study abroad and examine the choice process for access students in particular. Studies have attempted to identify the reasons students do or do not participate in study abroad. Most of the research, however, comprises unpublished doctoral dissertations, whose findings are not readily available to study-abroad professionals or to those who work with students at colleges and universities (Stroud, 2010). Table 1 outlines empirical studies that have used various college-choice models to understand how to increase participation in study abroad.

Table 1

Empirical Studies Diversifying Study Abroad and the Study-Abroad Choice Process

Author(s)/Date	Subject/Purpose	Sample/Methodology	Findings
Walker, Bukenya, & Thomas, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study abroad programs at HBCUs • Low participation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Questionnaire; Likert-scale perceptions of study abroad • N = 263 • Data analyzed using factor analysis and binary logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from regression model found major and classification were statistically significant to relationship with globalization and study abroad • Demographic variables and information sources were not good indicators of students' perceptions of globalization • Business students were more inclined toward globalization and study abroad
Penn & Tanner, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black student participation in study abroad • Examined the influence of major, attrition, lower SES, lack of encouragement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Likert-type scale • 18 survey questions • 41 high school graduates in a six-week program at an HBCU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students less exposed to travel were less interested in study abroad • Black students had an affinity for traveling to places to which they identified • More mentoring is needed for Black students to participate in study abroad, especially from Black faculty • Service-learning model
Loberg, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed disparity between high interest and low participation • Focused on study-abroad professionals' perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed methods • Triangulation design with convergence model • 2010 IIE forum survey of study-abroad professionals, N = 219 • Focus group and interviews, n = 17 study-abroad professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty support and curriculum integration are important • Faculty have an important supporting role in encouraging higher rates of student participation • Outreach efforts aimed at faculty are needed to further the study

Author(s)/Date	Subject/Purpose	Sample/Methodology	Findings
Parker, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community college accessibility to study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative • Thematic analysis of textual materials • Multiple case studies • N = 18 community colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of congruence of community college mission of accessibility for study abroad • Community colleges can seek inclusion for study abroad
Simon & Ainsworth, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of race and socioeconomic status to disparities in study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed methods • National Education Longitudinal Study, 1988-2000 • Post-educational transcripts • N = 308 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' habitus, social networks, and cultural capital shaped study-abroad experiences • Race and class significantly shaped the process leading to study-abroad participation
Dyken, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examined student choice process to participate in short-term study abroad using Perna's (2006a) model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed methods • N = 10 years of quantitative data of winter-term course at Graceland University total of 1,941 participants • Seven interviews • T-test; logistic regression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complex choice process to study abroad was supported by institutional culture
Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied an integrated model of college choice to better describe students who do and do not intend to study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wabash National Study on Liberal Arts Education • N = 2,772 from 19 two- and four-year institutions • Logistic regression analysis with intent to study abroad • Applied student-choice construct and the integrated model of student choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a wide range of complicating issues influencing students' intent to study abroad • Integrated model of student choice may provide insight into the range of student decisions regarding participation in educational experiences
Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied an integrated student-choice model (Perna, 2006a) to identify differences between White and minority students across human, financial, social, and cultural capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education • N = 2,772 from 19 two- and four-year institutions • Adjusted logistic regression based on work of Salisbury et al. (2009) • A Wald Chi-square test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse racial groups were affected differently by similar measures of human, financial, social, and cultural capital and habitus

Author(s)/Date	Subject/Purpose	Sample/Methodology	Findings
Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied an integrated student-choice model (Perna, 2006a) to identify differences between male and female intent to study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education N = 2,772 from 19 two- and four-year institutions Follow-up data collection n = 3,081 Adjusted logistic regression based on work of Salisbury et al. (2009, 2010) A Wald Chi-square test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender differences played an important and varied role in men's and women's interest in study abroad Targeted marketing strategies to men versus women can be effective in influencing choice to study abroad Influential pre-college experiences affected participants' intent to study abroad Measures of capital and student-choice constructs served to reveal important gender differences
Kutsche, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the underrepresentation of students with disabilities studying abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative Open-ended survey n = 749 students at a Midwestern university with responses from 28 students Chi-square test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with disabilities perceived a range of both benefits and barriers to study abroad Students reported a range of barriers that fell into six categories (disability-related, financial, readiness, little effort invested, few opportunities)

These empirical studies examined students' decision-making process regarding study abroad, namely diverse student groups (minorities, low-income, non-traditional, students with disabilities). Likewise, this action research case study also examined the factors involved in the study-abroad choice process for diverse groups of students at an access institutions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used for this action research case study, including a discussion of the data collection and data analysis. The purpose of the study was to explore how an access institution could influence the choice of its students to study abroad. The following primary research questions guided the study: (1) What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework? (2) How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?

Design of the Study

During multiple interactive cycles of this study, the action research group—comprising faculty and administrators from ABC who shared an interest in increasing the number of students at the college studying abroad—focused on gaining a better understanding of the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad and how it could help address the research questions. The ARG planned the change process utilizing the general empirical method of remaining attentive and responsive to the enactment of the action research cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Perna (2006a) created her original conceptual model, which integrates both economic and sociological approaches, to understand the process of students' choice to attend college. The model assumes that an individual's assessment of the benefits and costs of an investment in

college is shaped by his or her habitus as well as by the school and community context, the higher education context, and the social, economic, and policy context (Perna, 2006a). Salisbury et al. (2009) then adapted (by collapsing) Perna's model in order to identify the choice process that students undergo when deciding to study abroad. The researchers concluded that students engage in the same process in their decision to study abroad as they do in choosing to attend college. Using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) model for study abroad, the ARG for the current study set out to learn about the student-related and institutional issues that influence and do not influence ABC students' choice to study abroad. Additionally, create stakeholder interventions to influence the choice of students to study abroad.

This action research case study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology for collecting the primary data. Using Perna's conceptual framework, I completed deductive analysis of the data; central to this approach is the notion that theory determines the data, in the sense that the hypotheses or assumptions are articulated within the background or context of the theory (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

As a study-abroad practitioner, I approached this research from a pragmatist viewpoint, exercising a willingness to use methods most useful to understanding the student-choice process on multiple levels and then apply the findings to inform future actions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzle, 2004). A pragmatic approach was particularly suited to this type of research on study abroad since the Perna (2006a) model allows for a deep examination of students engaged in the choice process (Dykens, 2013). In the words of Kivinen, Kaipainen, and Hedman (2008):

Adapting a famous pragmatist slogan "learning by doing" we could also say "inquiring by doing"...describing a research process shows the most essential thing in a research process is that it seeks answers to accurately posed research questions—partly arising

from the theories of the field—and that all concepts within the framework can be operationalized into precise research actions. The aim of scientific research is to discover social mechanisms, recurrent sequences of events and their effects—intentional and unintentional consequences—that is why the applied methodology is relational. Pierre Bourdieu’s key concepts field and habitus, as thoroughly relational, are apt tools also in the context of pragmatist research methodology. (p. 1)

Qualitative Research

In its most basic form, qualitative research is designed to gain a deeper understanding of how people make sense of their experiences. Data are collected through interviews, observations, and documents, and then analyzed to address specific research questions (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative researcher studies individuals in their natural settings in an effort to examine particular situations, interactions, or phenomena. By entering the world of others, the researcher attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of study participants from their perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). To achieve this goal, data are gathered from the participants themselves. This qualitative case study drew on multiple sources of data, including review of ABC documents, transcripts of meetings, surveys, and interviews with students, faculty, administrators, and the ARG members. In qualitative research, surveys often include open-ended questions designed to capture personal experiences and perceptions. The interview is one of the most commonly used methods in qualitative research as it has the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions and gives the researcher an opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Specifically, this qualitative research relied heavily on critical incident interviews. The critical incident technique (CIT) adheres to a flexible set of principles to gather information

about defined situations and to examine how factors related to a situation under investigation lead to effective practice (Flanagan, 1954). For example, such studies might focus upon examining incidents related to effective and ineffective practices; exploring supportive and hindering factors; collecting functional or behavioral descriptors of events or problems; or examining characteristics that are critical to the success of an activity (Butterfield, Boregan, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005; Flanagan, 1954). Researchers often use CIT to corroborate other data and to allow perceptions that might have been revealed through other methods, such as surveys or focus groups, to be uncovered (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

The analysis of data in this study involved deductive coding using the Perna (2006a) model; that is, predetermined codes derived from the literature and theoretical frameworks were applied to the collected data (Ivankova, 2015). Deduction is a theory-driven, in the sense that hypotheses and assumptions are articulated within the background or context of theory, which is then tested in confrontation with the so-called empirical world; that is, raw data (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). Furthermore, critical incident interviews were employed in this action research study. Table 2 summarizes the data collection methods employed in the study.

Table 2

Data Collection Methods

Research Question	Data Sources	Analytical Approach	Proposed Timeline
1. What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Surveys • Interviews • Critical Incidents • Audio recordings • Summaries of action research meetings • Researcher observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis • Quantitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Researcher memos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous until project completion • December 2014 • September / October 2015 • December 2016 / April 2017 • Immediate • Immediate • Immediate/Ongoing
2. How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Interviews • Critical Incidents • Document Analysis • Audio Recordings • Summaries of action research meetings • Researcher observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative inquiry • Qualitative analysis • Qualitative analysis • Researcher memos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2014 • September / October 2015 • December • 2016 / April 2017 • Continuous until project completion • Ongoing • Ongoing • Immediate / Ongoing

Case Study Methodology

The use of case study methodology in qualitative research can contribute to existing knowledge about specific groups, organizations, or related phenomena. This research comprised a descriptive case study, whose purpose was to describe a phenomenon in depth and in its real-world context (Yin, 2014). The real-world context of this case study was Atlanta-Based College,

an access institution, and the factors that influenced the student's decision to study abroad.

Generally, a case study research design includes “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2014). At its core, a case study attempts to illuminate a decision or set of decisions in order to ascertain why they were made, how they were implemented, and with what result (Schramm, as cited in Yin, 2014). This research represented a classic action research case study in which both the researcher and the access institution were engaged in collaborative change management or problem solving to generate new knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick, 2012). It strategically brought together a group of individuals working for ABC who had a stake in increasing study-abroad opportunities at the college. The research produced a single, descriptive case study in which analysis was performed primarily at the group level, and it used multiple sources of evidence in an effort to determine how to influence student's decision to study abroad.

Various sources of institutional data were used in this study, including ABC reports (e.g., the *2013 Quality Enhancement Plan* and the *2013-2018 Strategic Plan*, prepared by the American Council on Education's Internationalization Laboratory) and documents from the OI. Another data source was a sample of students responses to ABC's annual 2014 fall student survey, which included questions designed to identify student's interest in studying abroad as well as the types of students interested in studying abroad. Results of pre- and post-study-abroad surveys administered from spring 2014 through fall 2015 were also reviewed. Additionally, minutes from Quality Enhancement Plan meetings were also mined for relevant data. Furthermore, I, as the lead researcher, interviewed a sample of students who had studied abroad between 2014 and 2015; the interviews were conducted using a guide I developed that was based on the condensed Perna (2006a) conceptual framework and that was reviewed beforehand by the

ARG. Prior to the interviews, I received approval from the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to use the student interview guide and to administer the consent form.

Data were also gathered from my researcher's journals and memos. I kept detailed researcher notes on the learning experiences of the ARG members as they addressed the research questions. The ARG members were asked to reflect on their experiences and to analyze their learning through the action research process. At the conclusion of the study, I interviewed ARG members, allowing each individual to share his or her reflections on the multiple action research cycles. In an effort to identify themes, I triangulated the data by reviewing action research meeting transcripts, journals, ABC documents, student surveys, and interview transcripts (MacLean & Mohr, 1999; Stainback, 1988). Throughout the research process, I constantly reviewed and compared the gathered data against the Perna (2006a) model, utilizing HyperResearch, an easy-to-use qualitative software package, to access, manage, shape, and analyze the qualitative data (Creswell, 2009). In addition, the ARG examined the data from multiple data sources, interpreted findings, and drew conclusions and implications for future practice.

Action Research

This study utilized action research methodology, a collaborative, active, inquiry approach to problem solving that uses continuous cycles of planning, acting, and evaluating in order to effect some form of change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Stringer, 2007). Action research represents a participatory, democratic process and partnership that involves stakeholders—individuals affected by the problem being studied—who are engaged in systematic inquiry and investigation of a problem (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Stringer, 2007). Stringer (2007) posited that this methodology implies the need to develop cooperative approaches to work and harmonious,

collegial relationships between and among people. In action research, the researcher and the participants are collaborators in the study and operate under the notion that participants are committed to the process and invested in the successful application of the findings (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). The action research process tends to be complex and often fluid; various findings can emerge which may require other courses of action. Coghlan and Brannick (2010) further explained that these phases are completed in a cyclical, non-orderly way that may or may not produce intended results.

Collaboration among action research group members was evident from the outset of the study, and all ARG members actively participated in discussions about the study-abroad choice process. The group members drew from their own experiences at ABC and from their understanding of ABC students and the study abroad choice process to analyze the data and ultimately decide on the best interventions.

Action Research Cycles

The cycles of action research often run concurrently. According to Coghlan and Brannick (2010):

Meta-learning—learning about the learning process—is taking place when these cycles are operating in parallel. One cycle is the review of the achievement of the project’s purpose and goals whereas the other cycle is reflecting on using the actual action research stages. The latter is “a reflection cycle which is an action research cycle about the action research cycle.” (p. 11)

Action research approaches are participatory; they involve a collective process of knowledge generation and ultimately aim to make that process democratic (Popplewell & Hagman, 2012).

A definition, provided by Shani and Pasmore (1985) captures the main themes of action research:

Action research maybe defined as an emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems. It is simultaneously conceived with bringing about change in organizations, in developing self-help competencies in organization members and adding to scientific knowledge. Finally, an evolving process is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry. (p. 439)

Coghlan and Brannick (2012) held that the context of doing action research in one's own organization comprises an action research cycle of four basic steps: diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action (see Figure 3). The exploration of the action research cycle can be understood in terms of four factors: context, quality of relationships, quality of the action research process, and the outcome.

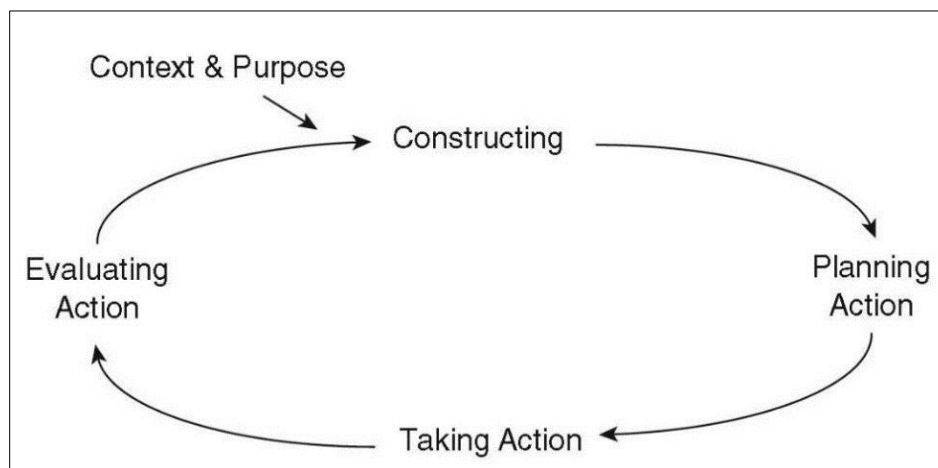


Figure 3. Action research cycle. Adapted from *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, by D. Coghlan & T. Brannick, 2010.

The first step of an action research cycle involves diagnosing the issue or issues. Diagnosis also entails the articulation of the theoretical foundations of action. The next step is planning action, which follows from analyzing the context and purpose of the project, framing the issue, and insuring that the diagnosis is accurate. Taking action is the third step, followed by the final step of determining the outcomes, both intended and unintended, of the action. Action outcomes are then examined and studied to verify that the correct action was taken. In any action research project, multiple action research cycles operate concurrently, and these cycles typically have different time spans (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). As Coghlan and Brannick (2010) maintained, action research contains concurrent cycles similar to a clock on which the revolutions of the three hands are concurrent, with the revolutions of the second hand enabling the revolutions of the minute hand, and the revolutions of the second and minute hands enabling the movement of the hour hand. Likewise, the short-term action research cycles contribute to the medium-term cycles, which in turn contribute eventually to the longer-term cycle. This study included iterative action research cycles, as shown in Figure 4.

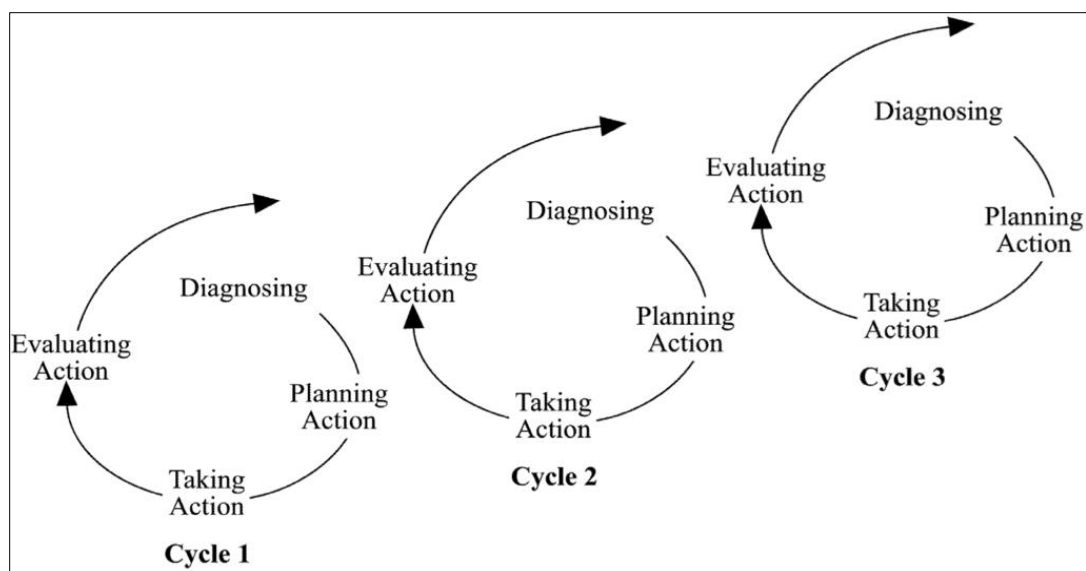


Figure 4. Concurrent action research cycles. Adapted from *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, by D. Coghlan & T. Brannick, 2010.

Action Research Group

In this study, the action research group members held key positions on the ABC campus, working on both the academic and administrative sides of the college. The members had an authentic stake in seeing study abroad grow on the ABC campus. Each person signed an informed consent form, demonstrating his or her commitment to the action research study, to maintaining confidentiality during and after the meetings, and to the meeting schedule. Furthermore, in an effort to protect each person's privacy and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for all of the participants (Yin, 2014). The original study began with an action research multi-unit group. A subgroup of the action research team was then formed and met beginning in January 2016 to work on the final interventions for additional action research cycles. Table 3 lists the members for both the action research group and subgroup.

Table 3

Multi-Unit Action Research Group and Study-Abroad Subgroup Members and Positions

Pseudonym	Gender	Position at ABC	Group
Betty	Female	Associate Vice President of Quality Enhancement Programs and Institutional Policy	Multi and Subgroup
Brandon	Male	Director, Center for Teaching Excellence	Subgroup
Dana	Female	Director of Student Involvement	Multi
Faith	Female	Assistant Professor, Spanish	Subgroup
Gary	Male	Associate Professor, School of Science and Technology	Multi and Subgroup
Julie	Female	Coordinator, Global Studies Certification Program	Multi and Subgroup
Lydia	Female	Director, New Student Connections	Multi
Mary	Female	Senior Associate Provost for Operations	Multi and Subgroup
Peter	Male	Director of Co-Curricular Assessment	Multi and Subgroup
Steven	Male	Professor, School of Business	Multi
Tina	Female	Professor, Political Science	Multi and Subgroup

The members of the multi-unit ARG were formally invited to participate on the study-abroad action research team. The group's primary goal was to participate in a collaborative effort to design, implement, and evaluate the interventions around influencing ABC students' decision to study abroad. The participants agreed originally to meet at least every four weeks for a minimum of one year; however, the subgroup agreed to extend the meeting period another six

months to one year. The action research subgroup members were then formally invited to participate and began meeting once per month until February 2017. The new members also signed the consent form. All of the meetings were recorded and transcribed. I also kept a journal to record any learning that took place during the meetings and in conversations throughout all phases of the action research process.

The ARG consisted of 10 members, while the subgroup for the action research study consisted of nine. After all of the meetings were completed, the action research members were interviewed to determine what they learned from their participation in the process. Interviews were an essential source of case study evidence (Yin, 2014). As the researcher, I worked with my lead advisor to ensure that the final interview instrument for the ARG was valid and reliable; shortly thereafter, the interview instrument received the approval of the University of Georgia's IRB. The data received from the action research meetings and member interviews were coded to identify particular themes and to document the learning that took place throughout the phases of diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action. Additional measures, discussed in detail in later sections, were taken to develop convergent evidence and data triangulation to strengthen the construct validity of the case study (Yin, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

As discussed previously, to address all of the research questions, I used a deductive analytical approach whereby the theory determined the data. Specifically, the conceptual framework of the Perna (2006a) model guided the entire study from conceptualization through data analysis. Data sources included results of a student survey which examined, in part, students' desire to study abroad; interviews conducted around predetermined questions meant to probe students' choice to study abroad; and institutional documents (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Survey

To help address the research questions and gain insight into ABC students' choices to study abroad, questions were added to ABC's annual 2014 fall student survey. With the assistance of an ARG member who worked in the assessment department at the college, I drafted questions to add to the annual survey, then shared them with the ARG to make sure we were targeting the correct information to address the research questions before the survey was administered. Great care was taken to design the appropriate questions for the online survey, especially since a very limited number of questions relating to study abroad were added. Research has shown that question design is one of the most important ways to minimize errors and negative effects on data; moreover, improving the design and evaluation of survey questions is one of the least expensive components of a quality survey process. A good question is one that produces answers that are reliable and valid and that measures a phenomenon that needs to be described (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Table 4 summarizes the data collected from the student survey that were relevant to the research questions and the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad.

Table 4

2014 Fall Student Survey Matrix

Interview Question	RQ 1: What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?	RQ 2: How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?
“How many times have you participated in a study-abroad program?”	Habitus Layer 1: 96.3% have not studied abroad. Demographic factors may influence students having study-abroad experiences before entering college.	Habitus Layer 1: 96.3% of students have not studied abroad—statistically similar to national statistics that access students do not study abroad.
“How would you like to learn more about study-abroad opportunities?”		Higher/Institutional Layer 3/4: ABC students want to learn about study-abroad programs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email (51%) • Website (26.7%) • Class Presentations (25%) • Study Abroad Fair (26.1%) • Not Interested in Study Abroad (33.5%)
“If you are interested in studying abroad, what is your ideal program length?”	Habitus Layer 1: Access students have competing responsibilities and are not able to get away for longer periods of time—or are potentially not comfortable with being away for longer periods of time.	Higher/Institutional Layer 3/4: Most students want shorter-term study abroad, which is consistent with research on access students. Higher/Institutional Layer 3/4: ABC students interested in most short-term study-abroad programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 weeks = 38.9% • 4-5 weeks = 25.5% • 7-9 weeks = 4.7% • Semester = 24.4% • Academic Year = 6.5%

Interview Question	RQ 1: What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?	RQ 2: How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?
“Please identify any reason that might prevent you from participating in a study-abroad program?”	Habitus Layer 1: Students do consider factors listed in this layer, such as demand for higher education, supply of resources, expected benefits, and expected costs.	Higher/Institutional Layer 3/4: Students need funding to study abroad. Students have competing responsibilities that can keep them from studying abroad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too expensive = 66.2% • Too busy with work = 35.2% • Family responsibility = 43.8%
“Do you have a passport?”	Habitus layer does not match the research on Generation Study Abroad passport initiatives to diversify study abroad.	Higher/Institutional Layer 3/4: Promoting only cultural awareness may not be a selling point for our students. There is already a diverse population from many countries; students are also coming from a diverse heritage.

Interviews

The ARG decided to interview study-abroad participants throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. The first step in creating and preparing for the interviews centered on gaining familiarity with the relevant literature around. I searched for themes related to the Perna (2006a) model that might inform the creation of the interview guide, and also designed an interview survey instrument to address the different layers in students’ decision making related to study abroad. The survey was approved by the University of Georgia’s IRB (see Appendix A). All students who studied abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year (approximately 75) were invited by email to participate in the interview; follow-up invitations were also made by phone, in light of the small number of potential interviewees. The 13 student interviews were recorded

and transcribed. The interviewees remained anonymous, and pseudonyms were used when the data were shared with the ARG in the late fall of 2015. Fifty-four percent of the interviewees were female and 46% male. The average age of the students interviewed was 23. Regarding race and ethnicity, 38% of the interviewees were Latino, 23% White, 22% Black, 8% Colombian, and 8% Vietnamese. Most of the interviewees (77%) were single; 23% were married. Fifteen percent had children. A majority of the interviewees who had studied abroad (54%) were first-generation students. Ninety-eight percent of the students interviewed received financial aid. A large percentage of the students worked, with 46% working full-time and another 31% working part-time. Some of the students (31%) classified themselves as immigrants.

Prior to the interviews, I developed an interview protocol, determined a time limit for each interview, and conducted a preliminary interview to test the protocol (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2013). One of the ABC students who worked in the Office of Internationalization as a work-study student and who had studied abroad was chosen for the test interview, after which changes were applied to the protocol. Prior to the interviews, I gained written informed consent from each interview participant.

In an effort to examine students' choice process related to study abroad, the interview questionnaire included questions about the students' sex, race, cultural capital, social capital, family resources, financial aid received, foregone earnings, and study-abroad costs. The questionnaire examined the decisions that ABC students made in choosing ultimately to study abroad. The sample included students whose time studying abroad varied from 10 days to one semester. I interviewed 13 students, or 17% of the sample. All interviews were recorded after

gaining the participants' permission. A summary of the data gathered from the interviews was shared with the ARG.

The student interviews were informative. The qualitative data collected were used to understand what factors facilitated or created barriers during the student choice process and why those factors were influential in the decision to participate (Creswell, 2007). After the interviews were transcribed, codes were created for all of the responses and entered into HyperResearch. Coding consisted of organizing the materials to identify which sections of the materials warranted further analysis and examination. Again, the interviews were semi-structured, and the questions focused on conceptually interesting influencers as informed by Perna's (2006a) model.

Critical incident technique. The interviews conducted in this action research study adhered to the critical incident technique. John Flanagan (1954), who pioneered the CIT during World War II, defined the technique as "a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles" (p. 327). Since then, CIT has become recognized among industrial and organizational psychologists as a premier qualitative data-collection method and has been used in thousands of studies (Butterfield et al., 2005). "CIT studies elicit unambiguous and complete critical incident (CI) reports, via interviews or questionnaires. To elicit CI reports respondents are prompted to describe specific episodes detailing either their own behavior or their recollection of someone else's behavior" (Gogan, McLaughlin, & Thomas, 2014, p. 3).

Chell (2004) elaborated further on CIT interviewing by defining it as a qualitative interview procedure that facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences. The objective of

a CIT interview is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual.

In this study, I used Chell's six distinguishable CIT steps:

1. introducing the CIT method and getting the interview under way;
2. focusing the theme and giving an account of oneself as a researcher to the respondent;
3. controlling the interview by probing the incidents and clarifying one's understanding;
4. concluding the interview;
5. addressing ethical issues; and
6. analyzing the data. (p. 48)

The CIT interviews conducted in this study were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy. I developed two different CIT instruments, which were further refined by my major advisor. The first critical incident instrument, titled "Study Abroad Program Directors Interview Guide," was given to seven faculty who led a study-abroad program for ABC (Appendix C). The second critical incident instrument, the "Study Abroad Choice Process Action Research Group Post Interview Guide" (Appendix D), was given to the 10 ARG members to determine what they learned from the action research study. Both instruments were field tested in conjunction with the pilot interviews. The results of the field test called for minor revisions, which were incorporated into a final critical incident instrument.

When preparing the interviewees, I used Anderson's (2012) interview guidelines, which include advice on preparing an interview protocol, recommendations on selecting participants, tips for contacting and scheduling interviews, and beginning, conducting, and closing the interview. Before the CIT interview was conducted, each participant signed a consent form. All of the critical incidents were recorded and transcribed by a professional service.

The critical incident interviews served as a validity check on certain aspects of the data uncovered during the research study. However, some researchers caution that critical incident interviews cannot be the sole technique for collecting data. Also, another issue that should be taken into consideration when using critical incidents is the accuracy of the data, since the technique relies solely on the respondent's recall of the scenario (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). However, the selection of this method worked well for this action research study.

Documents

The documents that were gathered and analyzed for this study were linked to the research design. Document review is considered another primary source of qualitative data and covers an assortment of written records, visual data, artifacts, and even archival data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The document review in this study was used with other multiple data-gathering techniques to provide triangulation for enhancing the quality of data from multiple sources. Documents from the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the American Council on Education's (ACE) Strategic Plan Report 2013-2018, the Center for Teaching Excellence's (CTE) Internationalized Learning Program (ILP), and the operational definition of an *i*-course were excellent sources of historical and current information. *I*-courses are courses at ABC that have been verified as internationalized, with at least 30 percent international or global content. These courses focus on intercultural awareness, communication, and collaboration that help prepare students to successfully interact in a global community. Other documents used as data included minutes gathered during the QEP monthly meetings. Personal documents, such as my reflection and research memos, captured my actions, experiences, and feelings as I conducted the research, and useful as data sources in this study.

Data Analysis

As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) held:

Data analysis is a complex procedure that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between descriptions and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of a study. (p. 202)

Data analysis occurred throughout the action research cycles in this study. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) recommended that researchers develop a provisional “start list” of analytic codes prior to fieldwork—a practice they referred to as *deductive coding*. That list emerges from the theoretical framework, research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variables that the researcher brings to the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The goal of data analysis is to find answers to a study’s research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Using the deductive codes created from the Perna (2006a) model, I conducted a first cycle of coding. Deductive content analysis is used when the structure of the analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is to test theory (Kyngas & Vanhanen, 1999). This may also involve testing categories, concepts, models, or hypotheses in a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In this action research case study, I developed provisional codes from the research questions, Perna’s (2006a) model, study-abroad literature, and my own experiences in the field of education abroad. The formal process of data analysis began by assigning codes according to the categories and descriptors of the study’s conceptual framework. Using these deductive codes, I conducted a first-cycle manual coding of ARG meetings, student interviews, and critical incident interviews of faculty who developed study-abroad programs. I continued to search the data for more and better units of

relevant information, revising my initial set of categories. As the study progressed, I completed additional phases of data recoding based on my research questions and conceptual framework. I completed thematic analysis of the data using deductive coding, and I addressed issues of validity and trustworthiness to ensure the overall quality of the study.

Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness refers to the rigorously established checks-and-balances system a researcher puts in place to ensure accuracy of the data and analyses that emerge from the research process. Action research is grounded in qualitative methods and uses different criteria for establishing the validity and reliability of a study (Stringer, 2007). According to Gibbs (2007), qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects. Yin (2009) indicated that "the goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study" (p. 45). Furthermore, he suggested that qualitative researchers need to document as many of the steps of their case-study procedures as possible. At the beginning of the research process, I created and maintained a case study database that included field notes, researcher memos, documents, audio and hardcopy interview transcripts, and observational notes collected during the research process. This practice aligned with Yin's (2014) recommendation that the researcher create a database to improve the reliability and quality of case study research.

For this research project, I employed several approaches to assure validity and trustworthiness. The primary approach was methodological triangulation, "in which multiple forms of data are used" (Roulston, 2010, p. 84). The action research group met over a two year period which allowed for extended immersion. Over this timeframe, the data was analyzed and

synthesized. The ARG lived with the data and intimately became familiar with information about ABC and the choice process. Data analysis requires adequate time and immersion so that premature judgements and conclusions are not made (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). As the lead researcher, I collected data through individual interviews, review of documents, and ARG meeting transcripts. On average, each team meeting lasted one hour. All meetings were recorded, as were all group and individual interviews with students, faculty, and staff members. Recordings of meetings, individual interviews with students, faculty program leaders and ARG members were professionally transcribed for documentation purposes. During scheduled team meetings, discussions among the members focused on understanding the Perna (2006a) model and exploring how ABC could influence students' choice to study abroad as well as members' reactions to the selected interventions. During these discussions (and in other interactive sessions), I also observed the collective work in which the ARG engaged. It was my common practice to capture all observed activities in journal entries to reinforce evidence of data findings and analysis. Roulston (2010) advised that qualitative researchers keep a journal to record the day-to-day decision making that takes place throughout the research process. Excerpts from these journals are included within the findings (Chapter 5).

Furthermore, a code book was developed and retained in HyperResearch, which lists all the codes in the study. As the data was analyzed by the lead researcher and ARG, a list of codes were developed and updated as the research study progressed. Figure 5 provides a sample of the codes in the code book on HyperResearch.

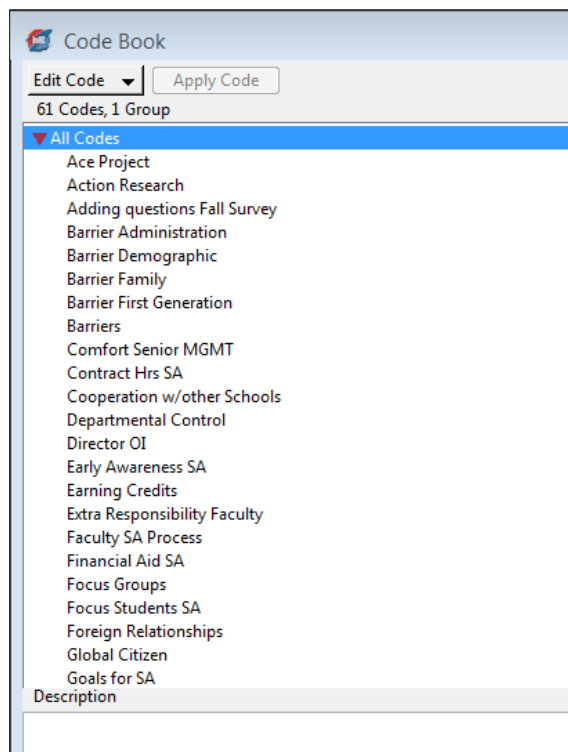


Figure 5. Sample of the study code book from HyperResearch.

Throughout the study, member checking was conducted as part of the quality control process. According to Harper and Cole (2012), member checking is an important quality control process in qualitative research as during the course of conducting a study, participants receive the opportunity to review their statements for accuracy. According to Stake (2005), the actor in the case study is requested to examine rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured. The actor is asked to review the material for palatability and accuracy. Member checking was accomplished by providing ARG members with a copy of the interview

transcript to verify accuracy of information. In addition, the ARG members also cross checked interview data with emerging themes, thereby verifying the accuracy of data and findings. The evidence and findings were coupled with rich, thick descriptions from critical incident interviews and discussion transcripts from ARG meetings to better understand the choice process of ABC students deciding to study abroad.

As a qualitative researcher, I relied on the process of documenting my subjectivity and personal assumptions. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), during the coding process, researchers should think about potential biases they bring into the study beyond the epistemological or theoretical framework. It is important to consider what elements of their own beliefs, life experiences, positionality, and social location they may inadvertently project onto the data. To this end, my lead-researcher memos and journal entries included information about the personal biases I held about the study-abroad choice process and the Perna (2006a) model.

Researcher Subjectivity Statement

As a researcher and professional in the field of study abroad, it was important for me to provide a statement so that all related experiences are transparently presented. This ensures that that the reader can critically examine the truthfulness of the research and the biases, which contributes to the validity of the research. As a researcher engaging in this action research study, I have many life and work experiences that have shaped my view of education abroad which should be bracketed in order to study the phenomenon from a fresh perspective. I am a first-generation college student and an African-American, middle class female who believes that all students ought to have the right to all educational opportunities. I have worked in the field of higher education administration for over twenty years. Most of my experiences have been in business school graduate admissions, however, I moved into the field of education abroad and

have worked in this area the last nine years of my career. My last two colleges in which I was employed and responsible for students studying abroad had very diverse student bodies, with large percentages of students of color, first-generation, lower-income and non-traditional students. I have a very passionate view that all students, especially students of color and lower-income students should have an opportunity to study abroad. Because of these personal biases and beliefs that it is essential for all students to study abroad, my thoughts on the importance of this matter may be more than the average person. Thus, it is important for me as the researcher to control these biases in the research process. It was important for me to engage in critical self-reflection regarding my assumptions, worldviews, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation (Merriam, 2009). To uncover blind spots, I sought input from others about my interpretation of the data, which ensured the trustworthiness of the data.

Additionally, I kept written track of my own learning and maintained reflexivity as much as possible. A researcher's notes comprise a narrative of the analytical "conversations" he or she has with him or herself about the research, and, as such, these notes illuminate a particular way of knowing (Lempert, 2007). As the lead researcher for this case study, I kept a research journal and recorded notes about any conversation I had with a member of the action research group or with an ABC staff member about students' choice process to study abroad. According to Hertz (1997), "to be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment" (p. viii). Reflecting on the research process allowed me to see myself and the ARG members' specific biases. Reflexivity is one way for researchers to maintain an explicit and critical consciousness of their actions and decisions in the research context. When researchers represent themselves in their field of study and in writing, reflexivity

gives informants and readers the opportunity to evaluate the researchers as active participants in the process of creating meaning (Nagata, 2006). The way one perceives the world and oneself is shaped by experiences as a member of particular groups within society. To promote awareness of their standpoints and views, researchers are encouraged to consider their various identities, how their research interests express their personal values, what biases they bring result from their backgrounds and experiences, and how these biases might affect their research (Nagata, 2006).

Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative methods employed in this action research case study. The critical incident technique represented the primary method of data collection, with CIT interviews being conducted with faculty who led study-abroad programs and with action research group members in their exit interviews. Thematic analysis of the data was accomplished using deductive coding in order to extend existing theory around the Perna (2006a) model and the study-abroad choice process. Issues of validity and trustworthiness were addressed to ensure the quality and reliability of the research.

CHAPTER 4

ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY REPORT

Personal Motivations

Nationwide, there are ongoing initiatives within higher education to increase the numbers of students studying abroad. In addition, there is renewed focus on diversifying study abroad, namely to include more students of color, STEM majors, first-generation students, and nontraditional students, among others. However, the question remains: Are these study-abroad initiatives occurring at colleges and universities at all levels—at community colleges and open-access colleges? In working to increase study-abroad numbers at Atlanta-Based College, an access institution, I oftentimes feel isolated in my professional efforts to entice students to study abroad. Many competing priorities exist at ABC: increasing graduation rates, improving academic outcomes for low-performing students, and keeping tuition costs relatively low. Within this hierarchy of priorities, where does study abroad fall for senior administrators and institutional stakeholders? Indeed, the challenge of promoting study abroad at access institutions can be frustrating at best. Practitioners in the study-abroad field recognize that the realities of operating programs—in terms of resources, philosophical and monetary support from the central administration, making connections to academic departments, integrating participation into degree programs, and the ability to attract faculty support—pose considerable challenges that differ across institutions.

For example, in my attempts to gain increased departmental support for study abroad at ABC, I entered into an intense battle with the Financial Aid Department. ABC students have

indicated that financing study-abroad programs is a major challenge; therefore, working with financial aid, is important as another funding source for students to finance study abroad. The Financial Aid Department is under a mandate from the ABC president's office to maintain one of the lowest rates of student-loan debt compared to other university system campuses. ABC's mission around maintaining low tuition and low student debt, however, is at odds with advising students to consider taking out extra student loans to finance study abroad. Thus, the priorities of the study-abroad office and the Financial Aid Department themselves are also at odds, in a way. Working with financial aid to achieve a mutual understanding on the importance of using aid for study abroad, has been exhausting. Nevertheless, I pushed forward believing that these high-impact experiences are important to ABC students. Many assume that all campus units will be supportive of study abroad, but this is not always the case, especially on campuses with many competing priorities. Yet, despite these difficulties, testimonies from ABC students such as the following highlight the ways in which studying abroad has changed lives:

I was required to study abroad. This requirement led me to Costa Rica where I stayed a month with my host family. I slept in living conditions considered middle class by natives yet unimaginable by our U.S. American standards of living. I slept with bugs. I ate with roaches. I took showers that froze my blood. And I loved every part of it. Because beyond the poverty and seemingly difficult living conditions, there is pure happiness and appreciation for life. My host family taught me how to love life without 800 thread-count sheets and artisanal cuisine; and my host family taught me how to speak a new language! Five years of French studies, and I can't string a sentence together; but four weeks in a Spanish-speaking family, and I am conversationally fluent!

After I hear stories like this from students, I feel motivated to ensure that ABC students have an opportunity to study abroad. For this reason, I decided to conduct an action research study on how to influence the choice of students at an access institution to study abroad using the Perna (2006a) conceptual model.

In this chapter, I detail the “story” of the action research case study. I describe how I entered the client system, how the action research group was formed, and how we constructed interventions based on the data that were gathered. I also outline the action research process through the different cycles and stages, including the interventions put in place to help influence the choice of ABC students to study abroad.

Beginning the Case Study

I have had an opportunity to work at two colleges that were new to study abroad and had low numbers of study-abroad participants when I began my employment. As the individual tasked with increasing the number of students studying abroad at both colleges, I found my responsibilities challenging, which encouraged me to research the most effective ways to reach this goal. I started with my first college, which served as the initial client for this study, and conducted that research for a year. In March 2014, I accepted a full-time position at ABC and was very excited to share this research in my new role. The college was eager to support my research ideas around influencing ABC students’ choice to study abroad, which I shared during my interview process for the position. Thus, immediately upon entering my new client system, I felt that this research study was supported by senior leadership.

The Client System

Atlanta-Based College was created in October 2004, opening its doors to 118 students and becoming the nation’s first four-year public college founded in the 21st century. It welcomed

its first freshman class in 2007 and graduated 17 students at its inaugural commencement ceremony. In 2009, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges granted ABC its initial accreditation (in record time), thereby allowing the college to apply for research grants and awards from foundations for students and faculty members, and to expand its degree programs. More than 3,000 students enrolled for the 2009 fall semester. ABC continues to build upon its successes, upholding its unique mission and vision to provide access to all wishing to obtain a quality education. The college currently enrolls over 12,000 students and from 2015 to 2017 was ranked as the most ethnically diverse Southern regional college by the *U.S. News & World Report* (2015, 2016, 2017), which also ranks ABC as having the second lowest student-debt rate among Southern regional colleges.

Entry Process

In my final job interview with ABC, I discussed my current research study focusing on how to increase study abroad at access institutions. The two interviewers—the provost and the associate vice president of Quality Enhancement Programs and Institutional Policy—were very intrigued by my research. I told them that I would like to continue the study at ABC, and they both agreed this would be a good idea. After meeting with the associate vice president, I felt that she would be an excellent sponsor for the action research study, since it was in her best interest, as the leader of the QEP, for study abroad to increase at ABC. Shortly after accepting the job and starting work, I met with the associate vice president and presented her with more details about the study and asked if she would be interested in sponsoring it, to which she agreed. After gaining the associate vice president’s sponsorship, I met with the provost to solidify her support as well. Senior leaders play an essential role in any action research study, and a visible sponsor imbues the process with greater authority and credibility. Indeed, it is important to anchor the

project within the organization, which is achieved in part by find the right stakeholders and getting their buy-in (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). I continued to develop the client relationship and validating the overall benefits for ABC.

Contracting Process

Anderson (2012) defined the contracting process of a study as the development of an agreement between a researcher and a client regarding specific work to be performed. The contracting process for this action research study went smoothly since increasing study abroad was important to both the associate vice president of QEP and the provost. I officially began the contracting process in July 2014, after securing the commitment of the two senior staff members, and the written agreement was signed by the sponsor. It was important for me to engage senior staff in this process in order to eventually form a successful action research group and conduct a quality study. When engaging in action research in one's own organization, politics are powerful forces; the researcher consider the impact of the process of inquiry, who the major players are, and how to engage key stakeholders in the process (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

As the lead researcher, I recruited all of the action research group members. I selected individuals who possessed various types of knowledge and levels of influence on campus. Brannick & Coghlan, (2007) highlight that certain managers have knowledge of their organization's everyday life. They know the everyday jargon. They know how the informal organization works and to whom to turn for information. They know the critical events and what they mean within the organization. Thus when certain managers inquire into certain matters, they can use the internal language, draw on their own experience in asking questions and be able to follow up on replies, and so obtain richer data. Therefore, it was important for me to select the correct administrators/managers to serve on the ARG.

After the ARG members confirmed their participation, the group's first meeting took place in September 2014. At that meeting, the group solidified the purpose of the action research study; the members also agreed to meet monthly over the course of the following year and to respond promptly to requests by email. The ARG continued to articulate the conceptual framework of the study, ultimately deciding to center on Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad in the second meeting. Thereafter, the conceptual framework was kept in the forefront of all subsequent meetings.

Process for Informing the Client

During the period of ARG meetings, I provided quarterly updates to the study sponsor. In addition, the sponsor's attendance at meetings was invaluable as she gave credibility to the process and was able to provide me with one-on-one feedback about the action research process. Likewise, I periodically updated the provost on the progress of the ARG and the study itself. Early on in the study, in September 2014, my sponsor requested that I compile an executive summary—to be shared with the provost and the ARG—that offered an overview of the scope of the action research group and the then-current status and accomplishments of study abroad programs at ABC. Similarly, I continued to update the provost and the director of the Office of Internationalization on a periodic basis on the progress of the group and the research overall.

The Action Research Group

The action research group comprised senior-level administrators, staff, and faculty at Atlanta-Based College. Specifically, I invited individuals that would be key to the success of study abroad on campus. In addition, I included faculty who had designed study-abroad programs or who had been instrumental in the QEP for ABC internationalization. I also asked

my sponsor to recommend others for participation in the ARG. Everyone whom I invited ultimately agreed to serve on the group.

ARG Members

I was strategic in forming the action research group. First, I met with each prospective member individually. This initial meeting included inviting the individual to be a part of the team, discussing action research methodology, and describing the purpose of the ARG. I also provided prospective members with documents that framed the research study. By the time the ARG held its first meeting, each member possessed a basic understanding of study's purpose. The ARG was diverse in terms of members' respective positions, departmental affiliations, experience, and expertise. Some of the members knew each other and had worked together on other projects. Others were not as familiar with each other's background.

The ARG members held key positions on campus, working in both academic and administrative capacities at the college. The members had an authentic stake in seeing study abroad grow on the ABC campus. The original study began with an action research multi-unit group consisting of 10 members; however, only eight members participated faithfully in the ARG. A subgroup of the action research team was then formed in January 2016 to work on the final interventions for Cycle 2 of the action research.

As captured in from my journal notes, on multiple occasions the study sponsor commented that we had a good working group for gaining deep insights into the subject matter and producing viable interventions. Every research group has its own unique chemistry and dynamics, which, to a large extent, determines the way in which the group works (Gosling & Noordam, 2011). Stake (1995) suggested that the inclusion of diverse perspectives enables researchers to clarify meanings by identifying different ways phenomena are perceived. Also,

the use of qualitative inquiry allowed for deeper insights to be gleaned directly from ARG participants about their learnings and behavior changes. By definition, action research investigates and reveals the ways in which participants describe their actual experiences (Stringer, 2007). The following sections briefly describe the role and skills of each ARG member.

Betty: Associate vice president of QEP. Known as the “strategic planner,” Betty was the associate vice president of Quality Enhancement Programs and Institutional Policy. She was one of the original staff members to assist the current president establish central policies and strategic plans for ABC. She was also instrumental in the college receiving SACS accreditation in record time. At the time of this study, Betty was in charge of the QEP, themed “Internationalization of the Curriculum: Engaging the World to Develop Global Citizens.” Her knowledge of ABC was invaluable to the ARG in its efforts to navigate the decision-making process. As the study’s sponsor, she helped to guide team discussions and gave me advice on how to handle certain matters. She had extensive knowledge about group processes, as exemplified in the following comment she made:

But in watching the group work together, I think they learned and I think you [i.e., the lead researcher] really learned, too, that before you can go about coming up with recommended solutions, people have to have a very good knowledge base about all the factors that affect, in this case student choice and the support the institution gives to faculty who are trying to mount a study-abroad program. You have to have a shared understanding.

Peter: Director of co-curricular assessment. As director of co-curricular assessment, Peter had worked with the previous director of the Office of Internationalization to determine

whether or not activities such as study abroad were impacting ABC's efforts to graduate global citizens. He had administered the pre- and post-study-abroad surveys, designed to measure perceived changes in global citizenship. Peter had an extensive educational background, having served as a counselor, psychologist, college professor, director of academic learning, and coordinator of pre-college programs. He was an expert in assessment, program review, and data reporting. Because of his previous involvement with Office of Internationalization, he had solid insights into the importance of student participation in study abroad. He was also instrumental in the ARG's development of the questions added to the fall 2017 student survey since he possessed an informed understanding of surveys and assessments. As he put it:

What I do is assessments. So we can be a little more data-informed, and then we try some stuff and we see. And so that's that iterative process of assessment. And so I think that the next time you have identified three, five factors, whatever, and you try those, then you're a little further along.

Steven: Professor of business. Steven was not only the first professor to design and lead a study-abroad program at ABC, but the first professor ever hired at ABC. He was instrumental in encouraging the current senior administration to support education-abroad programs at ABC and still has a close relationship with the president. At the time of the study, he was highly active in the international arena. He had been recognized for his research, which focuses on international aspects of marketing and management, including cultural and sub-cultural influences of business. He was well respected on campus by senior leadership as the individual who had laid the groundwork for all faculty to develop future study-abroad programs. He described his early success implementing a study-abroad program:

I think one thing is when we first started it out, we went and talked to the provost at that time and said, “Look, this is something we want to do,” but it—we were a new school, and obviously [administrators] were concerned about a lot of issues, liability issues and all of that. And so it took a good bit of convincing to get the go-ahead for the first time. And I had been doing it for quite a number of years at another institution, so I think that that helped swing it in my favor. But once we came back from [the study-abroad experience] ... we had a reception for [the students] where we met with the provost, and the students talked about their experience, and there were a number of them that got emotional and started crying and saying that it was a life-changing experience for them and it opened their mind to the things that they had never thought would be possible for them, et cetera, et cetera, and then after that ... the institution was very much in favor of my studies abroad program.

Mary: Senior associate provost for operations. At one point in time, the Office of Internationalization actually reported to Mary, ABC’s senior associate provost for operations. However, that reporting relationship was eventually transferred to the provost’s office. Mary had gained extensive senior-level administrative experience at multiple colleges. Previously, she had been a vice provost for administration and planning at another college and had also worked in the university system office as chief of staff for academic affairs. At ABC, she oversaw admissions, “one-stop shop,” and financial aid. Students studying abroad are highly impacted by access to financial aid; therefore, Mary’s participation was important to the success of the study. Because of the previous reporting structure of Office of Internationalization, she had a personal interest in issues related to study abroad. Mary was one of the first members of the ARG to identify that the group needed to shift its focus from the student habitus layer to the structure and

faculty of the higher education layer of the Perna (2006a) model. According to her, the timing of the action research study was good:

It reinforced that study abroad, like a lot of things, has to be a unified, integrated effort.

It's not something that one office can be charged with having responsibility for.... We don't do that a whole lot, especially in the administrative side. We tend to be much more “see a problem, fix it” and not really put all the pieces [together,] where you step back and you study it and you think about it and you consider options. In some ways, it's a luxury at times but I think for something that matters, it's a really nice approach.

Tina: Professor of political science. Tina was a well-respected, highly active full professor on campus, and was a major advocate for international activities at ABC. She was of Lithuanian descent and believed that all students should have some type of international experience. At the time of the study, she served on the QEP committee and the ARG. She had been a National Endowment for the Humanities grant recipient and a Carnegie Council on Ethics International Affairs fellow. She had written articles and books in the area of international relations. She was an outspoken member of the ARG and was passionate about ensuring that ABC students graduated as global citizens possessing a broad international perspective. Tina took a sabbatical to conduct research abroad in Lithuania for one year. Shortly before her sabbatical, she had begun participating in the ARG; upon her return, she rejoined the group. She was adamant that the members examine all options for internationalizing the campus:

Something that we talked about, I think, also in the group—was that if study abroad is not for everybody then how about if we create opportunities, international opportunities such as a Skype with the students abroad or a visiting lecturer from abroad or something like that or a visit to a community of refugees who have their own lifestyle. Something small

which may not necessarily [involve] the whole class going and studying abroad but something smaller, even on a somewhat local scale might be good. And in a sense, we're doing a lot of this already, like Global Awareness Week and these other opportunities on campus. I wish it was a little bit more structured in a sense that—like other schools have an international requirement to graduate.

Julie: Coordinator of the Global Studies Certification program. Julie was supportive of the research and had much to gain from the action research study. She was one of the two original professors of foreign language at ABC and was a strong advocate for foreign language education. She was responsible for the Global Studies Certification program, as part of which students completing a credit study-abroad experience is required. She and I had built a bond since our offices were adjacent to each other, and we had many discussions about the lofty goal of increasing the number of access students studying abroad. For Julie to achieve the goals of her new role, she needed students to study abroad. (In the summer of 2017, she Julie taught on a study-abroad program to France.) As a result, she valued her involvement in the ARG:

And trying to win friends and influence people and that kind of thing. When I became global studies coordinator, me having to get along well—work and play well with others throughout the campus became just that much more important because this is part of our QEP. It's a campus-wide initiative. I need to be able to call on people and ask for favors and/or consult with them, their expertise. And so this—that experience on the committee for me was really invaluable.

Lydia: Director of New Student Connections. As previous research has suggested, it is important to introduce students to study abroad as soon as they reach campus. Thus, the sponsor of the ARG asked me to include Lydia, the director of new student connections. She had been

with ABC since nearly the start-up of the college. She was able to contribute to the ARG by helping the group to explore options for introducing study abroad to ABC students very early on. One idea she introduced to the group was to place a marketing piece in the planner that is distributed to all new students, namely freshmen. As Lydia stated:

I'm not trying to reproduce a student handbook or a catalog.... [I]t's a small planner. But there could be a half page that says, "Hey, while you're here, consider study abroad or whatever."

Lydia did not attend many of the ARG meetings and did not continue with the ARG to the end.

Gary: Professor of mathematics. Before this action research study began, there were only two faculty-led study abroad programs at ABC. Gary was the third faculty member to design a new faculty-led STEM study abroad program. Gary joined ABC as a full-time mathematic faculty member in 2012. As soon as he joined the college, he agreed to serve on one of the QEP committees. As a former international student himself, he was passionate about the internationalization of the campus. He was a vocal contributor to ARG discussions: "The flow of information is sometimes broken. Prepare paperwork and then need to redo it. Need a good frame and structure to create study abroad. Need better communication and goals."

The group members learned a great deal from his trials and tribulations designing and leading a new study-abroad program. Since he had taught in Asia for many years, he was very ardent about making sure that his study-abroad program to Vietnam was successful each year.

Brandon: Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence. Brandon joined the action research subgroup at a later date than the other members. At ABC, he oversaw teaching-excellence initiatives and felt strongly about the need for academic rigor in study-abroad

programs. Additionally, as a historian of American foreign relations at his previous institution, he had experience designing and leading study-abroad programs. At the time of the study, he headed the QEP's International Learning Program (ILP), which trains faculty in internationalizing their courses. Not surprisingly, the sponsor was very supportive of his involvement in this research study. Brandon also advocated for the clear articulation of student learning outcomes related to study-abroad experiences:

I don't want to say it's an extended tour but ... there's elements of that. I think that if you have a short trip but you bracket it properly with instruction and learning beforehand and afterward, it can really help the students maximize what they get out of the experience. And I think that's also been informed by our QEP on internationalization of the curriculum. So our students can learn a lot ... I don't think they learn it as powerfully or as effectively as they do abroad, but they can learn what it means to become more aware of other cultures and more confident ... in dealing with other cultures, even here [locally].

Faith: Assistant Professor of Spanish. Faith also joined the action research subgroup at a later date. At the time, she was a newly hired ABC faculty member. She had been hired, in part, because of her experience co-leading study-abroad programs at her previous university. She and I met shortly after she joined the faculty, and I encouraged her to join the ARG. Very early on in our work together, we decided to co-present at the annual conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in November 2015. The session was titled “ABC Strategies to Internationalize Its Curriculum” and outlined the college’s efforts to integrate distance linguistic/cultural exchange projects, i-courses, online interactions, and study-

abroad experiences with the curriculum. Faith's experience as a new faculty member developing a study-abroad program and i-course was invaluable to the ARG. As she reflected:

What I learned is that, you're right, we need to learn the administrative side of leading the study-abroad program because ... nobody will do it for us. So once we have the training and the understanding [about] how that side of the program goes, then everything feels better and flows better. So I've learned that ... I cannot expect anybody to do it. But on the other side, what I've learned from this past summer is that if you have a service provider that facilitates some of the activities and some of the components, then we can really focus on recruiting students in the academic side of it, and that feels better and flows better, and everybody is more successful at what we're doing.

Dana: Director of Student Involvement. Dana had a very close working relationship with the previous director of the Office of Internationalization. She had partnered with the previous director to co-lead the Global Civic Engagement service learning study abroad programs. Dana had substantial knowledge on leading study abroad programs and was a good addition to the ARG. She was very vocal about the fact that we continue to use program providers, such as EF Tours. Very early in the action research process, Dana obtained a new position outside of ABC.

ABC Students Becoming Global Citizens

ABC has determined that students having international education experiences is important before graduation. Graduating global citizens has been highlighted in ABC's strategic plans, Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and overall internationalization plans. The College has internationalized its courses and also created efforts to have more students study abroad in an effort to graduate global citizens.

ABC is defining and measuring global citizenship by using the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) housed at The Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University (RISE GPI, n.d.). The GPI is a survey instrument that assesses a global and holistic view of student learning and development and the importance of the campus environment in fostering holistic student development. The GPI measures how students think, view themselves as people with cultural heritage, and relate to others from other cultures, backgrounds and values. The GPI is a survey instrument that also measures participants' global perspectives in terms of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, the skills important to intercultural communication, and the holistic development of complex epistemological processes (Braskamp, et al., 2012). The instrument and theory was designed to provide evidence to campus leaders regarding their students' levels of global citizenship. The instrument contains six scales, including both developmental and acquisition scales within each of the three dimensions (cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal). The two cognitive scales are knowing (development) and knowledge (acquisition); the two intrapersonal scales are identity (development) and affect (acquisition); and the two interpersonal scales are social responsibility (development) and social interaction (acquisition) (Braskamp, et al., 2012).

The GPI has been used to measure the effectiveness of students studying abroad and changing their global perspectives. ABC has been giving the GPI to a subset of freshman students and then again to that same subset during senior year to measure the effectiveness of its internationalization efforts, including studying abroad. Anderson and Lawton (2011), employed a pretest-posttest assessment of college juniors majoring in business and participating a semester-length study-abroad program, along with a parallel assessment of students enrolled in two on-campus courses. The on-campus students served as a comparison group as the researchers

looked for changes in intercultural development. Anderson and Lawton used the GPI. They chose to use the GPI because it measures an individual's growth and development as a consequence of life experiences, and also because it has been used extensively with college students. In the posttest, students in the study-abroad program showed greater gains in intercultural development than did their on-campus counterparts. The study results provide convincing support for the proposition that participation in a semester-length study-abroad experience yields a significant increase in participants' intercultural development.

ABC has been using the GPI to measure the effectiveness of the *i*-courses. However, the research group wanted to take a closer look at how the students who were choosing to study abroad, how this activity was affecting their global perspectives. Therefore, as the lead researcher, I worked with the ABC Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Department to conduct the GPI Study Abroad survey on the group of the students who studied abroad from 2014 to 2015 so that the data could be shared with the ARG to examine the impact of studying abroad and learn more about the students who were partaking in these experiences. The Global Perspective Inventory Study Abroad Form Report was shared with the ARG in January 2016 during cycle 2 of the study. Tables 5, 6, and 7 offer a glimpse of the data that were shared with the ARG to better understand the ABC student population studying abroad and changes in their global perspectives.

Table 5

Global Perspective Inventory Study Abroad Form Report, January 2016: Respondent Characteristics

Inventory Item	N	Percent
Race		
American Indian	-	-
Asian American/Asian	2	6%
African-American/Black	1	3%
Hispanic/Latino	12	35%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-	-
White/Caucasian	16	47%
Multiracial	3	9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>100%</i>
American/International Student		
American student at an American college/university	31	91%
Non-American student at an American college/university	2	6%
Other	1	3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>100%</i>
Prior to this term, how many quarters or semesters have you studied abroad?		
None	28	82%
A short term experience (summer/winter term)	4	12%
One	1	3%
Two	1	3%
More than two	-	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>100%</i>
Have you ever participated in a living-learning community?		
No	1	3%
Yes	33	97%
<i>Total</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 6

*Global Perspective Inventory Study Abroad Form Report, January 2016: Intercultural**Wonderment*

Inventory Item	Valid Responses	Mean	National Norm
How often did you interact with individuals from the host country outside of the classroom?	33 100%	3.91	2.99
How often did you feel immersed in the culture of the host country?	33 100%	4.36	3.13
How often did you intentionally push yourself out of your comfort zone?	33 100%	4.15	2.99
How often did you explore new habits and behaviors on your own while studying abroad?	33 100%	4.09	2.95

Table 7

*Global Perspective Inventory Study Abroad Form Report, January 2016: Study-Abroad**Experiences*

Inventory Item	Valid Responses	Mean	National Norm
How often did you speak in the host country's language in non-language courses?	33 100%	3.48	2.31
How often did you speak in the host country's language outside of the classroom?	33 100%	3.58	2.56
How often did you reflect upon your experiences abroad through writing or journaling as part of a course requirement?	33 100%	4.42	2.55
How often have you shared or discussed with others your experiences abroad?	33 100%	4.70	3.26

The data from the GPI Study Abroad Survey of the ABC study abroad students 2014 to 2015 shows overall growth of students from studying abroad in reference to their global citizenship perspectives. This data also had some similarities to the data obtained during the student interviews, in that we did have a diverse group of students studying abroad. Also that many of our students will be their first in their families to graduate with a four-year degree. Most of all that our students had not studied abroad before entering college. The GPI survey data provided the group with another perspective of the types and demographics of students that are choosing to study abroad. This survey data provided the ARG with additional incentives to understand how to influence the choice of students to study abroad.

ARG Collaboration

The ARG met face to face 19 times from September 2014 to January 2017 mostly on a monthly basis, except summer breaks; the action research subgroup met separately to finalize interventions. Between meetings, I shared appropriate documents with the group members by email. All meetings were recorded, and transcripts were made available to group members for review after each meeting. Team members also spent time reviewing multiple sources of data, including institutional documents, student surveys, interview transcripts of study-abroad returnees, and learning modules used in the initial faculty-training program on study abroad. In advance of each meeting, I provided the ARG members with an agenda, allowing them to prepare to contribute to discussions. Early on, the ARG decided to center conversations on the conceptual framework of the Perna (2006a) model, which would help the group concentrate its efforts on one goal of the study-abroad choice process.

Action Research Cycle 1

This study's action research process consisted of multiple action cycles operating concurrently (Coghlan & Brannick, 2012). The four basic stages that comprise an action research cycle are constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action. This study included two cycles and took place in multiple successive and concurrent cycles of action and reflection; therefore, it is likely that ARG members constructed in one cycle while evaluating action in another. Table 8 provides an overview of Cycle 1.

Table 8

Action Research Cycle 1

Cycle 1 Stage	Action Steps	Timeline
Constructing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered system as insider researcher Met with potential sponsor for the AR study; sponsor agreed and signed letter of support Recruited ARG and obtained signed consent forms Reviewed reports from American Council on Education (ACE) Reviewed Office of Internationalization (OI) and strategic plans Reviewed Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for 2013-2018 Reviewed theoretical and conceptual frameworks with ARG Decided to use Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad Prepared an AR study executive summary to share with sponsor and provost 	June 2014 – November 2014
Planning Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted survey and reviewed data from 2014 fall student survey Interviewed students who studied abroad during academic year 2014-2015 Strategized on how to use data to address student barriers Focused on habitus (Layer 1) of Perna (2006a) model 	December 2014 – November 2015

Cycle 1 Stage	Action Steps	Timeline
Taking Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARG decided to focus on school community and higher education context (Layer 2/3) of Perna (2006a) model • Developed process and policies for creating new programs • Developed a new policy for faculty pay for leading study-abroad programs • ARG members designed a training program to educate faculty on developing new study abroad programs • Launched first training program 	Jan 2015 – May 2015
Evaluating Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-point reflection of the ARG members • On track, but ARG wanted to take more action 	June 2015
Evaluating Action (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed survey from training evaluation on the first training on developing faculty-led study-abroad programs; survey revealed that training was not detailed enough • Met with OI director and provost to provide update on progress of ARG and receive feedback on future action and interventions proposed by group • Provost and OI director felt group progress was coming along well and was on the right track 	May 2015 – January 2016

The action research group meetings revealed a wealth of shared knowledge among members about influencing students' choice to study abroad, and the group capitalized on our collective learning to formulate possible interventions. The ARG continually made adjustments based on needs-assessment results, evaluation of interventions, and reflection on team actions. As the study progressed, the ARG realized we needed to concentrate on the higher education layer of the model, not just the habitus of students.

My dissertation committee reminded me to keep the ARG purpose and research questions at the forefront of group meetings. Since the purpose and research questions evolved around the Perna (2006a) model, this was critical advice that helped steer future data analysis. In a series of

meetings on the subject of the higher education context and institutional barriers, the group generated new ideas and understandings about what these concepts might convey in the context of the study. As a result, the group focused our efforts on the higher education/institutional context, namely on how we planned to develop the interventions.

Cycle 1 Constructing Action (June 2014 – October 2014)

Student survey and interviews. In addressing the research questions, the ARG decided to collect student data to gain a better understanding of their interest in studying abroad. It was suggested that the group survey students or conduct a student focus group. ABC administers an annual fall survey of students; therefore, it was suggested that the ARG add questions to that survey, to be administered in December 2014, so that we could cast a net across the entire student population. This would allow the ARG to capitalize on institutional support; however, because the survey was college-wide, we could only add a small number of questions to capture responses about students' study-abroad choices. These included the following:

- “How many times have you participated in a study-abroad program?”
- “How would you like to learn more about study-abroad opportunities?”
- “If you are interested in studying abroad, what is your ideal program length?”
- “Please identify any reason that might prevent you from participating in a study-abroad program?”
- “Do you have a passport?”

In reviewing the survey results, the ARG learned more about ABC students' desire to study abroad, but the group felt we needed a deeper understanding of the barriers preventing students from pursuing study-abroad opportunities. Therefore, the ARG decided to conduct

interviews with students who had studied abroad during the academic year of 2014-2015 to gain insights into their study-abroad choice process and other related issues.

Cycle 1 Planning Action (December 2014 – November 2015)

After reviewing the survey results, the ARG determined that more data were needed around students' desire and choice to study abroad. The group decided to interview a sample of the 75 ABC students who had studied abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year. A total of 13 students were interviewed, providing us with information about their interests in studying abroad as well as the barriers they encountered in pursuit of their education-abroad experience. Limited resources and anticipated costs emerged as major issues and/or blockades for students. In addition, students were concerned about foregone earnings while away since many ABC students work at least part-time while enrolled at the college. Another key item take-away from the survey and interview data was that ABC students prefer short-term study-abroad programs.

Cycle 1 Taking Action (January 2015 – May 2015)

Faculty pay policy. At the time of this study, ABC did not have a faculty pay policy for study abroad—that is, a policy spelling out exactly how faculty will be paid for designing and leading academic study-abroad programs. There is not a policy detailing faculty pay in ABC's Administrative Policy Manual (APM), so creating guidelines, in the group's opinion, was critical to faculty leading programs. Therefore, the ARG, in line with its focus on the higher education context of the Perna (2006a) model, agreed that we provide input to the OI about developing such a policy for the college. The ARG composed a draft faculty pay policy, which I shared with the director of the OI. The two of us made necessary edits, and then I shared the changes with the ARG. Once the draft policy was revised, the OI director and I presented it at an ABC cabinet meeting. The cabinet members received the policy favorably, and the director and I incorporated

their feedback into a final version. The policy received official approval from the ABC cabinet, after which it was included in the ABC's APM.

Training faculty to lead short-term programs. As mentioned earlier, the survey and interview data showed that students were interested in short-term study-abroad programs. Many of the ARG members felt that faculty were interested in leading programs but did not know how to begin. It was determined therefore by the ARG, that we should consider offering a training program to assist faculty with developing short-term programs. I first developed a guidebook that included steps for developing a study-abroad program; the ARG then reviewed this draft, offering suggestions for improvement. Once the final draft of the guidebook was completed, I shared it with the director of OI, who made final changes and edits. With the guidebook completed, the ARG worked with the OI to develop a training program, and in May 2015, ABC offered a half-day "Faculty-Led Study Abroad Training Program," in which ARG members participated in delivering parts of the training. All full-time ABC faculty members were invited to participate in the training; 40 faculty registered for the training, and 23 actually attended. Since ABC designed the training, it was a relatively inexpensive option to implement.

Cycle 1 Evaluating Action (May 2015 – January 2016)

The action research group was excited about ABC's administrative cabinet passing the new faculty pay policy. This was an important policy designed to increase the number of short-term, faculty-led study-abroad programs. After implementation of this policy, faculty are now aware of the compensation policy for creating and leading a study abroad program and no longer have to be concerned about not receiving pay or reduced pay for the extra work.

Although the turnout for the first Faculty-Led Study Abroad Training Program was excellent, the ARG believed that faculty needed more extensive training. Feedback and

evaluations around this second intervention were not as positive as those related to the faculty pay policy. Although an online training evaluation (designed in SurveyMonkey) was distributed to the 23 training participants, only four (or 17%) responded. As a result, it was difficult to determine the effectiveness of the training. Table 9 lists the statistical mean responses from the five questions, responses to which were rated on a 5-point scale (with 1 = “disagree completely,” and 5 = “agree completely”).

Table 9

Mean Responses to Questions on the Faculty-Led Study-Abroad Training Program Evaluation

Question	Mean Response
“The Faculty-Led Study-Abroad Training Program session helped to orient me to the content area.”	<i>M</i> = Agree somewhat
“The faculty training materials and guidebook were adequate and helpful.”	<i>M</i> = Disagree somewhat
“The training provided me with the knowledge necessary to develop a study-abroad program.”	<i>M</i> = Neutral
“The overall presentation, including the sequence of topics, was well organized.”	<i>M</i> = Agree somewhat
“Each topic on developing a faculty-led study-abroad program was covered in sufficient depth.”	<i>M</i> = Neutral

Faculty indicated in their open-ended evaluation responses that the most important items covered during the training included the global studies certification program, the overview of the study-abroad process, and financial management of study abroad. One faculty member commented that “how students use financial aid and HOPE” was an important issue, adding that “there are too many stipulations that were not covered” in the training.

The results of the training evaluation were discussed among the ARG members, who determined that both the training and guidebook needed improvement. The ARG agreed to address this subject in Cycle 2 of the action research study. The group believed that focusing on the higher education context of the Perna (2006a) model and providing faculty with a new faculty development program, the ARG believed, more faculty would be interested in creating short-term study-abroad programs. In addition, the ARG agreed that, in the future, a post-evaluation survey of each training will be conducted onsite immediately following the session in order to net a higher response rate.

In their reflections, the ARG members concluded that, overall, the interventions in Cycle 1 helped ABC to slightly enhance its influence on students' choice to study abroad according to the higher education context layer of the condensed Perna (2006a) model by improving the availability of resources and structural support, and by reducing barriers for faculty. A new policy was put in place that clearly defined how an ABC faculty member would be compensated for developing a study-abroad program. Secondly, a guidebook and training program on how to develop a faculty-led study-abroad program were developed. Both needed subsequent improvement, but they nevertheless represented an initial effort to influence the choice process by improving resources, as outlined in contextual Layer 2/3 of the Perna model. The action research activities completed in Cycle 1 allowed the group to capitalize on the understandings developed in the early stages and to apply them in future cycles.

Action Research Cycle 2

When this action research study originally began, it focused primarily on identifying implementation strategies for overcoming student barriers to study abroad. However, as the ARG collected data and continued to explore relevant issues, the members realized they needed

to focus on Cycle 2 in relation to the higher education context layer of the Perna (2006a) model to influence students' choice to study abroad at ABC. Cycle 2 of the study entailed the following: (1) completing process mapping for financial aid; (2) conducting critical incident interviews of faculty leading study-abroad programs; (3) identifying training options and program providers for faculty to develop new programs; (4) conducting critical incident interviews with ARG members to solicit feedback on interventions, the action research process, and relevant learnings. Table 10 details of the stages of Cycle 2.

Table 10

Action Research Cycle 2

Cycle 2 Stage	Action Steps	Timeline
Constructing Action	• Completed process mapping to determine how to address financial barrier issues for students; habitus (Layer 1)	February 2015 – December 2016
	• Examined process for the ABC ILP and i-course design	January – December 2015
	• Examined data from the GPI Study Abroad of ABC students 2014-2015	January 2016
	• Examined how to create condensed process to make a study-abroad course an i-course	June – July 2016
	• Designed and conducted critical incident interviews with faculty leading ABC study-abroad programs	October 2016 – January 2017
Planning Action	• Used data/learning to design faculty training program for short-term study abroad	February – April 2017
	• Used data/learning from financial aid process mapping to create resources for students	
Taking Action (Proposed Interventions)	• Designed new webpage for financial aid and study abroad	January – July 2017
	• Trained faculty through edx.org online, Course Study Abroad Capacity for US Institutions	Fall 2017

Cycle 2 Stage	Action Steps	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied for a grant so that members of the ARG could continue developing a process to make short-term study abroad i-courses 	Fall 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with program providers to develop new programs 	Fall 2017
Evaluating Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted CIT interviews of ARG members to understand learnings from Cycles 1 and 2 	December 2016 – April 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive briefing to organization on learning and proposed interventions starting fall 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on higher education context to overcome structural and support barriers for faculty developing study-abroad programs ○ Due to limited staffing, should use other resources outside ABC to train staff; college does not have staffing to train faculty in-house ○ Focus on supply of resources for students (habitus, Layer 1)—financial aid, etc.—to assist students overcome financial barriers 	February 2017

Cycle 2 Constructing Action (February 2015 – December 2016)

The ARG used information from the feedback on the Faculty-Led Study Abroad Training and guidebook to determine improvements that were needed to develop better training programs for faculty. It was evident from the feedback in Cycle 1 that a more extensive and longer training was needed for faculty; however, with a small office staff, it would be difficult for the OI to conduct a more robust training. Also, many ARG discussions centered on how to train faculty to develop solid curricula for faculty-led study abroad—that is, not creating programs that operated like tourism. In addition, the data analysis revealed that students needed more assistance with financing study-abroad programs. Therefore, the ARG conducted mapping of the

study-abroad process with the Financial Aid Department, in hopes of using the results to improve student access to financial aid.

A subgroup of the ARG worked on the two proposed interventions for Cycle 2. One of these interventions was to develop a full training program to assist faculty with creating and leading short-term study-abroad programs. The ARG used information from the faculty training evaluation and results of the data analysis to determine the feasibility of developing such a full-scale training program. However, it was determined, that it would be difficult to design well-thought-out learning modules that would be continuous and available to all faculty. As the lead researcher, I was charged with searching for other viable training options.

The second proposed intervention was to create a process for turning the new proposed faculty-led study-abroad programs into i-courses. A subgroup of the ARG met on multiple occasions to discuss this matter. Although all subgroup members believed it was important to make study-abroad studies available as i-courses to ensure academic rigor, they were unsure how this task would be accomplished in light of the existing workload of ABC faculty. The Internationalized Learning Program process was too extensive, especially when compounded with the task of creating a new study-abroad program. Attempting to create a faculty-lead study-abroad program while simultaneously completing the ILP would be extremely difficult for a faculty member with a full teaching load. While the subgroup felt this was an important goal, it could not commit the time needed to address it. One member of the ARG suggested that we consider applying for a grant that would allow faculty to work on making faculty-led study-abroad programs i-courses and going through a tailor-made version of the ILP. If a grant were obtained, it could potentially provide faculty working on the project with course-release time.

Cycle 2 Planning Action (February – April 2017)

Faculty training. The ARG discussed improvements to the learning models on how to develop short-term study abroad programs. Yet, under the existing full-time staffing structure, the ARG felt that implementing such improvements would be difficult. In my capacity as lead researcher, I benchmarked other colleges to determine how to train faculty to lead short-term programs. I also conducted online searches to determine if there were other types of training programs being offered. My web searches led me to an impressive training program designed for faculty, staff, and administrators working in U.S. higher education institutions to increase rates of study-abroad participation (edX, n.d.) and built around actionable information and ready-to-use templates. The course grew out of a partnership between U.S. Department of State and Arizona State University, and was in part the outcome of a survey administered to nearly 500 education-abroad professionals. Forty-five leaders in the study-abroad field shared their comprehensive experience and knowledge about study-abroad programming and developed the course, making the online training program available for all types of campuses. This free resource is ideal for professionals who work with all aspects of study-abroad programming on campus. The course provides practical approaches to increasing study-abroad participation with in-depth case studies and practice exercises (IIE, n.d). The course covers such topics as:

- models for structuring study-abroad programs;
- how to fund students' study-abroad experiences; and,
- how to create a long-term study-abroad strategy for one's campus. (edX, n.d.)

This training program struck me as an ideal fit for ABC in its efforts to enhance faculty capacity to create more short-term study-abroad programs. I therefore shared this information with the

ARG for possible implementation at ABC. Table 11 describes the learning modules for the “Study Abroad USA” training program.

Table 11

Learning Modules for “Study Abroad USA: Building Capacity for U.S. Institutions”

Module #	Topic	Description
1	Study Abroad History	Study abroad in the U.S., past, present, future
2	Program Types	Financial model, and curriculum
3	Internationalization	Internationalization and curriculum integration
4	Strategy and Support	Structure, policy, procedures, advising
5	Student Funding	Scholarships and student funding
6	Orientation	Orientation and assessment
7	Safety	Health and safety matters
8	Marketing	Promoting study abroad to students

Financial aid process mapping. The ARG reviewed the process mapping materials from my meetings with the ABC Financial Aid Department to determine how the process for obtaining financial aid could be improved. Mary, one of the ARG members, continued to take a lead role in making sure we continued to meet with financial aid to fully outline the process. It was obvious from the process map that obtaining financial aid involved multiple steps that could be difficult for a student to navigate. Therefore, discussion continued around how to make the process easier, such as by providing online resources for ABC students.

Cycle 2 Taking Action (January 2017 – Fall 2017)

Financial aid webpage. I took the lead in working with the Financial Aid Department to create a new webpage explaining to students the process for obtaining aid for study-abroad experiences. The new webpage benefits not only students but also staff who may not be familiar with how financial aid works regarding study abroad. The webpage links to both the OI website and the Financial Aid Department's website. After the new webpage was implemented, the ARG reviewed the site and suggested changes. Since the OI is responsible for any updates to its website, upon the conclusion of this action research study, the OI will maintain this new webpage and make any necessary updates recommended by both departments.

Working with study-abroad program providers. Because of limited staffing, the ARG also suggested that we build relationships with a small number of study-abroad program providers, a path that many colleges and universities have pursued in recent years. In fact, one of the easiest, least expensive ways for an institution to increase study-abroad opportunities is by reaching agreements with a set of preferred third-party providers. Many public and private universities (e.g., Michigan, Florida, Oberlin, and Cornell) have created opportunities for their students by carefully screening potential providers and monitoring their performance on an ongoing basis. To be sure, direct costs paid to providers are carefully monitored, as hidden fees are oftentimes associated with an a la carte approach to purchasing services (Heisel & Kissler, 2010). Therefore, in fall 2017, the ARG suggested that the OI vet a list of three potential study-abroad program providers for ABC and invite them to campus for further discussions, in hopes of ultimately finalizing agreements.

Applying for a grant to expand study-abroad i-courses. ABC's QEP is dedicated to internationalizing the curriculum. Therefore, as study abroad is expanded at the college, it is

important to ensure that study-abroad programs are offered as i-courses. These courses are intended to provide students with opportunities to build intercultural competence and skill. As such, i-courses contain a high level of international content and are built around the requirements and activities needed to promote student success in achieving the desired learning outcomes at an appropriate level for a given course. Some of the ARG members had significant concerns about the academic integrity of ABC's study-abroad programs; making them i-courses will ensure that the offerings meet ABC's student learning outcomes. However, as discussed earlier, it is difficult for a faculty member to create a new study abroad program and, at the same time, adapt it to an i-course, all while managing heavy teaching loads. So the ARG recommended that ABC apply for a grant, and two members of the ARG expressed interest in looking into grant opportunities after the completion of the action research study. The ARG recommended that ABC search for grants that would improve diversity and participation in study abroad, such as those offered by the U.S. Department of State's Global Educational Programs, U.S. Study Abroad Branch, and Partners for the Americas, which offer capacity-building grants for U.S. undergraduate study abroad. Grants from these organizations would advance ABC's mission to increase the participation of and diversity within study abroad by enhancing the institution's capacity to send students overseas for academic credit, internships, or other experiential learning opportunities (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.).

Cycle 2 Evaluating Action (December 2016 – April 2017)

A widely used qualitative research method is the critical incident interview, and my dissertation committee recommended that I use this method to garner feedback on the action research process. I conducted individual interviews with each team member between December 2017 and April 2017 to learn about the knowledge they had gained during all phases of the

action research process. Qualitative researchers often select critical incident instruments to corroborate interview data and further allow the perceptions of participants to be uncovered. Critical incident interviews probe for assumptions, which are good reflection tools (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The findings from the interviews were central to determining the direction the study should take, and they revealed that the ARG members had learned several lessons from their participation in the study. After each interview, I uploaded the transcript to HyperResearch to gain a clearer picture of the participant's reflections.

Importantly, the action research study confirmed that in order for ABC to influence the choice of students to study abroad, it is imperative that the entire campus, especially the senior leadership, support study-abroad initiatives. Therefore, in February 2017, with the assistance of the ARG, I gave an executive briefing to senior leaders at ABC. I invited all ARG members, faculty who had conducted study-abroad programs, and key senior staff (i.e., the current provost, the previous provost, and deans) and gave an overview of our learnings from the study. Based on verbal comments from the ARG members, the briefing went extremely well. It offered a strategic opportunity for the newly hired provost to learn about issues influencing the decision of ABC students to study abroad and for the senior leadership to hear firsthand about the interventions proposed by the ARG.

As successful as the briefing was, it was critical for the ARG to keep in mind that in order for any access institution to influence the choice of its students to study abroad, the entire campus support related efforts, not only verbally but through actions committed to increasing the number of students studying abroad.

Summary

This chapter outlined the current action research case study. The ARG members completed two action research cycles of constructing action, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action. The group worked well together and engaged in critical discussions as data emerged throughout the cycles. The group members provided subject-matter expertise, which was invaluable to the credibility of the study outcomes. Ultimately, the Office of Institutionalization agreed to and was supportive of the proposed interventions, in hopes that ABC will implement the program interventions in the near future. Although the ARG officially dissolved April 2017, the former participants remain committed to the purpose of influencing the decision of ABC students to study abroad.

Over a two-year period, the ARG worked to influence the choice of ABC students to study abroad. The activities and processes the group engaged in were not linear (in either cycle), but the group was nevertheless efficient and effective in our work to provide tools that directly benefit ABC's study-abroad initiatives.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This chapter offers an integrated, holistic picture of the findings that emerged during this action research study. The purpose of the study was to understand how an access institution can influence the choice of students to study abroad using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad. Specifically, the case study examined access-college students' decision-making process in an effort to influence their choice to study abroad. Two primary research questions guided the study: (1) What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework? (2) How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?

The chapter examines the data related to each research question, which were gathered from a number of sources: student interviews; critical incident interviews with faculty leading study-abroad programs and with ARG members; ARG meeting records; materials associated with the faculty-led study-abroad training program; and ABC documents. As the lead researcher, I engaged in ongoing critical reflection through journaling and discussions with key colleagues. I organized the findings around major themes and subthemes that emerged during the data collection and analysis. Table 12 provides an overview of the themes and subthemes associated with each research question.

Table 12

Overview of Findings

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
1. What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?	Access institutions need to rely on data, not assumptions, about student interest in study abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuming students will not be interested • Assuming that expected costs are too great for students
	Access institutions need to align institutional priorities and information with study abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privileging information toward college priorities • More important competing priorities for college
	Access institutions need to provide structural support and remove organizational barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of policies, process, structures for study abroad • Sacrifices of faculty to develop programs • Inexperienced faculty to develop programs
	Access institution need to identify and understand the student barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student lack of familiarity with study abroad • Students have limited resources to study abroad • Lack of funding and missed earnings from jobs are important issues for students
2. How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?	Individuals, groups, and the system learned that there is a need to identify institutional issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model useful to identify issues • ABC lacks advocacy across the campus for study abroad
	The group learned that working collaboratively in a cross-functional group had collateral benefits and costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better identification of issues with a cross functional group • Insider researcher pros and cons • Individual learning even if the system does not change

Research Question 1

The following section presents findings related to Research Question 1. Table 13 outlines the themes and subthemes associated with the first research question in the context of Perna's (2006a) integrated model.

Table 13

Research Question 1 Themes and Subthemes

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
1. What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework?	Access institutions need to rely on data, not assumptions, about student interest in study abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuming students will not be interested • Assuming that expected costs are too great for students
	Access institutions need to align institutional priorities and information with study abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privileging information toward college priorities • More important competing priorities for college
	Access institutions need to provide structural support and remove organizational barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of policies, process, structures for study abroad • Sacrifices of faculty to develop programs • Inexperienced faculty to develop programs
	Access institution need to identify and understand the student barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student lack of familiarity with study abroad • Students have limited resources to study abroad • Lack of funding and missed earnings from jobs are important issues for students

Assuming Students will not be Interested in Study Abroad

As I synthesized the data, a recurring theme emerged related to the assumptions that the ABC community made about students' interest in and ability to participate in study abroad. For instance, the ARG sponsored a "Study Abroad Feedback Meeting" in May, 2016 and invited several study-abroad stakeholders and deans to attend. One of the deans commented, "I have fears that if we have too many programs in my department there will be too few students to fill them." However, since ABC has over 12,000 students, this assumption about the difficulty filling newly created programs may not be accurate. Members of the ABC community also

made assumptions about students' ability to study abroad due to resources such as family income and expected costs, therefore would not be interested in studying abroad. During an ARG meeting, one member commented about

family mindset, if you will—because many of our students are first-generation who have not traveled abroad, so I do think that convincing them that this is something they can do and they want to do, because most students don't have a passport.

Yet, after adding a question to the fall 2014 survey that addressed whether or not ABC students had passports, the ARG learned that 54.2% of the students included in the fall survey actually had passports. The group members were very surprised by these results, which confirmed that their assumption about students possessing passports was incorrect.

Similarly, Faculty Member 4 stated that ABC students would have to pay for their study-abroad programs without parent support, though she had no data to support this claim:

At my old school, their parents paid their tuition. Their parents paid for their gas. Their parents paid for their food. And so [participating in study abroad] is somewhat more realistic when it's your parent's money. When all of a sudden you have pay for it ... it's three mortgage payments. It's ... two years' worth of car insurance. So it's a significant investment of money.

Gary, a study-abroad program director and ARG member, stated, "In a private school, the students, they're [more] financially well off. And so money was not as a big driving factor as it is at an open-access state college." Faculty Member 2 discussed how he and others potentially make assumptions about our students: "I think sometimes we have our stereotypes about what kind of student we think we're looking for. So I mean, sometimes, I'm limited in terms of where

I'm going to find my students.” Faith, a faculty leader of study abroad and ARG member, made an assumption about the ABC students interest in a similar manner:

Unfortunately, study abroad is a social class phenomenon because, well, speaking foreign languages, traveling the world, is associated with people who have ambitions about getting a good education, getting an international flavor to their experiences, finding a high-paying job, going to grad school, and unfortunately I don't think that some of our students have ever thought of themselves in these terms. So study abroad is part of that kind of world that ... they don't identify with necessarily.

Likewise, ARG member Dana made an assumption about students' interest in longer-term study-abroad programs:

I think our programs work better when they're shorter term. I think that for our population of students, it is cost prohibitive to do something longer term. It requires more capacity than we have to handle students that are taking these longer trips. The preparation for our students for longer-term abroad programs is probably a little more rigorous.

Faith also cited differences in students attending private high schools: “Some independent schools actually require study abroad, but most of the students are not necessarily setting their sights on ABC ... You're probably setting your sights on Ivy League.” ARG member Brandon stated, “I think [study abroad] can be a challenging thing on a campus like ours. I mean, going abroad is a scary proposition for students that haven't ever had a chance to travel.” Another ARG member, Tina, commented on student interest during the second action research meeting: “Yeah, we ... have some students whose families don't understand the value of a college education, much less studying abroad.” Julie, an ARG member, indicated that before joining the

action research study, she did believe that nontraditional students would not want to study abroad:

Well, first off all, I think everyone came in with assumptions about, you know, an open-access institution and our students going to actually study abroad—is this something they’re interested in? So I was kind of surprised when I learned that we had nontraditional students, for example, doing study abroad.

Even as the lead researcher of the action research study, I made assumptions about the type of ABC student who would want to study abroad:

Two female Columbian students, I was thinking maybe they came from a wealthier background. But then I found out they were from lower-income, single-parent households. I was like, “Okay, this is a real interesting group of students studying abroad.”

During my personal interview with Dr. Salisbury, I shared with him a realization:

We have been studying this for a year... [and] I don’t even think our faculty and administrators believe our students can study abroad because what comes out of the mouths of a lot of our faculty is that our students don’t have the money to study abroad. So it’s like we don’t even believe that our students can study abroad.

As the action research study results made clear, it is important for access institutions to make decisions based on data, not assumptions about students’. Students at open-access institutions may be interested in studying abroad. The ability to influence students’ decision to study abroad requires that the institution understand the actual barriers present and what resources students will need to overcome those barriers—rather than assuming students will not be interested in going abroad in the first place.

Institutional Priorities for Study Abroad

Privileging information toward college priorities. As the study progressed, the ARG searched for deeper meanings related to the research questions. The group had begun to understand that ABC was providing limited information about education-abroad opportunities, thus privileging that information. Moreover, it was not clear whether or not the senior leadership was supporting study abroad. As Salisbury noted, “If the institution doesn’t believe students can study abroad, then they’re not going to really provide that information and privilege that information ... Some of that is also driven by the kinds of values that those institutions communicate and prioritize” (personal communication, 23, February, 2016). At one ARG meeting, Julie stated:

We need to get the information to the departments, senior mentors, and faculty. If we cannot get more support from the college, we may need to go directly to departments instead of expecting them to come to us.

Another issue related to information privileging was the limited promotion of study abroad by deans. At the time of the study, there was one dean on the ABC campus supportive of study abroad; no other dean made it a priority for his or her department. Consequently, there was little information about study abroad being shared within departments, thus limiting the information reaching faculty, staff and students. During another ARG meeting, Julie commented that “deans are not recognizing the study-abroad leaders in the School of Liberal Arts. Many faculty do not even know about the study-abroad program to London sponsored by our department.”

Mentoring by faculty is a key component to student success at ABC, and historically has been well supported campus-wide. Faculty unfamiliar with study abroad on the ABC campus

may not feel as comfortable sharing information with students as they are advising. As an ARG member stated during a meeting: “Faculty don’t like advising students in areas that they don’t feel comfortable in.” The data showed a privileging of material that the college deemed important, and a lack of information on study abroad, including celebration of successful efforts sending ABC students abroad.

Competing priorities for the college. Another major theme and pattern emerged around the competing goal, was the promotion of i-courses instead of study abroad. Originally, one of the main reasons I wanted to work for ABC was that the Quality Enhancement Plan focused on internationalization. Leading the action research study and serving on the QEP committee, however, I came to realize that ABC’s focus was not on students having experiences abroad; rather, it was about providing an internationalization experience through the on-campus curriculum. The five-year QEP objective is to internationalize the curriculum in an effort to increase the number of students having an international on-campus educational experience before graduating. In my journal notes, I quoted a member of the QEP committee: “Global Studies Certification will be a mild or marginal program on-campus if tied to study abroad.” Thus, over the two years conducting the action research study and listening to discussions at the QEP meetings, I learned that the institutional focus was purposefully not on increasing study abroad. In fact, in QEP meetings, participants stated unequivocally that “study abroad is not part of the QEP.” ARG members made additional comments at meetings about how more students would be impacted by i-courses than study abroad: “We’ve got 7,000 seats in i-courses ... that means potentially 12,000 students have some i-courses where they’ve learned something about their own culture and other cultures.” One ARG member, Brandon, even stated that

study abroad in some ways is worse because it's not fully immersive, [and] it's pretty pricey, but [students] can learn what it means to become more aware of other cultures and more confident in dealing with other cultures through i-courses.

Since ABC is a relatively new institution, it is still solidifying its overall mission and long-term strategic initiatives. During his critical incident interview, Faculty Member 2 provided another example of ABC trying to determine its focus and top priorities: "We're still developing a culture here in terms of student involvement. We haven't defined what student involvement is, whether its study abroad or something else."

Structural Support and Barriers for Study Abroad

Institutional barriers to study abroad surfaced as another major theme. During critical incident interviews, faculty raised concerns about whether ABC supported students studying abroad. Comments from ARG members during meetings suggested an uncertainty about ABC's commitment to overcome the barriers to influence the choice of students to study abroad. This emerging theme continued to be discussed in ARG meetings. As one member stated, "The president is committed to study abroad, but are the departments? Can successful faculty-led study-abroad programs create more commitment from the deans?" Another ARG member, Tina, expressed similar ambivalence about ABC's commitment to influencing the choice of students to study abroad:

Sometimes I think it's very easy to say things and give lip service to things, and at ABC, we talked a lot about internationalizing the curriculum and study abroad, and I'm not sure we always put into practice in a meaningful way what that actually means.

Faith commented about ABC's lack of holistic support for study abroad:

If indeed ABC wants to go international, they need to understand that they need to invest in the study-abroad project; otherwise, faculty members will just shy away from conducting, leading study-abroad programs. It's simply too overwhelming, too big of a project if you don't believe in it a hundred percent and even more. So we won't have more programs, we won't have more students.

Lack of policies, process and structures. The study data revealed a major theme around a lack of study-abroad policies, procedures, and structures in place to influence the choice of students to study abroad. The Perna model (2006a) allowed the action research group to examine multiple facets of influencing access students' choice to study abroad. According to Salisbury (personal communication, 23, February, 2016) the model pertains to student decision making and institutional and political context: "One part of the integrated student choice model is that it's a series of decisions, and at each decision point, the decision that you make either expands or constrains the future set of choices." One theme that emerged from the data was that the institution needed to focus on structural support for study abroad, as Tina urged during an ARG meeting: "There is a lot of confusion on the part of faculty who are trying to organize these trips and get all the logistics. How can we support that better so that they aren't just flying blind?"

Prior to this study, there was no policy or process in place for paying faculty teaching abroad; therefore, faculty were not guaranteed to receive pay for such work. These types of issues created barriers to faculty success in establishing study-abroad programs. As the program director for history (Faculty Member 2) highlighted, special study-abroad arrangements were orchestrated by the dean:

The way we set it up here is well, the Chile program is two three-credit-hour classes, and so I remember spending a lot of time talking to our dean about compensation, and I know that the president's cabinet made some changes right before we did that trip. But [we] need to find better uniformity with the salary structure for those summer classes.

Faculty directors make similar comments about the lack of policies governing compensation.

Faculty Member 1, one of the more seasoned program directors, explained the issues he had with obtaining pay for his work:

The study abroad I led to the Galapagos Islands, we were at a time where ABC hadn't figured out or balanced the policies. And so the dean said that I could run the study abroad or I could cancel the study abroad, but I did that without pay.... Summer salary is important to faculty members.

Gary, a new program director, commented on the absence of policies governing student safety.

As he shared during his critical incident interview, in one instance, he had to make a crucial decision using his own best judgement, lacking any formal policies or procedures:

I would not want it to happen again because there was no answer, and I guess it might be nice to have a policy in place—I don't know if we can dictate when a student needs to go home for medical reasons because, in this case, both leaders thought [the student] should go home, but she didn't.

ARG members agreed to research other colleges' study-abroad formats or develop our own checklist and timeline. One member recommended that:

If we're trying to really do a structured education-abroad format that everyone can do from the pre-departure to the return, it needs to be structured in such a way that if [you're

traveling] in the fall, this is your checklist. If you travel in the spring, this is your checklist. If you're traveling in the summer, this is what you need to do.

As the lead researcher for the study, I suggested that the ARG consider benchmarking against other well-known college who have well-developed study abroad programs.

Sacrifices of faculty leading study-abroad programs. During the critical incident interviews with faculty involved in study abroad, they frequently mentioned their personal sacrifices leading programs for ABC, voicing their concerns about how much was required of them. I heard similar comments while attending QEP meetings. My notes from one such meeting, in September 2016, reflect the negativity and frustration felt by faculty:

Too difficult to do study abroad. So many fail and too much work. Not worth talking about study abroad. What protection will you have to get paid from the college? Faculty don't want to assume the risk. There are faculty who want to do it. Just don't know how to do it.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, faculty who lead study-abroad programs are required to engage in financial and risk management; that is, they are responsible for managing funds for their study-abroad program. For example, Faculty Member 2 was forced to learn about and address issues related to collecting tuition and fees:

A lot of the students were wondering ... why they had to pay facility fees and parking fees and things like that over the summer. So we did get student accounts to knock some of those out, to get rid of some of those, but we had to ask.

Once abroad, faculty may need additional support managing the participating students. Many faculty interviewees indicated that the presence of more than one faculty or staff member on a study-abroad program was essential. For instance, Faculty Member 3, the leader of the

criminal justice study-abroad program, spoke about the need for additional support and structure while abroad:

When you have another faculty member or a staff member—when there's a problem that's essential, like someone's sick or someone has special needs, that's essential. But I think having that second faculty member attend, particularly if we have inexperienced faculty leading programs is essential.

Faculty Member 1 noted that using a program provider to train new ABC faculty in developing study-abroad programs was helpful:

I think that was one of the benefits of having the [program provider]. I've had so many benefits from them, from logistical—it's helpful when problems happen. I think any time you have a [program not organized by the provider] you almost have to insist there's two faculty members.

Many faculty interviewees alluded to the significant amount of work required to lead a program.

One ARG member, who taught for the European Council study-abroad program, commented:

It's a year-round thing, and it involves a lot of heavy recruiting, but none of it panned out because no one ever had time. If a faculty member were to put as much energy into their study abroad as they put into just one of the classes they're teaching, that's a lot of time.

And when you're teaching a four-four load—a lot of our faculty are teaching overloads—it's difficult.

A program leader and a member of the ARG discussed her experience working with study-abroad programs at ABC:

Our decision to lead study-abroad programs is a challenging endeavor, more challenging than in other institutions where study abroad is so institutionalized, at least in certain

disciplines and departments where they have a highly populated study-abroad office with secretaries and administrators. So we can make it a reality at an open-access institution; it's just more challenging. It requires more of us at different levels.

The study data continued to highlight the need for institutional support of faculty leading and developing study-abroad programs, to relieve some of the burdens they take on in this role.

Inexperienced faculty leaders. During the critical incident interviews, many faculty shared that they did not feel properly trained or knowledgeable about leading a study-abroad program. Much of this sense of ill-preparedness related to on-the-job training. The data indicated that inexperienced faculty require training in order to effectively influence the choice of students to study abroad. As Faculty Member 4 noted, inexperienced faculty needed comprehensive training:

I think that what might really help is if there is a manual compiled that says, "So you want to lead a trip overseas, here are the 50 things you need to do and here is the timetable by which you need to do them. So you want to lead the trip overseas? Well, first and foremost, plan on that not happening this academic year. Plan on this happening next year." In fact, a very good guideline is 365 days before the first day, start planning from there.... It's a step-by-step of the process.

The following comment from Faculty Member 2 affirmed that training is available in different formats, such as partnerships with different institutions:

Well, it's through a partnership with another college, so that was essential. I hadn't had any experience with travel insurance or risk management or purchasing tickets. And so we had the vice president at the other college—so he had administrative help to do all

that. And they could set up the purchasing account for him. And so all that was really helpful.

Faculty Member 4 indicated that leading his study-abroad program required him to juggle more responsibilities than he had anticipated:

I think probably ... was a little naive as to how much effort would have been taken, how much ... administration needed to sign off on it. Just the various layers of complexity. I don't know what I was thinking. I guess I was really more in the dark.

Indeed, the ARG learned that faculty needed to be supported in creating and developing study-abroad programs more than they had originally presumed. Using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice in relation to study abroad allowed the ARG to more deeply appreciate the significance of focusing on the school community and higher education context layer of that model.

Understanding Student Barriers to Studying Abroad

Student interviews comprised an additional source of data for addressing Research Question 1. I developed the student interview guide using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model to identify student barriers to studying abroad. From the interview data emerged a theme that highlighted the need for an access institution to identify and understand the actual, existing student barriers that prevent students from studying abroad and not assume that they are not interested in these experiences. The data is showing that it is not a lack of interest from ABC students, but that ABC should identify and understand the institutional and student barriers

Lack of familiarity with studying abroad. A subtheme that surfaced from the data was that ABC students were largely unfamiliar with study abroad, which may have been the result of

them possessing lower social and cultural capital. The Perna (2006a) model suggests that students build cultural capital—in this case, understanding the value of study abroad—before they arrive to college. Students exposed to study abroad before college are likely to have a better understanding of the value of the study-abroad experience than those who were not. Upon arriving to college, many ABC students possess limited information about studying abroad. Very few of the students interviewed had parents who had studied abroad or knew of friends or family members who had studied abroad before entering college. During their interviews, the ABC students stressed the importance of the college reaching out to students about study abroad opportunities early on:

- Student 1: “Freshman year of college—I didn't even think about it until talking to my friend who went to study abroad. I've always wanted to go to Japan but never thought about necessarily how to in college.”
- Student 2: “If there was study abroad information sessions for incoming freshman advertised in the right place. Information sessions with specific dates.”
- Student 3: “In my opinion people don't care about anything that is not imminent to them. But if you target, say, the student population with emails at particular periods, say, around advising—if you shoot an email and say if you are planning to take French 1100, look at that study-abroad opportunity.”

Lack of funding and missed earnings. Another prominent subtheme highlighted that availability of financial resources was a factor influencing the choice of ABC students to study abroad. Many ABC students are eligible to receive financial aid. According to a report submitted by ABC to the U.S. Department of Education, in the 2013-2014 academic year, 71% of ABC students received federal financial aid. Based on the college's 2016 strategic plan, ABC

students are more diverse compared to other students in the university system and have a lower high school grade point average when entering college; in addition, 48% come from families in which neither parent received a four-year degree. ABC students also have more family and work obligations: Two thirds of the students anticipate working at least 10 hours per week, and 33% (up from 27% in fall 2011) anticipate working at least 20 hours per week. Finally, two thirds of the students receive Pell grants.

Yet, the 2016 strategic plan also noted that the median income in the county from which ABC draws most of its students is 20% higher than the state average, which points to the fact the study body is diverse and some students may have disposable income to finance study abroad. The following comments from the sample group of students who had studied abroad pertain specifically to their experience obtaining funds to finance their study-abroad opportunity:

- Student 1: “But due to finances, I was [delayed in] college and I was delayed in studying abroad, as well.”
- Student 2: “I had kind of worked part-time during high school and saved all my money and then used whatever I had saved plus the graduation gift money and treated myself.”
- Student 3: “Well, I'd be missing out a month of work and along with that, finances. The main thing was really just money.”
- Student 4: “I actually [had] to go and talk to the president of my company to get approval for that. It just took a few talks. I had some vacation hours approved.”
- Student 5: “Despite [not having] enough money ... I still [tried] to find ways to go.”

- Student 6: “Oh, I think ... they should have ... more scholarships here at ABC for that. I feel like that wasn't enough money because studying abroad was very expensive.”
- Student 7: “I'm actually paying for school by myself, out-of-pocket [because] my parents don't really [help me with school].”
- Student 8: “Probably finances almost kept me from studying abroad. I've always worked pretty much full-time.”
- Student 9: “I know receiving a scholarship really helped out. And hearing about getting to go to Japan, including going to Vietnam—that was a big bonus also. I guess what really helped out was income tax season.”
- Student 10: “Finance was really ... the only thing because with this particular study abroad, it was asking for so much money at one time.”

Though students may be interested in studying abroad, they may never actually pursue opportunities if they automatically believe they will not have access to financial support. Steven noted that he tells students:

“I understand some of you feel that you can't afford this, but you've got some time. You've got to start planning.” But you can kind of see people turning off, like when I talk to my classes about it, they seem a little bit interested and then as soon as somebody mentions price, then they just turn off, just like that... I mean, a lot of our students are just that cash-strapped.

Faith spoke about her experiences helping students to finance their study abroad experiences:

Last year I had problems with students understanding from the very beginning that they cannot count on external money besides their own savings, financial aid, any student

loans or their family. Students can certainly do fundraising, but again, they cannot rely on scholarships because it's a short-term program and there aren't scholarships for that.

In addition, student interviewees expressed concerns about interrupted income and lack of financial aid. As noted previously, many ABC students work part-time and full-time while attending school; therefore, when contemplating study abroad, students consider not only the funds that are available to participate, but also the earnings that will be lost while abroad.

Several students recounted their concerns about missing work:

- Student 11: “What almost made me not study abroad? Well, I'd be missing out on a month of work, and along with that, finances. The main thing was really just money.
- Student 12: “I've talked to a lot of students about it, some who really want to do these things. The biggest thing that they told me about was finances. Maybe they can afford to take a trip but they can't afford [to miss out on] those extra work hours that they need.”
- Student 13: “[I] could see the difference in pricing, for sure. They do ... help out somewhat financially, but [you'll] still find yourself paying out-of-pocket. So that goes back to weekends as a server.... since I did have the mentality I did want to study abroad.”

A related subtheme that emerged from interviews with ARG members and faculty leading study-abroad programs was inadequate funding provided through the International Education Fund (IEF) and the Office of Internationalization. The IEF, supported through specific fees paid by all students, was established to support international initiatives on the ABC campus. However, at the time of the study, the IEF was being used primarily to support several administrative functions of the OI, and only a small percentage of the IEF funds were earmarked

for study-abroad initiatives. ARG members expressed their wish that more of the IEF funds be used for study abroad:

- “As we have that college scholarship, I wish the support was a little bit more, maybe proportional to what the trip costs.”
- “Every student has to pay into IEF, so I feel like if every student is in good academic standing, they should be eligible for a scholarship.”

In summary, the Research Question 1 findings affirmed the importance of using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice to understand how to influence students’ choice to study abroad at an access institution. Based on the data collected, ABC made assumptions about students’ interest in participating in study abroad. Therefore, it is not lack of interest in studying abroad, but access institutions need to identify student barriers, such as lack of funding and overcome them to influence the choice to study abroad. Also, because of competing institutional priorities, ABC did not privilege information related to study abroad, making it difficult for the institution to influence the choice of students to pursue education-abroad opportunities. The data also showed that it is essential that institutions examine institutional policies, processes, structures of study abroad to influence the choice. Finally, through the action research study, ABC was able to identify and understand some of the student barriers hindering students from choosing to study abroad.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 focused on the learning that occurred among ARG members and within the ABC system itself around influencing students’ choice to study abroad using the systematic and collaborative processes of action research. As stakeholders in the study-abroad process at ABC, the ARG used democratic strategies to generate knowledge and design action in

two action research cycles (Bloombery & Volpe, 2016). The ARG strove to learn and inquire collectively, following Coghlan and Brannick’s (2005) recommendation to “[focus] outward (e.g., what is going on in the organization, in the team, etc.?) [and] inward (e.g., what is going on in me?)” (p. 33). As the ARG learned more about the institution and the system, themes and subthemes began to emerge. Table 14 outlines the themes and subthemes associated with Research Question 2.

Table 14

Research Question 2 Themes and Subthemes

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
2. How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels?	<p>Individuals, groups, and the system learned that there is a need to identify institutional issues.</p> <p>The group learned that working collaboratively in a cross-functional group had collateral benefits and costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model useful to identify issues • ABC lacks advocacy across the campus for study abroad • Better identification of issues with a cross functional group • Insider researcher pros and cons • Individual learning even if the system does not change

Action Research Group Selecting Conceptual Framework to Identify Barriers

As the ARG members reviewed the data, we began interpreting the information to address the research questions and to make sense of our collective experience. Specifically, The group wanted to understand what was happening in the processes of diagnosing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action during Cycles 1 and 2 (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

In our first meeting, the ARG defined its organizational context and its focus on student barriers to studying abroad. At the second meeting, I, in my capacity as lead researcher, introduced the Perna (2006a) model to the members. As I noted subsequently in my journal:

I really like this Perna model, since we've had a lot of discussion around our students with study abroad, if they had the money. I'm not sure that's the only issue. I think there's other issues involved. It's not only just funds. I was listening to the tape of [the] last meeting, and awareness was brought up too. There are a lot of different considerations when it comes to deciding to study abroad.

After much discussion about the conceptual framework and reviewing the literature on conceptual models focusing on barriers to students studying abroad, the ARG selected the Perna (2006a) model. Some of the members liked the model from the outset, while others were initially not convinced of its utility and value to the research study. ARG member Betty expressed her approval in this way:

When I look at this model that you put out—and keep in mind I'm a strategic planner and I've done three strategic analyses at ABC and hundreds at other institutions—the factors that are in this model are very much the factors that we look at in doing a strategic analysis. They're just laid out differently, if you will. In doing a strategic analysis, you look at socioeconomic factors. You look at technological. You look at economic factors and political factors, and there are many dimensions to each one of those things [in the model].

Another ARG member, Peter, approached the model more skeptically:

This is just a decision model.... I've seen probably 30 of these in psychology. These are factors that we use in sociology and psychology all the time. It's just giving it different

names, like for demand for higher education or expected benefits. So this is a model that's adapted from psychological research. It is valuable to give people the framework to say, "Okay, we need to consider all these factors that go into—and that would motivate a student to go aboard, and then the factors that we think are potential barriers.

After the group decided to use the Perna model to influence students' choice to study abroad, many of our ARG meetings focused on the habitus context, or Layer 1, of the model, which has a student focus. In concentrating on this contextual layer, the ARG examined barriers that prevent or dissuade students from studying abroad. The follow examples highlight group members' focus on ABC student barriers and potential ways to overcome them:

- Tina: "Yeah, we need to put together some type of database. There are foundations out there for study abroad scholarships for students. Foundation are not difficult to get."
- Gary: "We need to have conversations about the grants for students, like university grants. We need something set in stone so we can advertise it upfront so students know what to expect."
- Betty: "We could do some focus groups with the students to see what ... issues they are having in trying to get to study abroad."
- Dana: "There has got to be an easier way to handle some of that. And those are the obstacles as well to students who are trying to figure out what to do to get credit (does it count toward my degree?). We've got to make that more transparent."

As ARG discussions continued and data were collected and analyzed, it became evident through examining the higher education context of the Perna (2006a) that there was an overall lack of support and advocacy for study abroad across ABC. The group determined therefore that

it needed to shift its efforts and interventions toward providing overall college support for study abroad—that is, moving from a sole focus on student barriers to identifying institutional barriers. Using the Perna (2006a) helped the group to understand that there needed to be a shift in the focus to solve the problem. As one ARG member stated during a meeting discussion, “But that's where I was getting back to the systematization and overall support of study abroad. If we can incorporate more college support then we can start growing our audience that way, too.”

Shifting Focus from Student Barriers to Institutional Barriers

Initially, this action research study focused on understanding the student barriers. However, the ARG's focus shifted to the higher education/institutional-development context when the group became aware that the system had not placed itself in a position to influence the choice of students to study abroad. Specifically, ABC had not developed structures, programs, or policies to facilitate the growth of study abroad. As Mary noted, study abroad needs to be a well-organized institutional effort, not a single department's responsibility:

Study abroad, like a lot of things, has to be a unified, integrated effort. It's not something that one office can be charged with having responsibility for. It is a case where one hand washes the other, or multiple hands wash each other.

Another ARG member, Betty, observed:

We don't have a lot of guidance for faculty on what rules apply if you're thinking about doing this. This is why it is good to have you folks in this group who have been [trained] extensively in studying abroad and [who] know that landscape.

Steven, who had led several study-abroad programs, commented:

If a faculty member goes to the dean [about a study-abroad idea], and the dean seems dubious or hesitant, that faculty member may drop it right there, rather than pushing the

stone up the hill. If the dean seems excited about it or really interested in it, then that makes a huge difference.

As the ARG learned from the study, it became obvious that ABC needed to develop structures, policies, and procedures for study abroad. The group decided that the first set of interventions would focus on the school community and higher education context layer (Layer 2/3) of the Perna (2006a) model, which comprises information, programs, and institutional characteristics, availability of resources, types of resources, structural support, and barriers that exist at a particular institution as they relate specifically to study abroad.

Developing a common understanding of institutional barriers. The ARG used themes and subthemes that emerged from the study data to work toward a common understanding of the issues and to create interventions that would influence the choice of students to study abroad at ABC. As Betty reflected:

We didn't have any idea of the “why”.... [N]ow that we have at least some understanding, we can try some stuff. That's what being data-driven and data-informed is all about.

However, in recognizing that ABC was not in a position to influence the choice process of students, the ARG also realized that the group needed to engage in new learning in order to determine appropriate interventions. Betty added, “I think one of the things that came through those discussions is there was definitely a learning curve with the group.”

Support from departments and faculty. As the action research group collected data and continued to meet, the group, collectively and individually, became even more deeply aware of the lack of support from deans and departments and fellow faculty for study-abroad program leaders and promotion of study-abroad opportunities to students. Plus this was confirmation for

the system that there needed to be more overall support from departments for study abroad.

There was learning for the system, in that the data also showed that the Office of Internationalization did not have adequate staffing to promote study abroad on its own. I noted in my journal after an ARG meeting that “faculty are going to learn through other faculty. Should have faculty champions for study abroad.... The key piece is having faculty members that are supporters of it.”

All of the ARG members perceived faculty as highly influential advisors who could either encourage or discourage students to study abroad. As one member said, “You have to have faculty recommending it. But ABC must support the faculty, especially the department in which they work.” In the same vein, during a one-on-one meeting with the study sponsor, she commented: “The faculty must have more support from the Office of Internationalization and departments for them to succeed.”

The action research group also uncovered a significant lack of support from student-services departments at ABC, namely Financial Aid. During the interviews with study-abroad returnees, many students indicated that the process for obtaining aid for study abroad was difficult to understand and navigate. Similarly, faculty leaders of study-abroad felt that the process for securing financial aid or an IEF stipend was unclear. As the data and emergent themes became clearer, more and better support was needed from departments campus-wide to influence the choice of students to study abroad.

Learning from Action Research

Working in a cross-functional group. As the ARG completed Cycle 2—and the action research study itself—members expressed appreciation for what they had learned participating in

a cross-functional group that comprised individuals with diverse professional experiences and perspectives all collaborating to address the research questions.

The ARG was engaged in the study and remained open to new approaches and ideas, especially those around the action research process and the Perna (2006a) model. The ARG members were excited to work with other ABC staff and faculty from different functional areas. They agreed that their collaborative relationship allowed the group to develop a better product than had they worked separately. Betty noted that “a group, to be involved in making a decision, [should] learn it together and share that common base of knowledge before they can even talk about possible alternatives and come to consensus on what they are.” Julie also noted the benefit of serving on a college-wide, cross-functional group:

There's something to be said for being on any kind of committee that's college-wide, where you start to learn names, especially names you didn't already know, and you start to think, “Oh, if this situation comes up, I know who to call on in this other division of the college.”

Another ARG member explained how a particular conflict had been diluted by working on the group with another faculty member from a different school:

I had butted heads with one of the ARG members early on in my time here. And this person was kind of in a position to make things go badly for me. And so there was a lot of animosity between the two of us for years. Even though we would be cordial—and I could see some of my initiatives being undermined and things like that. So being on a committee with this person actually was really helpful, where we're working towards a common goal because I was able to reset that relationship, and this person has turned out to be one of [my] biggest allies

Tina noted other benefits to participating in the cross-functional ARG:

One of the things I especially liked about that group was the opportunity to hear from faculty who had been intimately involved in study abroad and a variety of study-abroad experiences. Everybody is determining the elephant based on what they have experienced, and I think the value of it is to bring those diverse perspectives together and test some assumptions, and I think that's what that group allowed us to do.

Peter discussed the value of learning from members of the ABC community, which he said would assist him in working on future projects at the college: “To interact with my colleagues, showing your lenses that they hopefully see some value in that, and then hopefully that allows us to kind of move more quickly to what we need to do.” Another ARG member, Brandon, commented more generally on the benefits of participating on an action research project:

One of the values of bringing a group together ... around the focus—a task force or an AR group—is to make sure you have different perspectives represented. And the kiss of death, I think, to an initiative like ours is to put together all like-minded people who are all going to agree with each other because you're going to lose some of the richness of the problem solving and the discussion that ultimately leads to a better solution hopefully.

The members learned much—looking outward and inward—in their roles on the cross-functional action research group.

Learning as an inside researcher. As the ARG neared completion of the action research study, we all realized that we have gained considerable insights as insider researchers—actors immersed in local situations generating contextually embedded knowledge that emerged from experience (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). As Coghlan and Shani (2013) observed, how insider action researchers maintain their dual roles, survive, and thrive politically through

challenges that require constant attention, negotiation, and renegotiation. If organizational politics are not managed successfully, the learning mechanisms will be neither steady nor sustainable politically (Coghlan & Shani, 2013). In this study, politics were linked integrally to the capabilities of the ARG. The ARG also witnessed my struggles as the lead researcher, in particular moving the group forward. As Mary shared during her critical incident interview:

You [i.e., the leader researcher] were put in a really difficult position because you had to be entrepreneurial about it. And I know you'd worked in study abroad before and you had experience in it, but when you're creating something from essentially ground level ... it's a change program and you have to do enough planning to get started, try some things and see if they work, and if they don't, assess and try some more things and assess and see if they worked or didn't and then do what did work and stop doing what didn't work. And it's just interesting to watch somebody go through that.

Betty also took notice of my learning experience during the study:

And I know you were frustrated. But see, I was watching you learn and you took the tack of, "Okay, I'm going to put together some things that other schools do that I'm aware of." And I think it was at that moment that people began to really get engaged with the process because you gave them something concrete that they could react to.

On a personal level, I experienced and learned about the difficulties of working as an insider researcher, juggling the responsibilities of researcher, leader, and group facilitator, keeping the ARG on track and moving toward its goals.

The role of insider researcher is also highly political. For example, working with the Financial Aid Department to complete the mapping process, for instance, was extremely

difficult, ultimately turning into a political battle on vetting students' eligibility for financial aid for studying abroad. One of my journal entries reads:

This has been a very trying morning. Even though we have done this process mapping, it does not seem much of this was taken into consideration. Financial aid is very important in this process. Have to figure out a positive way to promote study abroad through financial aid. Hopefully ARG member Mary, as a manager over the department, can assist with mending the relationship with this department.

I also learned that as an inside researcher, I needed the full support of my manager. Although he allowed me to conduct this research study at ABC, he did not see the value it could bring to the college. He seemed to view the work of the ARG—and the action research study in general—as an independent project. In an attempt to earn more of his support, about one year after the action research study had begun, I held a meeting with my manger and the provost to update them on the status of the ARG. Also, before the study sponsor officially retired, the ARG set up a presentation for the new provost and deans to share what we had accomplished as a group up to that point. My direct manager did not attend the ARG presentation. This is the difficult part of inside research, if your direct manager is not supportive of the research study to implement a campus change process, it may be more difficult to complete or implement the interventions.

Yet, there are also positive aspects to the insider-researcher role. Midway into the study, I requested written feedback about the action research process and what ARG members had learned thus far by email. Julie wrote about her experience as an insider researcher:

I was able to get a more holistic sense of the varying perspectives and needs of people in different departments and academic units. Even when I disagreed with ideas being put

forth by others, I was enlightened by their perspectives. This gives me a sense of how to pitch my programming and appeal to campus constituents who may see things very differently than I do. I was able to represent my own desires and concerns.

The ARG agreed that learning about the institution and relevant issues from a different perspective in an effort to influence the choice of students to study abroad was very insightful and that serving as insider researchers was beneficial but challenging.

Individual learning and system change. During their critical incident interviews, most of the ARG members indicated they had experienced learning at the individual level. Many learned the importance of valuing the diversity that members brought to the group's decision-making process. Lydia stated that she enjoyed working with different management styles and recounted that she had learned specific elements of successful leadership from the action research sponsor:

She has been really amazing. And I've seen more about how to work with people and get things done without having to be as direct or brash as my nature makes me. I mean, she was gentle, but she was organized and she was to-the-point without ever being brusque.

As the group continued to work together, a synergy developed. As Brian said:

It was fun for me to hear from people who had such different experiences and perceptions of what it was that they were doing. And so I can look at it as an outsider, for example, and say, "Ah, I see what you're doing." I tend to think like an administrator sometimes and put things in boxes.

Tina shared her individual learning:

I was able to become more familiar with several key staff members and to see how their work fits into the complex operations that enable our students and faculty to study

abroad. I was able to observe the wise choices and recommendations of very experienced directors and administrators, which was invaluable organizational training for me.

As the leader of this action research study, I learned that one needs to provide continual feedback to institutional leaders in order to keep them abreast of the progress of the action research group, as I noted in my journal: “Need to promote the action research project more on campus. Let people know what has been accomplished.” Indeed, working on this action research study challenged many of my assumptions, attitudes, and skills, not to mention existing organizational relationships.

The ARG felt a sense of collective ownership of the action research study, as well as positive pressure to produce effective interventions for influencing students’ choice to study abroad. The goal of providing a tangible product to ABC propelled the group to action. Because of the collaboration within the group, our passion for the subject, and our desire to see more ABC students studying abroad, we were motivated to achieve the goals. As one member stated in her feedback session:

I believe in this type of research. A very action-oriented approach—to put this knowledge into practice to resolve a very pragmatic issue. So yes, I totally believe in action research and what you learn from these conversations, meetings, interactions, and exchanges is that all participants in this action research group live the study abroad experience in a different way.

Change Resulting from the Action Research Study

Overall, learning occurred at multiple levels—individually, within the group, and systemically. The ARG members remained committed to learning in action, developing knowledge and awareness of the research process as they engaged in it. Many members stated

that gaining such knowledge of the action research process was reassuring and helped to develop their critical-thinking skills. This action research process allowed the ARG to make informed decisions about the subject matter—that is, influencing the choice of students to study abroad. Individually, it allowed members' informed beliefs about increasing study abroad at ABC to be heard. Group members also had an opportunity to meet and learn from individuals with similar lived experiences; at the same time, the action research study allowed individuals to network with others whom they had not normally interacted with on-campus and to communicate with research colleagues. Most of all, the ARG, using the findings of the action research process, was able to advocate for creating greater awareness of the issues around influencing the choice of students to study abroad at ABC.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how an access institution can influence the decision of students to study abroad using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice regarding study abroad as a conceptual framework. Two research questions guided the study: (1) What does an access institution learn about the study-abroad decision-making process using the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as a framework? (2) How does an action research project centering on study abroad in an access institution advance practice and theory at the individual, group, and system levels? The research questions were designed to examine actual observable events and behaviors. Deductive codes corresponding to the layers of Perna's model were determined before analysis of the qualitative data, and deductive codes also emerged during analysis. The results of the case study have implications for higher education professionals involved in education abroad, particularly at open-access institutions. This chapter summarizes the findings associated with each research question, draws conclusions from those findings, and offers recommendations for practice, theory, and future research in the field of study abroad.

Summary of Study

The research was conducted at Atlanta Based College, a public four-year open-access institution. A multi-functional action research group was selected to implement the action research project. The original group consisted of 12 members representing various backgrounds and areas of expertise relevant to study abroad. The ARG conducted the research over a two-

year period, employing a descriptive qualitative approach to collecting the primary data. ABC supported and sponsored the study.

Qualitative research was appropriate for this case study since I was interested in understanding how students decide to study abroad at open-access institutions. The student population at open-access institutions tends to be diverse, with a large percentage of minority, first-generation, nontraditional, and high financial need students. This study examined how to influence the choice process of access-college students who are considering study abroad. Qualitative research was particularly suited to this purpose because it allowed the researcher to uncover the meaning (or meanings) that students attached to their reasons choosing (or not choosing) study abroad. Data were gathered through critical incident interviews with 13 students who had studied abroad through the 2014-2015 academic year and seven faculty leaders who had directed study-abroad programs at ABC. In addition to these interviews, I mined data from ARG member interviews and reflections, team meeting minutes, faculty-leader study-abroad program training program materials, researcher journals entries, and ABC documents. Each interview was transcribed professionally and made available to the ARG for review.

The Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model formed the conceptual basis for developing interventions and programs to influence the choice of students to study abroad. My review of the literature revealed that there are major underrepresented groups in study abroad, including racial and ethnic minorities; males; students majoring in science, engineering, and related disciplines; students attending two-year colleges; and students with disabilities. The literature review for this study indicated that the most significant constraints preventing underrepresented students from participating in study abroad were finances, family disapproval, safety concerns, work responsibilities, family responsibilities, program length, lack of desirable

programs, and academic scheduling difficulties. Some studies noted that financial concerns extend beyond actual expenses because the opportunity costs of foregoing earnings while studying abroad are often major constraints. This action research study brought to light such barriers present at ABC and highlighted ways the institution could overcome them to influence the choice of students to study abroad.

Throughout the study, I used the constant comparative method to analyze transcripts of interviews with program leaders and students, ARG meeting transcripts, and other study data. This method of data collection and analysis yielded themes and subthemes related to the research questions. In the following sections, I summarize the findings around each of the two research questions.

Summary of Findings

In this section, I discuss factors and barriers that often deter students, especially access-institution students, from studying abroad. I then summarize how, according to the findings, an open-access institution focusing on institutional barriers instead of student barriers can influence the choice of students to study abroad. Lastly, I discuss how the multifunctional ARG collaborated to develop interventions designed specifically to influence ABC students' choice to study abroad.

Identifying and Understanding Barriers

Much of the research on groups underrepresented in study abroad focuses on student barriers, including financial barriers. However, this action research study found that there are other factors besides money that influence student choice to participate in study abroad. The results from this study point to the need for such institutions to examine practices according to the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice. The school community and

higher education context layer of the Perna model (Layer 2/3) is highly influential in the student choice process as it relates to study abroad. This contextual layer includes information, programs, institutional characteristics, availability of resources, and structural support and barriers, all of which serve as factors affecting students' decision to study abroad.

A second finding related to the influence of the institution on student habitus, represented by Layer 1 of the Perna (2006a) model. Salisbury et al. (2009) suggested that in an ideal college setting, educational experience not only provides additional human capital in the form of new knowledge and ways to integrate that knowledge in different settings, but also expands a student's habitus by making available new sources of social and cultural capital through interactions with a diverse range of faculty, staff, and peers. This study confirmed that providing students with new sources of social and cultural capital, college experiences can influence the choice of students to study abroad.

Aligning Institutional Priorities with Study Abroad

Many of the previous studies focusing on the study-abroad choice process have not examined institutional priorities as they relate to education abroad. However, this study found that institutional priorities favoring study abroad play a critical role in the student choice process. Specifically, information sharing and availability of resources from stakeholders are influential factors. A major competing priority with expanding study abroad on the ABC campus was graduating students with low debt. However, in many cases, students needed access to financial aid to finance study-abroad programs, thus increasing their total debt. The study data showed that ABC's Financial Aid Department was resistant to students obtaining aid for study abroad. Virtually all previous studies have shown that finances represent a major constraint to studying abroad for a wide range of student groups (Brux & Ngoboka, 2002; Burkart, Hexter, &

Thompson, 2001; Calhoon et al., 2003; Gleason, Cheiffo, & Griffiths, 2005; Mattai & Ohiwerei, 1989; Pickard & Ganz, 2005; Raby, 2005; Rhodes & Hong, 2005). Interviews with ABC students highlighted the difficulty of understanding and obtaining financial aid to pay for study abroad. Having to request time off from work and absorb lost earnings were additional financial concerns. This theme demonstrated the importance of access institutions assisting students with understanding and accessing the financial aid process in order to take advantage of study-abroad opportunities.

Providing Structural Support and Removing Institutional Barriers

The study data revealed an overall lack of institution-wide structural support, in the form of policies and formal processes, for study abroad at ABC. Brux and Fry (2010) found that faculty believed that the barriers preventing students from studying abroad included a combination of financial issues, conflicting work and family obligations, and low cultural capital; however, their findings confirmed that these were not, in fact, the primary constraints for students. The limiting factors tended to relate to institutional policy and practice, notably inadequacies in program offerings and information, awareness, advising, and long-term planning. A lack of structure and support places a greater burden on faculty to lead study-abroad programs, a finding confirmed in this action research study.

Understanding and Identifying Student Barriers

Earlier research findings have indicated that insufficient financial capital inhibits the likelihood of participation in study abroad even in the earliest stages. According to the findings of this study, ABC did not have a positive influence on how students managed the supply of resources and expected costs, categories that fall within the Perna (2006a) habitus context (Layer 1). During interviews with students, many mentioned that they needed assistance with funding

for study abroad and that finances comprised one of the most difficult parts of the decision-making process. Some studies have noted that financial concerns extend beyond actual expenses because the opportunity costs of foregone earnings while studying abroad can be a major constraint (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993). Furthermore, even if finances are not a direct issue for some students, many are still obligated to fulfill work responsibilities for other reasons (such as keeping their job). Brux and Ngoboka (2002) noted that 20% of respondents in their study listed work responsibilities as a constraint. Almost half of ABC students work at least 20 hours per week. It was clear from the study data that ABC students needed more and better guidance on how to navigate the process for financing their study-abroad programs. The research study confirmed that access institution need to look at funding options to support students going abroad.

Collaborative, Cross-Functional Action Research Group

This study's findings highlighted the learning that occurred at the individual and group levels through action research. Members of the ARG felt that the action research process was helpful for learning how to influence the choice of students to study abroad. In an intensive case study conducted within an Australian university, Zuber-Skerritt (2008) demonstrated that action research served as an effective method of problem solving and professional development for seven academics involved in six different kinds of professional development activities. However, she argued that action research in higher education can only be successful if it is carried out systematically and is based on a theoretical framework underpinned by cognitive, experiential, and critical theories of learning. In academic settings, cross-functional teams do not necessarily comprise subject-matter experts, but they have the collective ability and desire to research what is needed and the willingness to work on a problem of some social significance.

Cross-functional teams, if managed well, can build excitement among faculty, staff, and administrators, and can directly influence change in a field (Browning and Wicker, 2017). The members of the action research group in the current study relied on theoretical and conceptual models, along with extensive project management skills and years of experience in our respective areas of expertise. Each member had 10 to 20 years of experience in higher education teaching, administration, or both. We grew to appreciate and rely upon the differences in our experiences, which assisted us in planning interventions.

Study Conclusions

Two main conclusions were drawn from this research project: (a) access institutions should focus on institutional and structural barriers to influence students' choice to study abroad; and (b) action research can be utilized effectively to identify faculty and student barriers to studying abroad. The following section expounds on each of these conclusions.

Conclusion 1

Addressing institutional and structural barriers will assist access institutions in influencing the choice of students to study abroad. The Collapsed Perna (2006a) model consists of three contextual layers: the student context (*habitus*), the higher education/institutional context, and the national context. An access institution examine how its special institutional characteristics support or hinder study-abroad programs and initiatives, and then work to remove structural barriers. As Raby (2008) concluded, "The predominant issue preventing college students from studying abroad is not student interest. Rather, it is the lack of institutionalization of study abroad. Institutionalization will help colleges recognize and address the real barriers" (p. 24). In order for an access college to influence the choice of students to study abroad, the entire institution have a desire to increase or enhance study abroad. Any

college that plans to increase international education should ensure that changes are both broad—affecting departments, schools, and activities across the institution—and deep, expressed in institutional culture, values, policies, and practices. It requires articulating explicit goals and developing coherent and mutually reinforcing strategies to reach those goals (Green, 2007). Support for study abroad can be clearly articulated in college mission statements, strategic plans, and budgets (IIE, 2008). In addition, study-abroad successes be celebrated campus-wide. Parker (2015), in an evaluation of college website materials related to study abroad, suggested that displaying a commitment on a public platform is more effective than one might imagine: It shows students who view the website that their institution is committed to helping all students study abroad, not just those who can afford it or who are very successful academically. Institutions can publish statistical information regarding students who have participated in past programs, as well as a commitment to diversity. Cultural barriers to study abroad are more broad-based and pervasive; they cannot be changed by educational leadership alone but through a campus-wide effort (IIE, 2014) communicated through words and actions. Green (2007) compared community colleges engaged in highly active and less active internationalization efforts (such as study abroad). Green found that the highly active institutions had (1) articulated commitment (i.e., the extent to which an institution has written statements or established policies supporting internationalization) and (2) institutional investment in faculty (including professional development opportunities to help faculty increase their international skills and knowledge and internationalize their courses). The current study found that ABC needed to institute policies, procedures, and programs that support faculty efforts to influence the choice of students to study abroad.

Access colleges should consider removing the institutional barriers that affect faculty engagement in study abroad. Relative to the Perna (2006a) model, the institution can examine Layer 2/3 as it relates specifically to faculty. Ensure policies, procedures, and practices are in place that support faculty who wish to create and lead study-abroad programs. Based on the data from the current study, it can take 12 to 18 months to create a study-abroad program—during which time the faculty member may receive no extra pay. Faculty who want to lead study-abroad programs can be given incentives (such as fair pay) to do so. Despite the fact that the role of faculty encouragement in students' decisions to study abroad has been largely neglected in the literature, increased faculty involvement may hold the key to tackling barriers to student participation in study abroad (Stohl, 2007). Also, other incentives, such as leading study abroad programs for one's academic department, can be incorporated into the tenure process. Faculty need to be able to believe that leading a study-abroad program is important to the college (and is beneficial to their careers). Grants for course development, partial funding for faculty travel, and release time for project and curriculum development usually require modest costs but bring significant returns. Faculty, however, need to be properly trained to lead study-abroad programs. A report conducted by the Institute of International Education recommended that institutions develop a step-by-step procedure or analysis for identifying broken systems, which can significantly impact faculty (IIE, 2014). In the case of this study, an access college can develop policies and procedures for identifying how to establish programs, define faculty selection, advertise programs, and define risk-management programs that emphasize best practices around long-range planning and capacity building for study abroad.

Financial aid may be particularly effective in helping low-SES students participate in study abroad since studies have shown that students who receive financial aid are as likely to

persist as those who do not, and these effects may also be more striking at community colleges than at four-year institutions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Therefore, for students who have financial need to study abroad, the institution should be open to assisting students with the process. For example, Spelman College, a historically black college and university, “taps a wide range of resources including government aid, foundations, corporations, and other organizations for financial support for study abroad programs. Spelman also requires its scholarship students to apply for outside funds (Dessoff, 2006). Yet, more fundamentally, ABC and other access institutions need to make funding study abroad a priority if it is to influence the choice of their students to go abroad.

A central office for administering a study-abroad program is key to minimizing institutional barriers. Community college and access institution study-abroad offices are often understaffed, and in many cases coordination responsibilities are given to a single faculty member, executive assistant, or administrator whose assignment load is typically heavy. Institutional constraints can negatively affect budgets (including staffing) and services for study abroad that are essential for reaching a critical mass of study-abroad students (IIE, 2008). To help make up for these constraints, a centralized office can provide comprehensive, easy-to-find information about study-abroad programs to instructors, advisors, and the campus community in general, which can contribute significantly to the success of study abroad at an access college (Brux & Fry, 2010). Moreover, an office responsible for study abroad can more readily establish policies and procedures for supporting programs, including recruitment efforts. Ironically, individual study-abroad professionals are oftentimes overlooked as resources in international education and study abroad efforts (Loberg, 2012). Thus, a centrally located office where

students, faculty, and the community can obtain information is a key element in successfully expanding study abroad.

Furthermore, access institutions may want to consider working with program providers to relieve some of the burden placed on faculty to lead study-abroad programs and on small study-abroad offices that assist with administration. Providers can shoulder some (or sometimes much) of the responsibilities, making it considerably easier to create new study-abroad programs. Good providers can also relieve liability concerns access colleges might have as well as simplify administrative challenges by suggesting cost-effective program sites and itineraries, accepting payment directly from students, facilitating payments to faculty, and helping with marketing efforts, for instance (Hulstrand, 2016).

Conclusion 2

Action research enables institutional capacity building and advocacy to promote institutional change and to address institutional and student barriers to influence study abroad choice. Action research allowed the ARG in this study to examine the barriers and issues that kept students from studying abroad and faculty from leading these programs. The evidence from the study allowed ABC as an institution to make better informed decisions on the student study abroad choice process. Action research also helped the group and the system to understand what types of programs were of interest to ABC students. Furthermore, through action research, the ARG became deeply familiar with the Perna (2006a) model of student choice in the context of study abroad. The action research project helped us as individuals and as a group to avoid making assumptions about students' interest in studying abroad. For example, prior to becoming active in the ARG, many members had assumed that most ABC students did not have a passport; later, however, after reviewing responses to a student survey, we learned

that many of the students already possessed a passport. At the same time, the action research process allowed us to confirm a commonly held assumption that many ABC students have less disposable income, which can be an important factor in the choice process. Thus, action research, with its focus on using evidence to guide action, enabled us to question previous assumptions and make better decisions about where to focus our interventions. The action research process also served as a professional development tool for some of the members. Through this study, the group learned the power of participating in a project to create systemic change within an organization. At its core, action research is a participatory and unrestrictive approach to data-based problem solving that implies the need to develop cooperative approaches to work and collegial relationships (Stringer, 2007).

Implications for Practice

This action research case study has practical implications for open-access institutions that want to increase the number of students studying abroad. The results of this study offer insight into the impact that institutional barriers can have on an access-college students' choice to study abroad. Study-abroad professionals can use this study in practical ways to understand the complex decision-making process that a student undergoes when deciding to study abroad. The findings could also serve to motivate access colleges to complete much-needed critical reviews of policies, procedures, and practices in an effort to positively influence students to study abroad.

This study also exemplifies the use of action research to address a systemic problem at a higher education institution. Indeed, study-abroad professionals can use this democratic process to address many kinds of issues impacting colleges and universities. Action research aims to take both action and create knowledge (or theory) about that action, and can be used to investigate a variety of organizational issues (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Coghlan &

Brannick, 2005; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Gummesson, 2000; Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

There is a need for scholars and practitioners to explore in more detail the policies and practices that hinder access intuitions from expanding study abroad. However, conducting study-abroad research can be complicated; namely due to the variety of program types, destinations, living situations, disciplines, and individual program aims, there is no universally applicable mode of inquiry to assess learning outcomes. The study-abroad field is rich, with much room for debate, growth, and wide range of research (Contreras, 2014).

Implications for Theory

The outcomes of this study also have theoretical implications. The study builds on prior research on students' choice process related to study abroad, with intensive focus given to the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice. The existing literature contains few studies that specifically address the study-abroad choice process at open-access institutions. More research is needed to examine the significant differences across institutional types, in intent to study abroad, particularly as numerous voices in and out of academia have called recently for increases in study abroad participation rates among all undergraduates, regardless of institutional type (IIE, 2014).

Using the Perna (2006a) model as a framework, this study offers a deeper understanding of how students overcome barriers to study abroad. Moreover, since the study was situated in an access college, the research highlights an additional context for understanding issues unique to this student population.

Recommendations for Future Research

Perna's (2006a) integrated model of college choice proved very useful in understanding the study-abroad choice process. The model assisted me in identifying factors and elements

within each of its contextual layers that potentially influence the choice process. Currently, there are limited references in the literature to the Collapsed Perna (2006a) integrated model of student choice as it relates specifically to study abroad, despite the growing need to examine institutional barriers to education-abroad opportunities. As the findings from this study suggest, researchers are encouraged to turn their focus from student barriers to examine more deeply the institutional barriers that keep access students from studying abroad. The study suggests that the predominant issue preventing open-access college students from studying abroad is not student interest. Rather, access institutions must manage institutional barriers to influence the choice of students to study abroad. This study raised additional questions and issues for future study, discussed in the following sections.

Varying the Participants

As this research centered on students who ultimately chose to study abroad, it will be important for future research to explore the actual experiences of students who chose not to study abroad that attend open-access institutions. Conducting critical incident interviews with these students who chose not to study abroad would provide substantive data for enriching the theoretical underpinnings of the choice process around study abroad. Critical incident interviews with faculty who decided against (or had no interest in) leading study-abroad programs at access institutions would be an important addition to the literature in this area.

Action Research at Access Institutions

Another area for future research is to use action research as a useful methodology for the analysis of group dynamics and team development in open-access institutions. The aims of any action research project or program are to bring about practical improvement, innovation, positive change, or the development of new practice, or to provide practitioners with a better

understanding of current practices (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The information presented in this study will assist faculty, administrators, and staff members in the utilization of action research methods when developing not only academic programs but other pertinent initiatives.

Final Reflections

Conducting this action research case study as an insider researcher forced me to continually and critically evaluate my positionality and my learning. Action research is an effective methodology for implementing systemic change, but the process can be challenging for all participants. Even so, I was very passionate about this topic; as a Black, female, first-generation college graduate, I believe that it is important to provide opportunities for all students to study abroad.

The study entailed no shortage of challenges. For instance, I decided to change my client a year after my research began, since I was offered a new position in an education-abroad role and thought it would be more beneficial if I moved the project to my new college. Ultimately, the study took me much longer than I had expected, due partly to the interference of personal issues. It was difficult juggling work, graduate-school classes, and personal responsibilities while leading an action research study in a higher education institution.

However, I was excited to discuss my action research project during the interview process for my new position. I truly believed that I would have more support for my research at the new school. Overall, I did receive support for my study. Indeed, I received support from the committed members of the action research group. This experience reinforced the importance of securing support from senior level administrators for one's "inside" project work.

This research study allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of ABC's position on study abroad. Consequently, I have felt "siloeed" at times, as if I were the only person on campus

with a desire to see study abroad grow in sustainable ways. These momentary feelings of isolation notwithstanding, conducting the action research study did improve my leadership skills and my research skills. Leading the ARG presented a steep learning curve, and, at times, I believe the group became frustrated that we were not taking enough action. Yet I wanted to make sure that we examined all of the issues before making recommendations or designing interventions. During their critical incident interviews, group members mentioned that they watched me grow as the leader of this change process. One person observed that I “had to be entrepreneurial about” leading the study. As a professional in the field, it was helpful for me to revise my practice as I learned and reflected through the problem-solving process. For instance, reporting on findings and successes on a regular basis was critical, as was celebrating those successes with those on campus. The study brought greater visibility to the initiatives to increase study abroad. In addition, on a personal level, I learned that I needed to get key decision makers on campus to advocate for the changes the ARG proposed in order for those changes to happen on campus.

Finally, I learned from the research process and through my ongoing reflections that, although I am a first-generation college student, I am not a traditional one. My father strongly encouraged education for my brother and me, insisting that we attend college. This instilled in both of us a deep appreciation for higher education. My father also placed us in certain school districts that assumed many of their students would ultimately enter college. My graduate studies and my intensive research on students’ choice to attend college or study abroad has made me reexamine my status as a first-generation student. I feel that I had more information than many first-generation minority students; at the same time, my personal experience seems to support the Perna model’s ideals regarding the habitus and social and cultural capital of a student

entering college. Indeed, conducting this study has made me realize that I was more a member of a privileged class than I had once thought. I want to see other students have the same opportunities that I was given, even though they may not have the same level of support as I did as a college student.

The findings and conclusions of this research also recognize that open-access institutions should examine and understand their own institutional characteristics in order to influence the choice of students to study abroad. Access institutions need to focus on identifying and eliminating institutional and structural barriers to studying abroad, and then develop a new culture of study abroad that positively influences student choice.

Overall, Atlanta-Based College did learn about the choice process as it relates to studying abroad. It was useful for the ARG members to hear and learn directly from faculty creating and implementing study-abroad programs, and there was value in learning about the experiences of students who had participated in study-abroad programs. Furthermore, it was important to present the ARG's findings to the provost and deans, as the action research study offered insight into the institutional barriers preventing ABC from fully influencing students' choice to study abroad.

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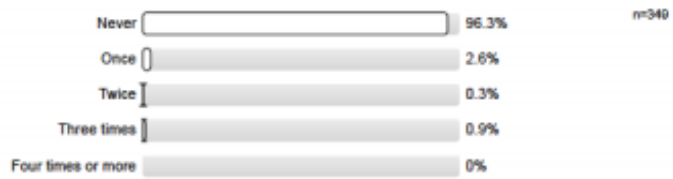
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APPENDIX A

FALL 2014 STUDENT SURVEY: QUESTIONS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD

5. Study Abroad - Part 1.

5.1) How many times have you participated in a study abroad program?



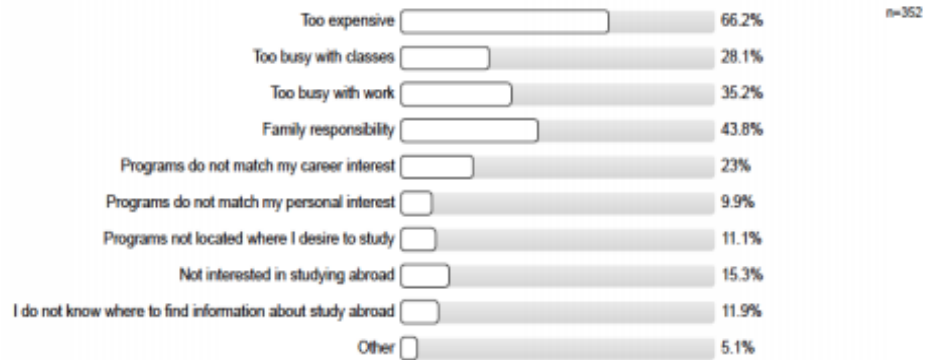
5.2) How would you like to learn more about study abroad opportunities? Check all that apply.



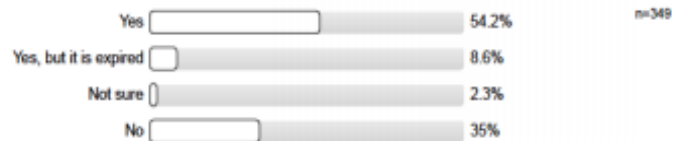
5.3) If you are interested in studying abroad, what is your ideal program length?



5.4) Please identify any reason that might prevent you from participating in a study abroad program? Check all that apply.



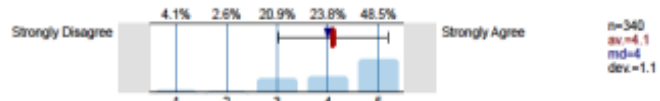
5.5) Do you have a passport?



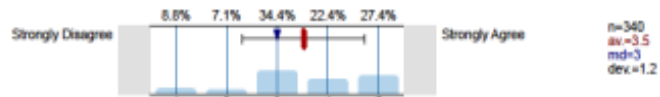
6. Study Abroad - Part 2.

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

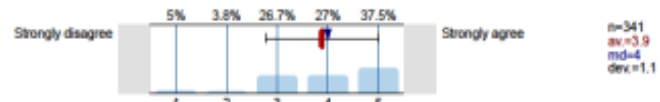
6.1) Completing a study abroad program will help me grow personally.



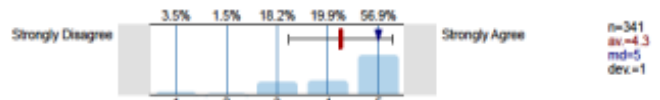
6.2) Completing a study abroad program will help me be more successful in my classes at [redacted].



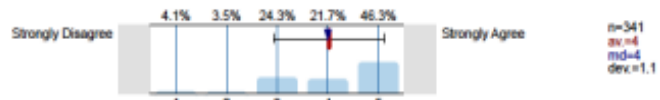
6.3) Completing a study abroad program will give me an advantage in gaining a job.



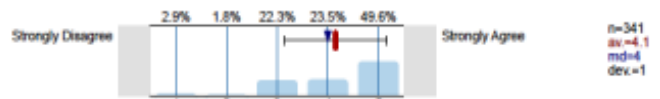
6.4) Study abroad programs are the best way for students to encounter another culture.



6.5) Students can understand their own culture more fully if they have studied abroad.



6.6) Study abroad helps prepare students to become more responsible global citizens.



APPENDIX B

2014-2015 STUDY-ABROAD STUDENT INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age:
3. Which of the following comes closest to describing your race or ethnic group?
 - A. Black or African-American
 - B. Latino or Hispanic
 - C. White or European American
 - D. Asian/Pacific Islander-American
 - E. Native American
 - F. Middle Eastern-American
 - G. Other (please specify)
4. Are you married?
Yes/No
5. Do you have children?
Yes/No
6. Please indicate your year in college:
 - A. Freshman
 - B. Sophomore
 - C. Junior
 - D. Senior
 - E. 5th year senior
7. Are you a first-generation college student?
 - A. Yes/No
 - B. Other (please specify)

8. What is your average grade earned in college?
- A. A or A+
 - B. A minus
 - C. B+
 - D. B
 - E. C
 - F. D
9. What was the highest level of formal education for either of your parents?
- A. Less than high school
 - B. High school graduate
 - C. Some college, but less than a BA, BS degree
 - D. College degree
 - E. Some graduate school
 - F. Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)
10. Please indicate your family's approximate annual income:
- A. \$0-\$40,000
 - B. \$40,000-60,000
 - C. \$60,000-80,000
 - D. \$80,000-\$100,000
 - E. \$100,000+
11. Do you currently receive any of the following types of financial aid?
- A. Federal Grant (such as Pell grant)
 - B. Institutional Grant
 - C. Loan
 - D. No financial aid
12. Do you currently work 20 or more hours?
If yes, how many hours do you work?
13. List the country of your study abroad program: _____
How long was your most recent study abroad experience)? _____
Did you live with a host family? Yes/No
14. Did you complete an internship or service learning project while studying abroad?
Yes/No
15. In what country where you born?
16. How long have you lived in the United States?
_____years [or you could do something like 1-2 years; 3-5, 5-10, etc.]
17. Years lived in Georgia?
_____years

18. Indicate the amount of time (in months) that you have spent traveling or living in a foreign country.

Have you traveled within the U.S? If so, to how many states? _____

19. When did you first start to think about studying abroad (please choose one)?

- A. Before high school
- B. During high school
- C. Freshman year of college
- D. Sophomore year of college
- E. Junior or senior year of college
- F. Other (please describe)

20. Who encouraged you to pursue study abroad?

Parents

Friends

University staff

Faculty

Other? _____ [pastor?]

21. Has anyone in your family studied abroad?

Yes/No

22. What factors helped and what factors hindered your decision to study abroad?

23. What were the most important factors in making the decision to study abroad?

24. What were your expectations for your study abroad experience?

25. Would you change anything about the process of signing up to study abroad?

26. Some people see themselves as more a global citizen. To what extent would you describe yourself as a global citizen?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
not at all	moving	toward becoming one		definitely a global citizen		

Please explain your response.

27. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX C

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM DIRECTORS INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Cele Blair, Assistant Director for Education Abroad. Thank you for taking the time to provide valuable information for developing study abroad programs at an access institution. The project's objective is to provide the college with information on how to influence the choice process for study abroad. This will provide valuable information as to how we grow study abroad initiatives on campus.

The purpose for conducting this interview is to understand critical incidents about your experience developing a study abroad program. Your answers represent your construction of specific events in your development of your study abroad program. All your answers will be confidential and be combined with responses from other study abroad program directors being interviewed to inform this study.

Your responses are very important to helping organizations, such as access institutions as they develop study abroad programs. To that end, I encourage you to speak openly about your opinions, experiences, and as you do providing specific examples and incidences when possible. I expect that this interview will take between 45-60 minutes to complete and will be recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Think about a time when you setup a study abroad program. How did it turn out? What about the incident that made it significant? What conclusions did you draw from the incident?

Follow up questions (if necessary):

- What were the issues?
- What about the incident made it significant?
- Did you have all the needed information?
- Was institutional culture/characteristics significant?
- Did you have all the resources needed?
- How did it turn out?
- What did you learn from this situation?
- What would you do differently in the future to setup a study abroad program?
- Were there structural supports or barriers to setting up your study abroad program?
- What conclusion did you draw from the incident?

Think about a time when you were recruiting for your study abroad program and talking with a student and what was their response?_What happened?

- What was it about the incident that made it seem significant?
- How did you handle their response?
- What was the demographic background of this student?
- What was the cultural background of this student?
- Did the student have knowledge about the study abroad process?
- Did the student have a supply of resource to study abroad?
 - Has this affected how you recruit students to study abroad? If so, in what ways?
 - What conclusions did you draw from this incident?

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with study abroad?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D

STUDY-ABROAD CHOICE PROCESS ACTION RESEARCH GROUP POST-INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on the Study Abroad Choice Process Action Research Group. It has been a pleasure to work with you. Everyone has done a great job and again thank you!

The purpose for conducting this interview is to gain information about your experience participating in this action research group. **Your reflections will be confidential and be combined with responses from other action research group members to inform this study.** As you will recall the purpose of the study is to provide the college with information on how to influence the choice process for study abroad. I emailed you the consent form you signed at the beginning of this study. Do you have any questions regarding this form?

The final product for this study will be a dissertation that will be published as part of my doctoral program requirements. Your responses are very important to helping organizations, such as ours, benefit from understanding the choice process to study abroad. To that end, **I encourage you to speak openly about your opinions, experiences, and as you do providing specific examples, when possible.** You may not have responses to all of the questions, but just answer to the best of your ability.

I expect that this interview will take between 45-60 minutes to complete. I will be recording this interview. Now that we have refreshed ourselves of the purpose of the study, the intent of this interview, how the information from this interview will be used, and how the interview will be conducted, would you like to proceed with the interview? Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Can you share an example of your learning regarding the study abroad choice process?
 - a. What about this learning that has effected how you view study abroad on campus?
 - b. Has this learning changed your expectations for study abroad on campus?
 - c. What conclusion did you draw from this experience?
2. What critical incident from the action research study influenced your way of thinking about an access institution/college and study abroad?
 - a. What did you learn from this situation?
 - b. What conclusion did you draw from this incident?

3. Can you tell me about an incident from working with the AR group that affected your way of thinking about creating a solution for your organization?
 - a. What did you learn from the situation?
 - b. How will you work differently with a group?
 - c. Tell me about what would you do differently?
 - d. What conclusion did you draw from the incident?
4. Can you describe an incident that occurred while working as part of this AR study that has had significant impact on you professionally?
 - a. What did you learn from the situation?
 - b. Tell me about what you would do differently?
 - c. What conclusion did you draw from the incident?
5. Can you describe an incident during the AR study that helped you to learn about yourself personally?
 - a. What about this incident that made it significant?
 - b. Tell me about what you would do differently in the future?
 - c. What conclusion did you draw from this incident?
6. Are there any other critical incidents that you would like to share that occurred from your involvement in the study?

We've come to the end of the interview. Thank you for your time. Again, do you have any questions or comments before we end?

Cele N. Blair

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher