

EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL OF ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES IN
A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

by

MALLORY ALICIA ANDERSON

(Under the Direction of Douglas A. Kleiber)

ABSTRACT

Within the last decade research in study abroad education has aimed to provide a means to measure or prove the transformation and change students report when they return. Most commonly used to interpret this transformation or change have been theories focused on global competence and intercultural learning. While student growth in global competency is beneficial, research focused solely on these objectives is limiting. Educators and researchers have given insufficient attention to other aspects of psychosocial development that may be reflected in assertions of change or transformation. While studying abroad students participate in a variety of experiences both in and out of the classroom. The experiences students are having may contribute to the feelings of change or transformation expressed upon returning home. Understanding how certain experiences in and out of the classroom may aid in a student's psychosocial development would allow educators to create programs that cultivate deeper learning. This exploratory study focused on understanding the perceptions of what is gained from adventure-type experiences in study abroad and if students' believed specific experiences contributed to their development more than others. Using a case study approach the stories of three students were collected through interviews, journals, and their Student Development Task

and Lifestyles (SDTLA) assessment scores. While not generalizable, the findings in this study support the idea of students experiencing psychosocial change after studying abroad. Six areas of developmental growth were identified from participating primarily in adventure and service-learning experiences. Implications for educators and for future research suggest that there is a connection to developmental growth by being out of one's comfort zone, having deeper interactions with locals, reflecting on experiences, and having opportunities for autonomy.

INDEX WORDS: Psychosocial Development, Study Abroad, Adventure, College Student, Change

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DEDICATION

To my parents for encouraging me to get an education beyond high school, without their dedication to supporting my endeavors I would not have made it to where I am today. To Dad for the countless phone calls encouraging and supporting me through the good and the bad, and to Mom for pushing me at an early age to find a way to go after whatever I set my heart on.

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I remember complaining to most of my family, in particular my brother Jason, that I was poor and life sucked. He said to me, “you’re not poor, poor is a way of life, you’re just broke right now.” Jason, your humor, your encouragement, and your attitude checks along the way have been part of what has kept me sane. I am forever grateful to my family for always meeting me where I needed to be met. Thank you for your unfailing love and support!

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moments of life that I might let pass me by. You are forever for me and I will be forever grateful. I love you.

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PREFACE

I have many memories that provide me with a general picture of the development of college-aged (18 to 24) students that occurs through adventure-type experiences. One memory in particular serves to offer a context for the research explored in this study. I was working at a small, private, liberal arts university (Elon) at the time, and it was a typical day at the office: answering student questions, working on my budget proposal, and returning phone calls. I remember this day because of a conversation I had with the president of a hedge-fund company in New York City. I was returning his phone call in reference to a student he was looking to hire, and somewhere our conversation took a turn ... into the '*wilderness*'.

At the time I was training upper-class students to lead incoming freshmen on a week-long pre-orientation wilderness experience. Students spent a week camping in tents and participating in excursions that included white-water rafting, rock climbing, and hiking. The trip was aimed at acclimating new students to the university while building friendships and developing their leadership skills. As the president learned about the work I was doing in developing the leadership of students, he shared with me his own Outward Bound experience almost 30 years ago. His memory of his Outward Bound expedition was remarkable, and he even noted that, while he didn't remember the training that happened in the boardroom, he remembered what happened in the wilderness. The lessons he learned about working with others, handling conflict, and surviving an unfamiliar experience still served as a reference for his work in the financial sector. To a great extent, the value of his wilderness experience provided a foundation that has shaped his life's work.

I have been privy to other experiences similar to those described by this hedge-fund president, and each story continues to motivate my work with college-aged students. My experiences with college students and adventure-type activities have included both domestic programs and international study abroad experiences. In addition to overseeing Elon's adventure-based pre-orientation programs, I had the opportunity to co-instruct a study abroad course where students participated in adventure-type activities like kayaking and canyoning. The sentiments students shared from these experiences were similar to that of the hedge-fund president: working with others, surviving an unfamiliar experience, and growing in confidence. The benefit the outdoors provides in the development of individuals has been well documented throughout the adventure and wilderness literature (further developed in Chapter 2).

Bell's (2006) research interests focus on how adventure and wilderness experiences can aid in the development of college-aged individuals. While pre-orientation programs tend to be most popular in using adventure or wilderness experiences to aid in the development of college-aged students (Gass, 1999), more recently the use of adventure can be seen in study abroad education (Passarelli, Hall, & Anderson, 2010; Thatcher, 2009). Although most of the evidence is anecdotal, it seems that many adventure or wilderness experiences abroad occur as a result of the student seeking out opportunities on their own. Or, if adventure is a part of a program, the perception is that it has been added to market the program to attract students (Cook, 2012b; King & Young, 1994). Based on the lack of literature, I believe it is rare to see adventure experiences infused into a program's curriculum as a means of cultivating developmental growth in students. Nevertheless, the intersection of adventure and study abroad experiences is my primary interest.

As with many doctoral students, my research plans reflect my personal interests; embedded in who I am, intertwined into my life's experiences from a young age. As a child I can

remember the thrill of going camping with my friend Julie and her family. In high school, I participated in outdoor activities with my youth group, and I attended summer camp. I always came home on an emotional high from these experiences. The woods, the outdoors: they provided a place for me to grow as an individual. In college, I worked for three summers at the youth camp I attended as a child. As a counselor, and eventually a staff leader, I felt I grew immensely. I not only grew in my confidence and self-esteem, but I also became a leader for others because of my experiences in the outdoors.

In addition to having a passion for the outdoors, my next greatest love has been international travel. At the end of my junior year in college, I held an internship in Sydney, Australia. It was a transformative experience. While in Australia, I not only participated in the culture of the people I was living and working with, but I also went sky-diving, camped in the outback, hiked up Ayers Rock, and went scuba-diving on the Great Barrier Reef. These adventure-type activities shaped my experience, and I have since been fortunate to co-lead three study abroad programs that have provided opportunities for students to experience similar outdoor and adventure activities.

In light of my experiences, my interest in exploring how adventure-based activities aid an individual's development should come as no surprise. With a Master's in College Student Affairs Administration, the psychosocial development of college-aged students (age 18 to 24) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) has become a primary area of interest in my research, in particular, in looking specifically at how personal growth, interpersonal skill development (affective domain), critical thinking skills, leadership skills, and cultural awareness may be affected through various experiences. I am not alone in recognizing the benefits the outdoors, in particular, provides in the development of individuals (see for example, Bachert, 1999; Hattie,

Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997; Hayashi & Ewert, 2006; Hirsch, 1999; Judge, 2005; McKenney, Budbill, & Roberts, 2008; Miner, 1999; Sibthorp, Paisley, & Gookin, 2007; Sibthorp, Paisley, & Hill, 2003).

As a result of my outdoor and international traveling experiences, I have chosen to take a deeper look at how adventure experiences abroad may contribute to a student's psychosocial development. In my personal experience, adventure or outdoor experiences are not always valued in the collegiate environment, especially in international education (Cook, 2012a, 2012b). I believe we do an injustice to students when we fail to recognize the contribution adventure experiences may have on personal growth while students are abroad. The ability for educators to utilize these types of experiences to enhance a student's development while studying abroad, I would argue, is critical to optimizing the study abroad opportunity.

My belief that intentional experiences can lead to a student's development has been influenced greatly by Dewey's (1917/1998) pragmatic philosophy. Dewey's (1909/1998) essay on *The Moral Training Given by the School Community* highlights a need for educators to be intentional in not only "what" they are teaching, but in "how" the material is being taught. The common belief prior to Dewey centered on the idea that knowledge was "dumped" into the student (Bell & Margolis, 1978) and practical skills would naturally evolve. Dewey (1909/1998) found that students could not apply the knowledge they had acquired because educators failed to see the child as an "organic whole"¹ (p. 246). I believe, as Dewey (1909/1998) did, that by recognizing the "whole" student the potential for learning in the individual is strengthened. My approach is guided by an overarching pragmatic philosophy. My underlying hope is that my research will both guide and support curriculum design in study abroad programs.

¹ As an "organic whole" includes: intellectually, socially, morally, and physically (Dewey, 1909/1998, p. 246).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The intention of the preface was to paint a clearer picture of where my interests lie for a better understanding of how my interests have evolved. In this chapter, a brief overview and an explanation of terms will be provided for the research study being conducted. Chapter 2 offers a deeper understanding of psychosocial development, study abroad education, and adventure experience. Chapter 3 provides details related to the design of the study, while Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings in greater detail. Chapter 6 reconsiders relevant literature and then summarizes the implications for practice and research in the field of study abroad education, student development and out-of-class experiences.

Psychosocial Development of College Students

Psychosocial developmental theory rests on the idea that “our capability to interact effectively within our environment – with other human beings – increases with each stage of development” (Stuart, 2012, p. 65). Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) developmental theory was based on seven *vectors* typical to the college-aged student: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research suggested that by moving along the vectors, individuals progress in their development “allow[ing for] the processing of greater complexity and... enhanced operations in the world” (Stuart, 2012, p. 64).

Psychosocial development can aid college-aged students in their ability to learn and synthesize material being taught (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Lou & Bosley, 2012; Perry, 1999; Robinson, 2012; Stuart, 2012). Researched widely (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Kegan, 1994), psychosocial development in the college student population has connections to the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains addressed both in study abroad education (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; McKeown, 2009; Stuart, 2012) and adventure education (Berry, 2011; see also Austin, Martin, Mittelstaedt, Schanning, & Ogle, 2009; Bell, 2006; Fine, 1999).

Study Abroad

Study abroad programs began as a means of educating young aristocratic men in their classical education (La Brack & Bathurst, 2012; Lewin, 2009). Prior to the 19th century, these “Grand Tours” enhanced a young man’s education by visiting “private collections of art and monuments of antiquity” (Lewin, 2009, p. xiv). Grand Tours were eventually transformed “into [the] university-based study abroad programs” (La Brack & Bathurst, 2012, p. 195) prevalent today. These programs still provide students the opportunity to visit historic monuments and museums, but the face of today’s study abroad has changed. Programs have grown to incorporate a variety of instructional strategies ranging from semester-long immersion experiences to short-term or “island” programs lasting three to eight weeks (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988, Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012b; see also Bowman, 1989).

Short-term or island programs have been criticized for being glorified vacations (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Indeed, the popularity of the shorter programs may lay primarily in their ability to attract a greater number of students, a trend that began more than twenty years ago

and still persists (Kavakas, 2013; King & Young, 1994; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Students have become consumers (Bolen, 2001; Kavakas, 2013), and as such, their tastes determine the study abroad marketplace rather than the educational potential of the programs alone. Nevertheless, recent research has failed to demonstrate any significant differences “...in global-engagement...between students who had studied abroad for longer and shorter time periods” (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 13).

Feeding into the idea of consumerism (Bolen, 2001; Kavakas, 2013), many study abroad educators have been measuring “success” in their programs simply in terms of an increased number of students going abroad (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012a). But in addition to growing numbers, programs are buoyed by the stories returning students share “...that [they] have learned abroad in special ways – in ways they presumably would not have had they stayed home” (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a, p. xi). Often students characterize this idea of “learning in different ways” as being transformative to some extent, having “changed” them from who they were when they left to study (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). However, relying on such testimonials does not offer much information about just what students have learned and even less about how precisely they have changed.

Despite a *laissez-faire* approach by some, a number of study abroad educators have embraced the idea of a greater focus on “developing [the] knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences [of students]... to successfully compete in [a] global marketplace” (Lewin, 2009, p. xiv). The idea of creating global citizenship or global competency has been a popular objective throughout study abroad programs (Bennett, 2012; Hammer 2012; Vande Berg, et al. 2012b), and Bennett’s Intercultural Sensitivity Model (DMIS) has been the most prevalent framework being used to assess student change (Hammer, 2012). Bennett’s (2004) model focuses on

cultural awareness and “what it means to be good at intercultural relations” (p. 9). Individuals move through stages that fall on a spectrum between ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism; they progress from seeing the world as having one right culture to seeing the value of other cultures (Bennett, 2004). Bennett’s (2004) model addresses but a tiny portion of the development individuals go through in their lifetime (see Erikson, 1959/1980; Vaillant, 2002), but it is nevertheless an important part.

While Bennett’s (2004) model is both important and relevant to study abroad education, Chickering and Braskamp (2009) suggested the use of psychosocial theories (which look at a broader spectrum of development). More specifically, Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) psychosocial developmental theory could offer a means to measure student learning through a developmental continuum. Through the experiences of being misunderstood in a foreign environment, Chickering and Braskamp (2009) asserted that a student’s increased awareness of emotions would provide an opportunity for the individual to learn to modify reactions, thereby becoming more proficient at managing emotions. As described by Chickering and Reisser (1993), the concept of learning to manage one’s emotions is an important aspect of psychosocial development. Chickering and Braskamp (2009) are not alone in recognizing the potential of study abroad to provide an opportunity for psychosocial development (Stuart, 2012; Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). A number of researchers believe “deeper learning” may occur if students are in a developmental “place” to learn (Bennett, 2012; Che, Spearman, & Manizade 2009; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Passarelli & Kolb, 2012; Stuart, 2012; Zull, 2012;), but that place has not been adequately defined.

Chickering and Braskamp (2009) and Vande Berg et al., (2012a) believed that learning that occurred abroad could be enhanced by educators focusing on the cognitive, interpersonal

and intrapersonal skill development suggested by student development theory. Similar developmental outcomes have been achieved through adventure experiences (Duerden, Widmer, Taniguchi, & McCoy, 2009; Hattie, et al., 1997; Hayashi & Ewert, 2006; Sibthorp, et al., 2007; Passarelli, et al., 2010). As a result, there is value in learning more about how adventure experiences may contribute to the perceived developmental growth of students studying abroad.

Adventure Education

As developmental outcomes in adventure education are reviewed in this study, an understanding of what adventure education is, and how adventure is defined is important. Because adventure education is a subset of outdoor education, a basic understanding of what outdoor recreation means is relevant. Defined by Priest (1999b), outdoor recreation is any activity that occurs outdoors or in the natural environment. For an activity to be classified as an *adventure activity*, it usually takes place in the outdoors, is entered into voluntarily, is intrinsically motivating, and the outcome of the activity is uncertain (Priest, 1999b). Researchers (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning, 2004) have found that qualities exhibited in adventure activities lend themselves to creating opportunities for personal growth, enhanced interpersonal skills, and group development. Priest (1999b) elaborated further on the concept of developmental growth noting that by

responding to seemingly insurmountable tasks, groups and individuals learn to overcome almost any self-imposed perceptions of their capability to succeed. They are able to turn limitations into abilities; and, as a result, they learn a great deal about themselves and how they relate to others (p. 112).

Wurdinger (1995) believed growth occurring through adventure was a result of educators employing the philosophy of experiential learning, which encourages an individual to learn about

oneself through experiences with which they may be confronted (Gass, 2008; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993; Kraft, 1990; Wurdinger & Priest, 1999). Because of the potential for adventure to create developmentally important opportunities for participants, it has been used in K-12 education (Davidson, 2001; Duerden, et al., 2009; Marlow & McLain, 2011; Raiola & O'Keefe, 1999; Sibthorp, et al., 2007), with at-risk youth (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1999; Kiewa, 1992), in higher education as a part of pre-orientation programs (Austin, et al., 2009; Bell, 2006; Bobilya, Akey, & Mitchell, 2009), and, most recently, in study abroad programs (Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Passarelli, et al., 2010; Thatcher, 2009).

Purpose of the Study and Exploratory Questions

The aim of this exploratory study is to understand the perceptions of what is gained from adventure-type experiences in study abroad and if students believe specific experiences contribute more than others to their development. Understanding this will clarify the relevance of such experiences to the developmental objectives and purposes of study abroad. The objective is to understand the value students place on adventure-type experiences and how that may affect their perceived development. Ideally, I hope to find students benefitting from adventure-type experiences. If this is true, perhaps a case can be made for study abroad educators to include adventure-type experiences in future study abroad courses or at the very least for recognizing the reflection-based experiential learning that is a central part of adventure education. In any case, gaining a better understanding will provide ideas for programming that educators could include in study abroad experiences to increase maximum developmental growth.

The research questions that will guide this study are:

1. Do students perceive they have changed (i.e. statements about being changed or transformed) in some way as a result of studying abroad? If so, in what ways?
 - 1.1. If change was indicated, was it connected to psychosocial developmental change as described in Chickering & Reisser's (1993) seven vectors?
2. If/when change was recognized, what in the student's overall experience was influential?
 - 2.1. If change was indicated, how, if at all, was adventure involved?

Limitations

Limitations of this study include:

1. Researcher Bias: I had an assumption that students would change as a result of participating in adventure experiences. It was important for me to recognize my bias, as not all participants have positive experiences and some may be relatively unaffected by them, and to avoid having my bias be apparent to study participants.
2. Program Limitation: Students participating in this study all participated in one study abroad program that had adventure activities included as a part of their program. I have also limited my selection of participants to those who completed a preliminary study I conducted. To better understand the impact of adventure experiences on study abroad experience in general, further research on a wider cross section of students and programs will be necessary.
3. Participant Group Size: The results of this study are not generalizable to the greater population because the three college-aged students interviewed are not representative of all students who study abroad.

4. **Researcher Relationship:** I served as a Teaching Assistant (TA) on the trip these students participated in. While I did not serve as a grading instructor to all of the students, I did to several, and that will be noted appropriately, as it might have had a bearing on the information I elicited or failed to elicit through interviews with participants.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms unique to this research and used throughout are:

Adventure Experiences. Adventure-type experiences in this study include activities that may or may not occur in the natural environment. They are characterized by spontaneity, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b; see also Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Extraordinary Experience. Extraordinary experience can be used to define adventure experiences. In this study, extraordinary experience is described as being absorbed in the experience, having a sense of “personal control, joy and valuing, a spontaneous letting be of the process, and a newness of perception and process” (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 25; see also Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Change. Defined by *Merriam-Webster* (n.d.) change means 1) to become different, 2) to make (someone or something) different, or 3) to become something else. Similarly, in study abroad education, students may refer to their experience as having changed their life (Vande Berg, et. al, 2012b). This study uses the word change to describe the difference students’ express upon returning from their sojourn. Reference to change in the research questions uses this definition.

Transformation. Mezirow (2000) suggests transformation comes about as a result of an individual elaborating existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, or transforming points of view, which lead to transforming habits of the mind. Transformation is a

change in *how* we know (Kegan, 2000) and Paprock (as cited in Mezirow, 2000) suggested life is “not *seen* from a new perspective, [rather] it is *lived* from that perspective” (p. 24). Students use this term interchangeably with change regarding their study abroad experience (Vande Berg, et al, 2012b). Reference to transformation in the research questions refers to this definition.

Students. Refers to traditional college-aged students age 18 to 24 (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Study Abroad. International study programs for college-aged students ranging anywhere from 3-5 weeks to a semester or year-long program.

Pre-Orientation Wilderness Experience. More commonly known as outdoor orientation programs (OOP), these experiences serve to aid students transitioning into college (Austin, et al., 2009; Bell, 2006; Gass, 1999). Primarily designed for first-year students, these programs focus on social adjustment and increasing retention (Austin, et al., 2009; Bell, 2006; Bell, Holmes, Vigneault, & Williams, 2010; Gass, 1999; Vlamis, Bell, & Gass, 2011). OOP’s programs are defined as “orientation or pre-orientation experiences for small groups [15 or fewer] of first-year students that use adventure experiences and include at least one overnight in a wilderness setting” (Bell, Holmes, & Williams, 2010, p. 8).

Psychosocial Development. Psychosocial developmental theory rests on the idea that “our capability to interact effectively within our environment – with other human beings – increases with each stage of development” (Stuart, 2012, p. 65). Psychosocial theorists focus not only on how “people [think] about themselves and the world but also in how they [feel], behave..., and interpret... the meaning of experience” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 21). This increase in development “allows the processing of greater complexity and supports enhanced operations in the world” (Stuart, 2012, p. 64).

Anticipated Contributions

Haverkamp and Young (2007) suggested the purpose of research falls under one of three categories: “theory or construct-oriented, practice or evaluation-oriented [substantive], or change-oriented” (p. 272). This study was not designed to develop theory or to empower individuals to create change, rather it is has been practice and evaluation-oriented (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). Haverkamp and Young (2007) defined a “practice-oriented purpose” in qualitative research as one that “aims to inform practice by providing rich, elaborated descriptions of specific processes or concerns within a specified context” (p. 274).

As previously stated, an outcome of this research was to provide a better understanding of the perceived development of participants in this type of educational setting (Creswell, 2007). I believe if these experiences can be described and better understood, perhaps they can illustrate how psychosocial development can occur. Perhaps educators could use adventure-based experiences to support a student’s development in the psychosocial development, which research has shown contributes to cognitive development (Perry, 1999; Stuart, 2012). I hope for this research to inform and support future programmatic endeavors in both study abroad and adventure programming (Haverkamp & Young, 2007).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The research study outlined in the first chapter is focused on understanding how adventure experiences may contribute to the psychosocial development of college students in a study abroad experience. The study is situated within three different fields: college student development, study abroad education, and adventure education. To better understand the research questions, a review of these three content areas is warranted. This chapter will provide a closer look at the development of college students as defined by psychosocial developmental theory, a greater understanding of the focus of the study abroad literature, and what is meant by adventure experience and its potential to influence development.

Psychosocial Development of College Students

Erik Erikson's (1959/1980) psychosocial developmental theory has been most noted as a starting place for defining psychosocial development across the lifespan and has served as a foundation for developmental theories targeted at the college-aged population (Arnett, 2000; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Josselson, 1987; Marcia, 1966). The first of its kind, Erikson's (1959/1980) theory focused on "an individual's ego identity in relation to the historical changes which dominated his childhood" (p. 50). Erikson's (1959/1980) psychosocial developmental theory was based on the idea of how a "healthy personality grow[s] or... accrue[s] from the successive stages of increasing [one's] capacity to master life's outer and inner dangers" (p. 53). From his research, Erikson (1959/1980) created an eight-stage model to describe the characteristics that comprised a "healthy personality" in adulthood. This concept of a "healthy

personality” was based on “Marie Jahoda’s (1950) definition...which [defined an individual with] a healthy personality [as one who] *actively master[ed] his environment*, show[ed] a certain *unity of personality*, and [was] able to *perceive the world and himself correctly*” (as cited in Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 53). Erikson (1959/1980) believed, as Marie Jahoda did, that “these criteria [were] relative to the child’s cognitive and social development” (p. 53). To have had a well-integrated and satisfying life, versus one resulting in despair, is the final existential issue of adulthood in Erikson’s model (Erikson, 1959/1980; Vaillant, 2002). The points of progression in the adult years preceding that have been identified by Erikson and others, (e.g., Chickering & Reisser, 1993) but questions remain as to what critical incidents aid in facilitating those changes (cf. Antonovsky & Sagy, 1990; Arnett, 2004). Understanding what incidents may help facilitate development is helpful to support an individual’s development through the lifespan.

Erikson’s Developmental Model

Erikson’s (1959/1980) model was designed as a sequence of stages, which means each stage was built on the previous stage. To move to the next stage, an individual must complete the tasks or effectively address the issues identified for the particular stage (Erikson, 1959/1980). Erikson (1959/1980) believed each stage was marked by a “crisis” an individual would have to work through in order to move from the current stage and into the next. For an individual to move through all eight stages implied success in development across the lifespan (Erikson, 1959/1980). The first five stages focused on birth to age eighteen, while the latter three stages consisted of young adulthood (19-40), middle adulthood (40-65), and maturity (65 to death) (Erikson 1959/1980; Vaillant, 2002). To address the research questions proposed in this study, the stage of young adulthood will be considered generally from theoretical perspectives originating with Erikson but developed further by others.

The first of its kind to include young adults (age 19-40), Erikson's (1959/1980) theory "describe[ed] the changing patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 1) that occurred as individuals developed. The sixth stage of Erikson's (1959/1980) theory, young adulthood, was identified by the crisis of intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1959/1980). The ability of a young adult to develop romantic and platonic relationships more deeply, Erikson (1959/1980) suggested, led to healthy development. Erikson (1959/1980) believed the capability to generate intimacy in early adulthood opened the door for an individual to move toward the next stage of development.

Evolution of Psychosocial Developmental Theory within the College-aged Population

Using Erikson's theory as a building block, succeeding theorists began to focus on this narrower age-range of 18 to 25 as young adults, and a number of later theories included attention to psychosocial development in the college-aged population (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans, et al., 1998; Havighurst, 1972). Erikson's ideas on identity formation were also the inspiration for Marcia's (1966) theoretical model, which gave more attention to ego identity status in young adults, rather than just in adolescence. Elaborating on Erikson's (1959/1980) theory, Marcia's (1966) research focused on the degree to which adolescents explored and committed to an identity. Believing there was a difference between the identity development of men and women, Josselson (1987) used Marcia's (1966) identity statuses in her research of women's development. While Marcia (1966) and Josselson's (1987) research built on Erikson's (1959/1980) theory, most notable to the psychosocial development of college-aged students was the research of Chickering & Reisser (1993).

Chickering and Reisser's *Seven Vectors* of Psychosocial Development

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory aimed to create a "general framework that could be used to guide educational practice" (p. 22) for the traditional college-aged (18 to 24) population. Rather than a checklist of items to be accomplished during this age-period, Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed "seven vectors as maps to help...determine where students are and which way they are heading" (p. 34). Each vector was developed as a result of the research Chickering began in 1969, and solidified with Reisser in the updated version of *Education and Identity* in 1993. Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed developmental theory directed towards the college-aged population would aid educators in helping students "grow in stature and substance" (p. 40). The culminating effect would produce individuals better able to compete in a global and dynamic workforce (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors suggest that students attending college: develop competence, learn to manage emotions, move through autonomy toward interdependence, develop mature interpersonal relationships, establish an identity, develop purpose, and develop integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The vectors were not sequential like Erikson's (1959/1980) stages, rather "movement along any one [could] occur at different rates and [could] interact with movement along the others" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 34). Despite the vectors not being sequential, Chickering and Reisser (1993) did propose "a sequence in order to suggest that certain building blocks make a good foundation" (p. 35). Traditionally, but not always, individuals seemed to move through most vectors by the age of 24 (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed the sheer design of university life, filled with curricular and co-curricular activities, provided students with the opportunity for growth, and

students would most likely move along the first four vectors to: develop competence, manage emotions, move through autonomy toward interdependence, and develop mature interpersonal relationships. Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested growth in the first four vectors helped students construct their identity. The first four vectors served as a foundation for the last three vectors: establishing identity, clarifying purpose, and developing integrity. As they move through the latter vectors, “most students also experience[d] greater clarity about purposes, values, and ways of thinking,...[and if they were] lucky...they expand their awareness of who they [were] and of how valuable they [were]” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 37 & 39). While not all students move through the seven vectors, movement through many of them is a result of the cumulative experiences occurring for a student attending college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Arnett’s Theory of *Emerging Adulthood*

Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) developmental vectors are a foundation for this research study, but Arnett’s (2000) research on the concept of “emerging adulthood,” in individuals aged 18 to 25 is worth noting as well. Arnett’s (2000) research focused on narrowing the gap between Erikson’s (1959/1980) stages of *adolescence* and *young adulthood*. Arnett (2000) believed “it made little sense to lump the late teens, twenties, and thirties together and call the entire period *young adulthood*” (p. 477). Arnett (2000) contended *young adulthood*² meant an individual had reached *adulthood*, which was simply not true of individuals aged 18 to 25. In fact, individuals in this age bracket consistently felt they had not reached adulthood; instead they felt they were “neither adolescents nor adults” (Arnett, 2000, p. 471). Most individuals aged 18 to 25 viewed the process of becoming an adult as gradual, dynamic, and fluid; Arnett (2000) believed the term *emerging* captured these characteristics better than previously identified developmental phases.

² *Young adulthood* is identified by Arnett (2000) as an individual being settled into a more stable occupational path, married, and/or having at least one child.

Arnett's (2004) theory of emerging adulthood focused on "three criteria at the heart of emerging adulthood: taking responsibility for yourself, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent" (p. 209). Characterized by experimentation and exploration, the three characteristics of this theory emphasize an individual's ability to become self-sufficient (Arnett, 2000). Arnett's (2000) research complements Chickering and Reisser's (1993) developmental vectors.

Psychosocial Development through Extracurricular Experiences

The premise of the current investigation is that development is influenced by extracurricular experience; thus particular attention will be given to this aspect of the work of Chickering and Reisser (1993) and others. Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed college was a place of exploration, where individuals could try new things and have new experiences.

Extracurricular activities in college have offered individuals an opportunity to try new things by becoming a part of student organizations, participating in outdoor clubs or intramural sports, hanging out with friends in the residence halls or in coffee shops, attending parties, watching TV, playing video games, and other common leisure interests (Arnett, 2004; see also Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Involvement in these common leisure and extracurricular activities in college arguably provide individuals with a host of developmental opportunities, many of which are reflected in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors. A description of the vectors through extracurricular experiences will follow the order Chickering and Reisser's (1993) represented in their research.

Developing competence. Extracurricular activities offer a fertile ground for individuals to *develop competence*, and learn to *manage their emotions* (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). If a student possesses competence, both success and the further development of competence are

likely. If a student does not have competence, the reverse is true. In a study by Bower in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research, a student affirmed this development of competence through his involvement in sports with his "confidence as a whole person [increasing] due to the entire experience and process" (p. 65). Building competence through physical activity can connect directly with the physical nature of many leisure pursuits ranging from team sports to individual pursuits in the outdoors like hiking, rock climbing, and surfing.

Managing one's emotions. As an individual grows in competence, the ability to *manage one's emotions* becomes stronger. The development of these skills provide the individual with the knowledge of knowing when to communicate, how to interact with others, what content should be shared, and with whom (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students "learn appropriate channels for releasing irritations before they explode, dealing with fears before they immobilize, and healing emotional wounds before they infect other relationships" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 46). Through leisure pursuits Chickering and Reisser (1993) assert a student's increased awareness of emotions will provide an opportunity for the individual to learn to modify reactions, thereby becoming more proficient at "managing emotions."

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Chickering & Reisser's (1993) vectors of *developing competence* and *managing emotions* are precursors to *moving through autonomy toward interdependence*. This vector has been best described as

freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval from others...; the ability to carry on activities in a self-directed manner, ...[with the] freedom and confidence to be mobile in order to pursue opportunity or adventure...; and an awareness of one's place in and commitment to the welfare of the larger community. (p. 117)

Leisure activities can provide an opportunity for young adults to try new experiences while testing out their ability to guide themselves (Kleiber, 1999). Leisure pursuits can aid individuals in taking responsibility for themselves by “learning to function with self-sufficiency, and to take responsibility for pursuing self-chosen goals (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 47). Leisure experiences can provide individuals with low-risk opportunities where mistakes can be made without egregious error. It is a fertile practice ground for decisions that will need to be made in life (Arnett, 2004).

Developing mature interpersonal relationships. The characteristics of interdependence can especially be seen in relationships during the age of 18 to 25 (Arnett, 2000). The opportunity for cultivating relationships through involvement in activities of similar interest is commonplace in college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The idea of finding a social group in college supports Astin’s (1993) findings of student peer groups serving as the single greatest influence on the growth and development of a student’s beliefs and values. Through peer groups “the need to be independent and the longing for inclusion become better balanced” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 47).

While the fourth vector notes a strong connection in peer relationships, this is also true of romantic relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). College has been a place where young adults are exploring romantic relationships on a deeper level, looking for the type of person they want to partner with through life (Arnett, 2000; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). A deeper level of intimacy in both platonic and romantic relationships is a foundation in *developing mature interpersonal relationships* (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

This vector is also characterized by an individual acquiring “tolerance and appreciation of differences” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 146). This can occur through many settings in

academia, but leisure and recreation programs supported by the university can offer a unique opportunity for individuals to participate in activities with individuals from different backgrounds (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). If the university “actively promotes deeper levels of multicultural understanding [through these programs], then students move toward more mature relationships” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 396)

Establishing identity. The foundation of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seventh vector, *establishing identity*, “involves the [reexamination of one’s] belief systems about a larger reality” (p.207). In doing so, the question of “who am I?” becomes clearer (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Service-learning and volunteer activities often provide “a space where [a] student [is] confronted with the ambiguity, noise, and disruption of their way of thinking about and engaging with the world” (Butin, 2007, p. 179). Similarly, studying abroad challenges a student’s beliefs and how they view the world (Bennett, 2012; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009). These experiences can allow an individual to grapple with ideas and concepts not previously considered (Bennett, 2012; Butin, 2007; Chickering and Braskamp, 2009; Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010). A solid sense of self (aka. *identity*) takes shape as the developmental tasks for competence, emotions, autonomy, and relationships are undertaken with some success, and that, as it becomes firmer, provides a framework for purpose and integrity” (Chickering and Reisser, 1993, p. 181).

Developing purpose. Chickering and Reisser (1993) found that clarity about one’s identity provided individuals with a “foundation for looking ahead and answering new questions” (p. 209). Such questions are connected to an individual’s future goals and ideals, and the kind of life desired beyond college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In *developing purpose* an individual must “go beyond what is merely interesting and find an anchoring set of assumptions

about what is true, principles that define what is good, and beliefs that provide meaning and give [individuals] a sense of place... in the larger whole” (Chickering and Reisser, 1993, p. 234).

Developing integrity. In Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) final vector of *developing integrity*, an individual learns “to balance[e] one’s own self-interest with the interests of one’s fellow human beings,... [to] consciously affirm [one’s] core values and beliefs while respecting other points of view, ...[and to match one’s] personal values with socially responsible behavior” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 237). The development of *integrity* begins from an individual’s ability to establish an *identity* and to establish a sense of *purpose* in life (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Braskamp (2009) suggested study abroad experiences could aid students in developing their *identity* and *purpose*, thereby fostering the development of *integrity*.

The recognition that not all students will move through Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors parallels Erikson’s (1959/1980) notion that an individual can become stunted in his or her developmental growth. Knowing how vectors can be addressed through the context of leisure and extracurricular activities can aid individuals in their developmental growth. An understanding of this development outside the classroom could potentially aid educators in helping individuals to reach Erikson’s (1959/1980) identification of integrity in later life. One medium found in higher education touting growth is that of study abroad programs.

Understanding the connection between the two is relevant for this study.

Study Abroad Education

Study abroad programs have been “an honored tradition of Western culture, going back even to the ancient Greeks” (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988, p. 10). The nature of study abroad programs has changed in a variety of ways. As the type of students have changed, so too have the purposes of the programs and the duration of the trips (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also

Bowman, 1989). A brief understanding of these developments will provide a context for current university based study abroad programs.

History

Known as the “Grand Tour” in the 18th-century, study abroad programs began historically as a means of educating young aristocratic men in their classical education (La Brack & Bathurst, 2012; Lewin, 2009; see also Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). A young man would travel overseas to view “private collections of art and monuments of antiquity” (Lewin, 2009, p. xiv) to broaden his academic repertoire. As the U.S. developed in relation to other countries, the objective of study abroad programs did as well (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Bowman, 1989). Beginning as a means of educating the elite, “grand tours” served as a finishing school for wealthy men and eventually wealthy women (Bowman, 1989; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). Goodwin and Nacht (1988) noted the “previous goal [was] intended to provide a veneer” (p. 11), whereas the goal that followed was focused on “broadening the intellectual elite [by] chang[ing] the entire human being” (p. 11). This concept of change connects with Mezirow’s (2000) transformation theory, which suggests individuals can change their perspective on life because of an experience that may force them to think differently. Further goals in study abroad education have been rooted in this idea of changing individuals.

Historically, objectives that have “supposedly” been acquired on study abroad are confirmed when students return sharing stories of how “studying abroad has ‘transformed’ them, [and] ‘changed their lives’” (Vande Berg, et al., 2012b, p. 3). Nolan (2009) further confirmed “plenty of evidence [that suggested] international experience[s] were] transformative...[but educators have failed to] prove why this is so” (p. 272). Within the last decade research has been aimed at providing a means to measure or “prove” the transformation and change students so

frequently speak of (Lewin, 2009; Oppen, Teichler, & Carlson, 1990; Passarelli, et al., 2010; Smith & Mitry, 2008; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b). Theories most commonly used to qualify transformation or change have focused on global competence and intercultural learning (Che, et al., 2009; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Nolan, 2009; Smith & Mitry, 2008; cf. Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). Student growth in global competency is beneficial, but research focused solely on these objectives limits additional psychosocial developmental outcomes that can be enhanced through study abroad. Regardless, it is important to have insight into the focus on intercultural competence in the study abroad literature.

Intercultural Competence

The unique interdisciplinary nature of study abroad programs has made it challenging to measure learning occurring abroad, but it has been done (Vande Berg, Lou, and Paige, 2012a). The literature used to support student learning abroad has been replete with research supporting global competence and intercultural learning (Bennett, 2012; Che, et al., 2009; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Engle & Engle, 2012; Lewin, 2009; Lou & Bosley, 2012; Medina-Lopez-Portillo & Salonen, 2012; Nolan, 2009; Paige, Harvey, & McCleary, 2012; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Smith & Mitry, 2008). Intercultural learning theory seems most obvious because of the common assumption that “going abroad” means students will naturally become more culturally competent (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; cf. Vande Berg, et al., 2012b), despite research that has proven this to be untrue (Brockten & Widenhoeft, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Smith, & Mitry, 2008). Bennett’s intercultural learning theory has been most popular in measuring student learning abroad (Bennett, 2012; Engle & Engle, 2012; Lou & Bosley, 2012; Medina-Lopez-Portillo & Salonen, 2012; Paige, et al., 2012; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Smith & Mitry, 2008).

Bennett's (2012) model places students in one of six stages related to their intercultural identity: Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration (Bennett, 2012; Hammer, 2012). As an individual develops intercultural competency, he or she moves from an *ethnocentric* worldview to an *ethnorelativistic* worldview (Bennett, 2004).

Ethnocentrism refers to "the experience of one's own culture as 'central to reality'... [whereas *ethnorelativism* refers to] the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among viable possibilities" (Bennett, 2004, p. 1). A higher understanding of one's intercultural identity, movement from the stage of Denial towards Integration, requires a cognitive complexity allowing for more than one cultural perspective to be recognized (Bennett, 2004; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) contend that this cognitive complexity can be seen through "the presence of diverse worldviews, accepting ambiguity and understanding the basis of differing worldviews" (p. 577). Furthermore, Moore and Ortiz (as cited in King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) "found that interculturally competent students were critical thinkers who suspended judgment until the evidence was in and who included a diverse range of knowledge in what they considered as evidence" (p. 577).

While Bennett's (2004) theory has been most prevalent in the study abroad literature because of its interdisciplinary nature (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a), other developmental theories can strengthen the support for student learning occurring abroad. In fact, Chickering & Reisser's (1993) research supports psychosocial growth enhances intercultural learning – the two are intertwined and Bennett's (2004) theory is but a small piece of psychosocial development. Researchers should be looking more broadly at developmental growth that occurs while students are abroad. To better facilitate this research, an overview of the different types of study abroad programs is warranted.

Program Types

Study abroad programs still provide students the opportunity to visit historic monuments and museums, and these objectives have shaped the design of study abroad programs still offered today. What began as travel tours for aristocratic men has evolved into the types of programs frequently referred to by educators today, ranging from total immersion to island or short-term programs (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). Common objectives that continue to be identified in study abroad education focus on students: gaining a cultural awareness, having the opportunity for the world to be their learning laboratory, gaining language proficiency, learning from others, learning how to see themselves as the world sees them, and improving international relations (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988).

In a quick review of the *Education Abroad Glossary* (2011) provided by the Forum on Education Abroad, there are a multitude of program types proliferating study abroad education. Engle and Engle (2003) highlighted the multitude of program classifications as problematic to the industry because it has prevented scholars from truly assessing student learning and growth abroad. With too many program classifications, it can be difficult to find meaning in the data being collected (Engle and Engle, 2003). A consistency in program labels would allow for a greater understanding of the growth and development of students participating in study abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003).

The characteristics Engle and Engle (2003) identified in their classification system are common to most study abroad programs: *trip duration, language competency, context of academic work, type of housing, provisions for cultural learning/experiences*, and the *implementation of guided reflections*. Despite Engle and Engle's (2003) efforts to create a more simplified classification system, it has not fully caught on in the industry. I believe it is

important to have an awareness of the multitude of existing programs; however, there are too many programs to define for the purpose of this research. Thus, a brief overview of two common program types supported by many universities will be described: total immersion programs and island or short-term programs (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Bowman, 1989). To create consistency in program descriptions, Engle and Engle's (2003) characteristics related to *trip duration*, *context of academic work*, *type of housing*, and *provisions for cultural learning/experiences* will serve as a foundation in describing these program types.

Total immersion programs. Total immersion experiences can range from a semester-long (4-5 months) to a year-long excursion where students live and study at a foreign university (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Education Abroad Glossary, 2011). In an immersion experience students are completely immersed into their foreign academic and social environments, often with little support from their home institutions (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). Students attend a foreign institution taught by faculty from the host university and they may live with students from their host country in dormitories, or their accommodations may be a homestay: living with a local family (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). The philosophy of this type of abroad experience rests in the idea of “sink or swim” with a fifty-fifty chance of students succeeding and benefiting from their experience (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b). There is a shared belief by some educators that students learn more through an immersion experience because, in order to succeed, students are forced to do things for themselves (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; cf. Vande Berg, et al., 2012b).

However, Vande Berg, et al. (2012b) suggested “most students... do not meaningfully develop either through simple exposure to the environment or through having educators take

steps to increase the amount of that exposure through ‘immersing’ them” (p. 21). Rather, there has been research in study abroad education to support the need for intentional interventions to increase the potential for developmental growth in students (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a, 2012b; see also Engle & Engle, 2012). Only when a balance is struck between challenge and support do students experience the growth study abroad educators strive for (Engle & Engle, 2012; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b). The idea of challenge and support leading to growth is supported by the research of psychosocial theorists (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; see also Arnett, 2000, 2004; Bennett, 2012).

Island/short-term programs. At the opposite end of the spectrum are island programs or short-term programs where students spend anywhere from three to eight weeks abroad (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012). Island programs or short-term programs became more popular in the latter part of the 20th century (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; see also Bowman, 1989). Short-term programs are typically characterized with students that live together with other American students and learn from home-campus faculty (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; see also Donnelly-Smith, 2009). There is a common belief that short-term programs are limited on cultural exposure because students have limited interactions with individuals from the host country (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Students not only live and learn together, but they are also “shepherded about in groups” (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988, p. 44) for the duration of the three to eight weeks they are abroad (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012).

The underlying philosophy of island or short-term programs rests in the ability to offer an international learning experience to the masses (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Despite short-term

programs providing what some view as a limited cultural experience, short-term programs are generally more affordable than longer programs, they appeal to students who might not be able or willing to commit to a semester or a year abroad, and they allow students in structured academic programs like engineering, nursing, and education to study abroad without falling behind in their programs. (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 12)

Additionally, some educators would counter that short-term programs are able to achieve a perfect balance between the idea of challenge and support that Vande Berg, et al. (2012b) suggest because educators have a heavier involvement in the experience of students (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). This heavier involvement can translate to greater opportunities for developmental growth.

Environments for Developmental Growth

Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed environments could be created to foster students being influenced in powerful ways. With a focus on the development of college-aged students, they suggested seven key ingredients that could encourage developmental growth: “(1) institutional objectives, (2) institutional size, (3) student-faculty relationships, (4) curriculum, (5) teaching, (6) friendships and student communities, and (7) student development programs and services. I believe the most salient ingredients for study abroad programming are: student-faculty relationships, curriculum, teaching, and friendships and student communities. Short-term study abroad programs create a better opportunity for these environments to create stronger developmental opportunities for students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; see also Chickering & Braskamp, 2009).

The premise of this study is rooted in the idea that study abroad educators have the opportunity to foster the psychosocial development of college-aged individuals. While research

on study abroad programs has focused largely on global competency (Bennett, 2012; Hammer 2012; Lewin, 2009; Vande Berg, et al. 2012b), these programs can offer a deeper benefit. I believe study abroad programs can contribute to students achieving higher developmental outcomes. By aiding students in their development we help them “grow in stature and substance” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 40), thus putting them on the path to become better citizens (cf. Erikson, 1959/1980). The culminating effect could produce individuals better able to compete in a global and dynamic workforce (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Study abroad educators have the opportunity to be intentional in their curriculum design and they have the ability to structure their programs to foster friendships and student communities, as well as meaningful student-faculty relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b).

Reflection and Experiential Education in Study Abroad

As study abroad programs have expanded, one way more universities have become more intentional has been through the use of guided reflection in their curriculum (Engle & Engle, 2003; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pagano & Roselle, 2009; Paige, et al., 2012; Robinson, 2012). Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich (2002) have suggested the growth of reflection is a result of the philosophy of experiential education serving as a foundation in study abroad education. Like many experiential educators (Breunig, 2008; Carver, 1996; Dewey, 1925/1998; Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Gass, 2008; Itin, 1999), study abroad educators have begun to recognize reflection as a means to enhance the experience of students studying abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pagano & Roselle, 2009; Paige, et al., 2012; Robinson, 2012). Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich (2002) argue that by creating an environment supported by critical analysis and synthesis through reflection, educators create

deeper learning because “carefully chosen experiences... are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results” (Itin, 1999, p. 93). Study abroad programs are uniquely positioned because out-of-class experiences can create an environment for this deeper learning to occur (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Passarelli, et al., 2010; Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). Students can be put into positions where they must take initiative for their actions by “actively posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning, and integrating previously developed knowledge” (Itin, 1999, p. 93). Study abroad can provide an environment where students must make decisions about how they will spend their free-time, what activities they will choose to experience, what form of transportation they should take to get somewhere, and faculty have an opportunity to encourage students to reflect on these decisions thereby potentially deepening the learning. Additionally, I believe faculty can craft out-of-class experiences (i.e. sight-seeing/cultural tours, adventure experiences, service-learning opportunities) to provide an opportunity for students to make decisions and be accountable for their results. Itin (1999) further suggests that carefully crafted experiences must be supported by reflection in order for deeper learning to occur. Students can have experiences out-of-class, and not be encouraged to reflect on their experiences. However, if required to reflect, students may learn more deeply and therefore be more successful in a globalized workplace (Vande Berg, et al., 2012b). To aid study abroad educators in creating opportunities focused in experiential education, an understanding of experiential education and how it evolved through adventure education is relevant.

Adventure Education

Some argue that educators have been providing support for education in nature since the era of Aristotle and Socrates (Hunt, 1990; Wurdinger, 1995). However, support for education in the outdoors did not become prominent until Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, introduced his philosophy of education in the 1940's (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, & Breunig, 2006; Miles & Priest, 1990; Miner, 1990). To understand the nature of adventure education fully, a deeper understanding of the history of outdoor education, and what adventure activities are, should be explained. Additionally, a definition of adventure experiences for this research project will be identified.

A Definition of Adventure Experiences

As the profession of outdoor education has matured, so have the distinctions between terminologies used to classify activities occurring in the natural environment (Hirsch, 1999; Priest, 1999a, 1999b). The term outdoor education was first used to describe “almost anything people did in the out-of-doors” (Hirsch, 1999, p. 13), but over time the definition has shifted to represent the outdoors as a medium for educational learning opportunities. The outdoors provided a place for unknown physical and emotional challenges to be tackled by individuals (Miles, 1990). The uncertainty, challenge, and “getting out of your comfort zone” were often synonymous with adventure activities (Miles, 1990; Priest, 1999b).

Adventure experience. For many, adventure activities may conjure images of rock-climbing, zip-lining, white-water rafting, and even skydiving. The common thread of adventure experiences have been the natural environment where they occur, and the adrenaline rush that often occurs as a result of participating in these types of activities (Priest, 1999b; Quinn, 1990). Prouty (2007) connected this adrenaline rush with the belief of adventure education having “real

consequences” (p. 12). Expanding on this, Priest (1999b) asserted that adventure activities usually take place in the outdoors, are entered into voluntarily, are intrinsically motivated, and have an uncertain outcome. Prouty (2007) and Priest’s (1999b) definition of adventure is a start, but some researchers suggest the defining characteristics of adventure can lead participants to have extraordinary experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993; Farber & Hall, 2007; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012). To define adventure experiences for this research study, characteristics found in extraordinary experiences will allow for a more inclusive definition that will benefit this study.

Extraordinary experience. Arnould and Price’s (1993) multi-method research explored the idea of extraordinary experience over a two-year period on river rafting trips. The researchers (1993) noticed river guides discussed “the river rafting experience with a sense of reverence and mystery – a singular quality some call[ed] ‘river magic’” (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 24). *River magic* left participants charged with an intense, positive emotional high. Forgotten were the “hours spent freezing in wet clothes, uncomfortable toilet facilities, bad food, or any summary index of specific attributes to the trip” (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 25). Participants remembered their experience on the river as magical and transformative (Arnould & Price, 1993). An individual in an extraordinary experience is absorbed in the experience, having a sense of “personal control, joy and valuing, a spontaneous letting be of the process, and a newness of [their own] perception and process” (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 25; see also Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Using participant observation, surveys, focus groups, and on-site interviews, Arnould and Price’s (1993) research identified three dimensions common to extraordinary experience: harmony with nature, a connection to others, and personal growth and renewal. Mezirow’s (2000) transformational theory complements the idea of change found in extraordinary experience. Mezirow’s (2000) transformational theory focuses on individuals

changing their points of view or transforming habits of the mind, which supports Arnould and Price's (1993) findings around personal growth and renewal. Similarly, research on extraordinary experience in study abroad found the themes of travel, magic moments, community/group identity/being with friends, spontaneity, walking outside, and reflection to be important to creating extraordinary experiences (Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Wright & Larsen, 2012).

Wright and Larsen (2012) used photo-elicitation to gain a deeper insight into the study abroad experience from the view of the participant. Similar to my interest in understanding change, Wright and Larsen (2012) identified three dimensions "of the study abroad experience that cause[d] participants to describe it as life changing and the best experience of their lives" (p. 121). The researchers (2012) findings suggested study abroad programs could create extraordinary experiences (suggested in Arnould & Price's (1993) research) by creating opportunities for travel, magic moments, and community. Opportunities for travel included self-directed and program-directed experiences (Wright & Larsen, 2012). Like Arnould and Price's (1993) river magic, magic moments in study abroad were characterized by "deeply emotional experiences that enchant[ed] and delight[ed] the participants;... everything combined to make [the activity] one of the most memorable" (Wright & Larsen, 2012, p. 130-131) experiences of the semester. Lastly, community described the personal bonds that grew between participants (Wright & Larsen, 2012). Community was a common theme that helped students have extraordinary experiences (Wright & Larsen, 2012). While Wright and Larsen's (2012) research is beneficial in recognizing some common themes that create change, they still have not identified what is meant by change. This study aims to explore this idea more deeply.

The themes Arnould and Price (1993), Jefferies and Lepp (2012), and Wright and Larsen (2012) have found that create extraordinary experience (harmony with nature, spontaneity, community, magic moments, and having a sense of personal control) mirror qualities researchers have found in adventure activities (natural environment, sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome) (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b; see also Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). While Priest's (1999b) definition of adventure does not include individuals experiencing personal growth, researchers have found personal growth, interpersonal skills and group development skills to be enhanced through adventure experiences (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning, 2004). Priest (1999b) elaborates on this concept of adventure being used to facilitate personal growth noting that by

responding to seemingly insurmountable tasks, groups and individuals learn to overcome almost any self-imposed perceptions of their capability to succeed. They are able to turn limitations into abilities; and, as a result, they learn a great deal about themselves and how they relate to others (p. 112).

The combined characteristics of extraordinary experiences and adventure noted above will be utilized to define adventure experiences within the context of this research study. Therefore, *adventure experiences* in this study will include activities where there is: spontaneity, community, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b). The natural environment is a key indicator of adventure experiences in the outdoor literature (Priest, 1999b; Prouty, 2007) and while not expressly identified in the definition, it will be examined closely in this study.

History of Adventure Education

The use of adventure in education in the United States dates back as early as 1861 with the use of camping expeditions in the education system (Raiola & O’Keefe, 1999). Two well-known programs in outdoor and adventure education are Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) (Bachert, 1999; Martin, et al., 2006; Miles & Priest, 1990; Miner, 1990). These programs are touted often and have been used as exemplars in the field of adventure education (Miles & Priest, 1990).

Founded by Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt, Outward Bound began in Aberdovey, Wales in 1941 as a school for young maritime staff and apprentices of other industries (Hattie, et al., 1997; Miner, 1990, 1999). In Miner’s (1999) historical account, Holt and Hahn’s philosophy rested in the training school being “less a training for the sea than through the sea, and so benefit[ed] all walks of life” (p. 58). The saying, “training through rather than for,” (Miner, 1990, p. 60) has been the essence of the Outward Bound school, and the initial concept of students participating in intense challenges in nature has continued to provide a means for individuals to build a sense of self-worth. Through the experience of such challenges, groups gained an awareness of human interdependence, which in turn led participants to grow in “concern for those in danger and in need” (Miner, 1999, p. 58). The challenges fostered growth beyond the tactical skills being learned. Holt and Hahn believed the development of these characteristics would ensure an individual’s ability to survive the perils encountered at sea and beyond. This belief has served Outward Bound well, as the same tenets of self-perception and personal growth continue to be the foundation of the program (Outward Bound, n.d.).

Borrowing from Hahn’s ideas of developing young men, Paul Petzoldt, a former employee of Outward Bound, in 1965 opened the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

(Bachert, 1999; Martin, et al., 2006). Petzoldt, an accomplished mountaineer, began his guiding career by leading mountaineering expeditions in the Tetons, which led to his work as the mountaineering advisor with the Colorado Outward Bound School (Martin, et al., 2006). While working for Outward Bound, Petzoldt recognized a need for trained instructors to lead outdoor programs because the skill-set graduates gained from Outward Bound was not sufficient to lead other individuals on outdoor excursions (Bachert, 1999; Martin, et al., 2006;). Similar to Outward Bound, NOLS was founded on using the “challenges inherent in a wilderness experience” to develop skillsets useful in other arenas (Bachert, 1999, p. 87). Together, these two organizations have been at the forefront of using adventure in education.

Despite most historical accounts of adventure education having been developed in the last 150 years, with the greatest emphasis noted over the past 70 years, a deeper look proves otherwise. Adventure education can be tied back to the great philosophers of Aristotle, Plato & Socrates (Wurdinger, 1995). These philosophers believed “direct experience [was] important to the learning process” (Wurdinger, 1995, p. 14). As noted earlier, the definition of adventure education involves direct participation (Quinn, 1990). The idea of learning in action, Hunt believed was a foundation to adventure because “when one experiences something first hand, the level of understanding deepens” (as cited in Wurdinger, 1995, p. 15). Wurdinger (1995) further connected the use of adventure activities in programs such as Outward Bound and NOLS to Plato’s philosophy of “learning through experience,” (p. 15) and this may be “one reason why the terms ‘experiential education’ and ‘adventure education’ are sometimes interchanged” (p. 15). While some may use the two terms interchangeably, not all adventure experiences meet the criteria of experiential education. A major criterion of experiential education is the concept of reflection (Carver, 1996; Itin, 1999; Wurdinger, 1995).

Experiential Learning in Education and Reflection

While Wurdinger (1995) recognized experiential education as a process of learning that can be used with many activities, he was not alone in connecting adventure education to experiential learning (Gass, 2008; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993; Kraft, 1990; Wurdinger & Priest, 1999). Experiential education however, is complex and is more than simply participating in an activity, assuming “learning” will occur. This inferred learning seems to be the underlying belief by a number of adventure providers (Stiehl & Parker, 2007; Wurdinger, 1995). For adventure education to be experiential learning, intentionality is needed and reflection is key (Warren, Mitten, & Loeffler, 2008; Wurdinger, 1995; see also Carver, 1996; Itin, 1999).

Berry (2011) cited Dewey’s belief that learners “need[ing] to be given the chance to construct their own meaning through experience and reflection” (p. 66). It is this idea of “reflection” that is the heart of experiential education (Chapman, McPhee, & Proudman, 1992; Itin, 1999). It is not simply participating in an activity (i.e. experience), rather, it is an intentional process where educators create learner-centered environments with action followed by reflection (Berry, 2011; Breunig, 2005; Chapman, et al., 1992; Itin, 1999). Reflection deepens the learning process by providing the opportunity for individuals to make relevant connections for future learning situations (Gass, 2008; see also Breunig, 2005; Chapman, et al., 1992). The premise behind experiential education is the “applicability of learning for future situations” (Gass, 2008, p. 305).

Berry (2011) went further to support Gass’ (2008) notion of the “applicability of learning for future situations” (p. 305) by highlighting the benefits of using an experiential approach to education. He suggested individuals participating in an experiential learning environment “retain more from the experience-based approach, [because] learners [were] actively engaged rather than

passive observers" (Berry, 2011, p. 70). Coleman's (as cited in Berry, 2011) research confirmed this idea, as he found his "clients retained more from the experience-based approach" (p. 70) versus a traditional didactic approach.

Individuals participating in experiential learning are retaining more because "what" is being learned is beyond "factual knowledge and understanding" (Berry, 2011, p. 70). Bloom's taxonomy (as cited in Berry, 2011) is a reminder of the multiple domains of learning that exist: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. The cognitive domain is the traditional focus of "learning" as it encompasses knowing facts and understanding concepts (Berry, 2011). Psychomotor refers to the "development of physical skills... [while the affective domain refers to] emotions, attitudes, and values" (Berry, 2011, p. 70). Learning that occurs through adventure education encompasses all three domains, but Berry (2011) suggested the affective domain is the most affected. Berry (2011) contends that this domain is especially activated in an experiential learning environment because "first-hand experience is required [to enable] individuals to reflect on and make sense of their successes, failure[s] and relationships with others" (p. 72).

Outward Bound has tested development in the affective domain and has found increased self-awareness, personal growth, motivation levels, interpersonal competence, and self-actualization in participants (Klint, 1999; Paisley, Furman, Sibthorp, Gookin, 2008; Sibthorp, et al., 2007). Ford and Blanchard's research (as cited in Klint, 1999) supported these claims of increased development in the affective domain through adventure experiences. This increased development in the affective domain (especially interpersonal skill development) has been found to support cognitive development as well (Zull, 2012). Educators must create learning environments that "activate this synergistic system... [where] cognition and emotion work together" (Zull, 2012, p. 184) in a social context.

The interpersonal skill development of the affective domain in adventure is linked to the previously discussed psychosocial development theory popular in the college-aged population. Psychosocial developmental theory rests in the idea that “our capability to interact effectively within our environment – with other human beings – increases with each stage of development” (Stuart, 2012, p. 65). This increase in development allows the processing of greater complexity and supports enhanced operations in the world” (Stuart, 2012, p. 64).

Adventure education appears to be especially beneficial to personal growth in adolescence. Interpreting Erikson’s view of the exploration/commitment dilemma, Kleiber (1999) suggested that in leisure (including adventure experience), adolescents can develop their emotional independence through exploration and by engaging in activity away from home prior to committing to more permanent courses of action and understanding, in both leisure and non-leisure settings. Supporting this idea, Fine (1999) suggested that there was “probably no state in a person’s life where adventure education [was] more valuable than in the later adolescent years (p. 196). It is in emergence from these later adolescent years that Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) psychosocial developmental theory is most applicable.

Adventure in Higher Education

Adventure activities have been adapted to meet the needs of different populations in higher education since the 1930’s (Gass, 1999). Initially, educators began incorporating adventure activities in pre-orientation programs because of their ability to integrate students into collegiate life by developing meaningful peer relationships. These adventure or wilderness-based pre-orientation programs aided educators in the positive integration of students into collegiate life by developing meaningful peer relationships, creating positive faculty and student interaction, increasing academic interest, and increasing compatibility with student’s

expectations (Gass, 1999; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). According to Upcraft and Gardner, (1989) one of the single greatest means of reducing attrition in college was to provide the greatest opportunity for success for freshmen students, and wilderness pre-orientation programs have had the opportunity to aid universities in this quest (Bell, 2006; Bobilya, et al., 2009; Gass, 1999; Sibthorp, et al., 2003). Although wilderness pre-orientation programs (which typically include components of adventure activities) have been most commonly studied in relation to developmental outcomes (Bell, 2006; Bell, et al., 2008) adventure activities in study abroad programs are beginning to be recognized (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011; Passarelli, et al., 2010; Thatcher, 2009).

Conclusion

For educators, an understanding of a college-aged individual's development through the life stages allows study abroad experiences to be designed to provide students with the degree of challenge needed for the greatest amount of learning and personal growth (Stuart, 2012; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b). Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors may serve as a foundation for study abroad educators to gain a deeper understanding of the development of college-aged students studying abroad. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors build upon one another, and studies have found students most often deal with developing competence, managing their emotions, and developing mature interpersonal relationships during a study abroad experience (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Drexler & Campbell, 2011). Partnered with the interpersonal skills developed through adventure education (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Klint, 1999; Paisley, et al., 2008; Passarelli, et al, 2010; Sibthorp, et. al, 2003, 2007), Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial theory may lead to a greater understanding of the transformational experiences students talk about when they return from their sojourn (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a, 2012b). By

understanding “what aspects of the adventure experience facilitate development, in what ways and to what degree” (Klint, 1999, p. 168), educators can potentially use adventure to benefit the development of students. The aim of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of a student’s development through adventure experiences abroad. Chapter 3 will explore this idea further by outlining the study methods.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter revisits the purpose of this study outlined in Chapter 1 and outlines an approach to address it. I begin by reiterating the purpose of the study and the exploratory questions guiding the research. Next, I detail the background of both the study abroad program being used and my involvement with the organization. The chapter ends with a description of the design of the study and the data analysis methods that were used. This is a qualitative study that used case study methods to gain deeper insights into the adventure experiences of students studying abroad.

Purpose of the Study and Exploratory Questions

The aim of this exploratory study is to understand the perceptions of what is gained from adventure-type experiences in study abroad and if students believe specific experiences contribute to their development more than others. Understanding this will clarify the relevance and value of certain experiences in a study abroad program. The objective is to understand the value students place on adventure-type experiences and how that may affect their perceived development. I expect to find students benefitting from adventure-type experiences but will approach the subject open-mindedly and critically, with due attention to my own biases. If there is evidence for positive change, perhaps a case can be made for study abroad educators to include adventure-type experiences in future study abroad courses. Gaining a better understanding could provide study abroad educators with ideas for programming that could increase the likelihood of developmental growth. The research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) Do students perceive they have changed (i.e. statements about being changed or transformed) in some way as a result of studying abroad? If so, in what ways?
 - 1.2. If perceived change was indicated, was it connected to psychosocial developmental change as described by Chickering & Reisser's (1993) seven Vectors?
- 2) If/when change was recognized, what in the student's overall experience was most influential?
 - 2.1. If change was indicated, how, if at all, was adventure involved?

Worldview

I identify with a social constructivist worldview, which operates from an assumption that meanings are subjective because they are created by individuals' interactions with others (Crotty, 1998). I believe we live in a world where "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Social constructivism recognizes meanings are subjective because they are created by individuals' interactions with others; participants construct meaning "through their continuing activities' which they are 'constantly involved in interpreting'" (Blaikie as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 56). Using a social constructivist lens allows me to look at how individuals operate in the world or make meaning of their adventure experiences during a study abroad program (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This perspective will allow for a greater understanding of the influence adventure-type experiences have on the perceived development of participants.

While I identify with a social constructivist worldview, Dewey's (1925/1998) pragmatic approach to curriculum design in education also influences what I believe to be true. The theories I have highlighted (in Chapter 2), and how I approach aspects of what I am researching, support Dewey's (1925/1998, 1909/1998) belief in experience-based education. I want to understand the experiences students have that may influence their development. Inherent in this quest is a belief in being intentional, that experiences can be designed to aid students in their growth. Uncovering the stories of students, I believe, will help me in this quest.

Design of the Study

Case Study Approach

Guided by my social constructivist worldview with underlying pragmatic influences, I have chosen a multiple case study design to explore the developmental experience of students studying abroad (Stake, 2006). A case study approach allows for multiple sources of evidence to be used in addressing a research question (Yin, 2009; Stake, 2005). Gaining multiple perspectives of multiple students participating in a study abroad program will allow for a deeper understanding of the phenomena of out-of-class experiences while abroad and their impact on psychosocial development.

In this multicase study, students represent individual cases that will contribute to understanding a student's psychosocial development through adventure type experiences on study abroad (Stake, 2005, 2006). Categorically bound together through their common experience abroad, the students become a "quintain" (Stake, 2006). Stake (2006) described a quintain as the umbrella for what is being studied; the similarities and the differences about the individual cases allow the researcher to better understand the quintain.

Following the tenets of Stake's (2006) research, the quintain in this study will consist only of students who participated in a specific study abroad program. This will allow for some consistency of experience and potentially provide a better understanding of the environment created to foster growth and development abroad (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). To understand the study design better, detailed information on the study abroad program, my involvement, participants, and types of experiences participated in will be described further.

Program Description

The study abroad course used in this research study was a short-term (five-week) program based in Cape Town, South Africa. True to most short-term programs, participants lived together with fellow American students participating in the course, and they learned primarily from their home-campus faculty (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Education Abroad Glossary, 2011). Characteristic of short-term programs, students were guided around in groups (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). The program was quite large with 147 students participating. To better accommodate out-of-class excursions, the students were broken into smaller groups of 47 to 50 students led by two academic instructors and two International Study Program staff (a pseudonym was selected for the program for confidentiality). These groups were broken down even further (24 to 25 students) for smaller group discussions.

The International Study Program (ISP), a for-profit study abroad organization, focused on four content areas: leadership, education, adventure, and diplomacy (ISP, n.d.). This study abroad program is different from most other programs because of its inclusion of adventure as one of four content areas (ISP, n.d.). However, there is no literature to support the value added from this approach.

As a joint venture between the University of Georgia (UGA) and ISP, both organizations staffed the program. The ISP staff oversaw logistics of the program ranging from transportation needs and accommodations to providing access for students to sign-up to participate in a variety of adventure type activities. The UGA faculty included full-time instructors from academic ranks and doctoral-level graduate students who directed the curriculum and co-instructed in teaching and grading students.

As a hybrid-program between ISP and UGA, class sessions were divided between instruction by the ISP staff and the UGA faculty. Students took courses focused on service-learning and leadership for a total of six credit hours. At UGA, the courses were housed in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and were taught by faculty with a background in History, Service-Learning, or Leadership Development. As such, the curriculum was largely focused on providing a historical grounding in the country visited.

As a former teaching assistant for the ISP study abroad program, I had the opportunity to experience the curriculum first-hand. The teaching team spent many hours refining the course curriculum and strategies for approaching the subject material. One of the many benefits touted by study abroad programs is the ability to take students into the “field” to learn (Che, et al., 2009; Oppen, et al., 1990). ISP is no different; out-of-class experiences are a large focus of the program. What may be unique however, is a curriculum that incorporates reflection, and adventure-type experiences.

Students spent five-weeks of their summer participating in the out-of-class experiences infused into the curriculum. The experiences focused on three areas: cultural/leadership, service-learning, and adventure. Cultural/leadership experiences included activities that connected students to the history and to the people of Cape Town. Examples included going to Robben

Island to see the prison where Coloureds and Blacks (including Nelson Mandela) were held during Apartheid rule or going to a Rugby game to experience the deeply entrenched sporting culture. Service-learning was experienced through a partnership with a local township. Students engaged with youth and “soup-moms” (local leaders) in the township community. The third area of out-of-the-class experience focused on adventure activities, where students spent a week traveling up the coast of South Africa to participate in experiences like bungee jumping, shark-cage diving, and even touring an elephant sanctuary. To coordinate the large amount of students, the course was broken into thematic weeks that students rotated through. A week was devoted to service, to leadership, and to adventure. The remaining two-weeks served as bookends with one week as an introduction to the country and the final week a synthesis of their experience tying together concepts related to leadership and service-learning.

As a part of the course design, students had the opportunity to engage in various adventure-based activities on their own and/or as an official part of the curriculum. Activities included in the curriculum were caving, shark-cage diving, a strenuous group hike, and the option to go bungee-jumping. Optional activities ranged from skydiving, sandboarding, surfing, abseiling, wind-surfing, cycling, and quad-biking to name a few. While adventure does not generally include simple “sightseeing” or “traveling the country,” these activities may provide the “unknown outcomes” that characterize adventure-type or extraordinary experiences. Ample time was provided for students to explore Cape Town and the nearby cities and towns.

Researcher Involvement

Patton (2002) notes “the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry” (p. 566) and therefore it is important to understand the extent of my involvement and the knowledge I bring of this study abroad program. As mentioned previously I served as one of the Teaching Assistants

for this program. I actually worked with the program for two summers, which meant I traveled with the students, delivered lectures, graded assignments, and handled issues that arose while abroad.

I began working as a Teaching Assistant with the program's faculty director in the late spring of 2011. My expertise in leadership development was utilized initially to strengthen the leadership course content for the program. In my second year with the program, I worked with the faculty director to strengthen multiple facets of the curriculum in both the service-learning and leadership courses.

While responsibilities were split differently between the academic team and the ISP staff, both groups taught in the classroom. Mentioned earlier, the primary responsibilities of the academic team were related to the course content, and the ISP staff was connected to logistics and out-of-class activities. While the program touts adventure as a part of the curriculum, the academic team did not typically accompany students on the adventure week. Because of my research interests connected to adventure experiences and the faculty director's desire to have a more complete picture of what the adventure week experience was like, I accompanied students. This occurred during my first summer working with the program, but by the second summer, to reduce risk, UGA prohibited the academic team from participating in the adventure week. As I talk about the initial adventure experiences associated with this program, my knowledge is based from both personal experience and from an intimate knowledge of the curriculum.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the role my first year with the program played in shaping this research study. While I did not participate in the adventure week my second year, and thus not with the students in this study, I still have an idea of the experiences they had. A critical aspect of qualitative research is an understanding of what is being researched (Patton,

2002). It was my intimate knowledge of the program and the time I spent in the field that led me to select ISP for my research. Additionally, conversations I had with students the first year on the adventure week anecdotally support my belief in adventure-type experiences enhancing a student's study abroad experience. Relevant is Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, and Steinmetz's (1991) "presumption of understanding":

Familiarity with the subject at hand – the subculture, the jargon, and the unwritten codes of behavior – may enable a researcher to delve deeply into the research without having to do all of the preliminary work... However, there are certain issues that arise from familiarity with the subject of which the researcher must be aware. An important, subtle issue concerns a researcher's presumption of understanding. (p. 124).

It is important for me to recognize while my knowledge can be beneficial, I also need to exercise caution in not assuming I understand the students' experience.

Participants

On the study abroad program, students' ranged between 18 and 22 years of age, with class-standings from rising sophomores to rising seniors. Fifty percent of the students enrolled in the course were full-time students at the University of Georgia, with the other fifty percent of the students attending universities primarily in the southeastern United States. A total of 147 students participated in the Cape Town International Study Program.

The three participants for this study were selected based on their participation in the ISP Cape Town study abroad program, and because of their involvement in a preliminary exploratory study where students completed a pre- and post-test connected to psychosocial development, and a supplemental survey based on individual experiences. The data collected from the preliminary study allowed for a more robust picture of the experience students had and was beneficial in

developing the case (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009). The use of the data collected in the preliminary study is described in greater detail in the data collection section. Chapter 4 includes a description of the three participants, which was also provided from the data collected.

Data Collection

Preliminary investigation

The preliminary study consisted of three phases: a quantitative pre-test delivered prior to students leaving the country; an out-of-class experiences survey developed specifically to learn more about the out-of-class activities students experienced, administered about a two-months after their return; and the original quantitative post-test, administered a second time six months after their return. The decision to wait six months to administer the post-test was to allow students to integrate back into their lives on-campus (D. Cooper, personal communication, 2012). Allowing students to re-acclimate on their college campus to what was “normal” in their lives before departure provided an opportunity for experiences abroad to influence potential change in their normal routine (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). The pre- and the post-test was a previously validated instrument designed to measure psychosocial development in college students (Winston, et al., 1999).

Student development task and lifestyles assessment. The Student Development Task and Lifestyles Assessment (SDTLA) was a 153-item survey designed to measure aspects of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model of psychosocial development (SDTLA, n.d.; Winston, et al., 1999). The SDTLA consisted of three developmental task areas: *establishing and clarifying purpose, developing autonomy, and having mature interpersonal relationships* (SDTLA, n.d.; Winston, et al., 1999). Each task was divided into subtasks. Establishing and clarifying purpose had four subtasks: *educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, and cultural*

participation (Winston, et al., 1999). Developing autonomy also had four subtasks: *emotional autonomy*, *interdependence*, *academic autonomy*, and *instrumental autonomy* (Winston, et al., 1999). And having mature interpersonal relationships consisted of two subtasks: *peer relationships* and *tolerance* (Winston, et al., 1999). Winston, et al.'s (1999) research found it “unrealistic [for researchers] to find statistically significant differences on tasks, subtasks, or scales” (p. 34) and instead recommended that individual item responses be analyzed. For this purpose the results from the SDTLA instrument were reviewed in their entirety.

Out-of-class experiences survey. The “out-of-class experiences” survey was developed specifically to learn more about the experiences students participated in and was administered two months after students returned. This survey provides an account of the student’s experience after course assignments were completed, which included reflective journals and papers. The survey was divided into three segments which focused on specific areas of out-of-class experiences: cultural/leadership, service-learning, and adventure. A series of Likert-style questions were asked related to the perception of personal development and the perception of learning. There were a total of ten Likert-Scale questions and seven open-ended questions, which asked students to clarify their experiences related to their perceived influence of certain activities (see Appendix A).

Participants. A total of 25 individuals participated in the pre-test, 13 individuals participated in the post-test, and a total of 26 individuals completed the out-of-class experiences survey. Of those participants only four students participated in both the pre- and post-test, and the out-of-class experiences survey, and three of those four participants elected to participate in this study. With a low return rate these data could not reveal associations that were statistically significant or generalizable; however, information could still be used to learn about the four

individual students who completed all three phases of the study. All participants identified as White or Caucasian.

SDTLA and out-of-class survey usage. As noted, participants for this study were selected because they completed all three phases in the preliminary investigation. The out-of-class experiences survey was completed two months after students returned to ensure an individual's participation and response were not influenced by course grades. For this study, the SDTLA data was used to understand the individual psychosocial development of the three participants. The SDTLA data highlighted positive and backward movement in the tasks and subtasks outlined in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial developmental theory. T-scores were calculated for each pre-and post-test using the normative sample data, and the scores were compared for each individual. All three participants exhibited signs of positive change with some backward movement in different tasks and subtasks. More information was gained about the potential reasons for positive and negative movement through interviews and document analysis as outlined further in data collection. The SDTLA was used to develop some follow-up questions in the individual interviews (see Appendix B). Additionally, the individual out-of-class surveys of the three participants were utilized to gain a perspective of their experience within two months of returning. Using these data allowed a better identification of certain experiences that persisted in their impact a year after the active study abroad period. The SDTLA, the out-of-class survey, and interviews were used to triangulate information and thus provide a more complete case study for each of the participants.

Memos

Memos were utilized in a variety of ways throughout the duration of this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) recognized memoing as going "beyond codes and their relationships to

[represent all aspects] of [a] study – personal, methodological, and substantive” (p. 72). In this study memo-writing served as a tool in keeping an audit trail to record my processes and observations during the interviews and throughout the analysis and coding process (Charmaz, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse & Field, 1995). As the data were analyzed memo-writing also aided in tying “together different pieces of data into recognizable clusters” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). Memos were also instrumental in developing and revising the codes identified in this study, and elements of how memos were utilized are noted throughout the phases of the study below.

Interviews

Two qualitative interviews with each participant were conducted face-to-face and lasted between one and one-half hour to two hours each (Patton, 2002; Warren, 2002). Warren (2002) described qualitative interviewing as a conversation where participants are “more likely to be viewed as meaning makers, not passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers” (p. 83). The purpose of both interviews was “to derive interpretations, not fact or laws, from [the participant’s response]” (Warren, 2002, p. 83). Seidman’s (1998) interview structure themes and Flanagan’s (1954) critical incident interviewing techniques were used to guide the interviews and they will be explained further below.

Although this investigation involved interviews as an essential component of the case study design, the interviews were developed with access to the SDTLA and the out-of-class experiences survey data from the previous exploratory study. Initial data from the out-of-class experiences survey administered in the preliminary study were reviewed to familiarize the researcher with the experiences described by the participants within two months of returning from their travels. The out-of-class survey served to inform the researcher’s interview questions.

Additionally, questions identified in the first interview were asked previously as a part of a class project, and the interview protocol (see Appendix B) was piloted with three students who closely resembled the participant's demographics outlined in the study. The pilot interviews assisted in developing and strengthening the questions asked, and they helped determine the flow of the interview questions. Memoing was helpful to this process, as were consistent conversations with committee members and colleagues in the field (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Interview one. The first interview aimed to provide a background of the participants' prior experiences with adventure-type activities and international travel, as well as to learn more about their experience studying abroad with ISP (Seidman, 1998). The researcher hoped to gain initial thoughts and ideas connected to the participants' interpretation and valuing of their out-of-class experiences while studying abroad. Additional clarifying questions related to their survey responses were asked where applicable. An interview guide was used to create consistency among the interviews (Patton, 2002).

Interview two. In the second interview "participants [were] asked to [specifically] reflect on the meaning of their experience" (Seidman, 1998). They were also asked to clarify statements extracted from their journal entries, their SDTLA results, and their initial interview responses (Creswell, 2007). Flanagan's (1954) critical incident interviewing technique was used as a model to elicit descriptive responses about the experiences participants shared. As an experience was identified the participant was asked: 1) to describe the activity or experience in specific detail, 2) to share what they did, who was a part of the experience, how it made them feel, and what their actions were, and 3) to identify the outcome of the experience (i.e. what they gained, if anything, as a result of participating) (cf. Flanagan, 1954; Sommers-Flanagan &

Sommers-Flanagan, 2003). The interview guide developed for the second interview focused on understanding the student's study abroad experience with reference to all data collected.

Journal Entries

After the first interview, a document analysis of the participant's journal was conducted. Included in the analysis were journal reflections focused on questions that may have elicited comments regarding the student's perception of his or her personal development. A list of the journal assignments is listed in Appendix C. These journal entries provide a better understanding of adventure-based experiences. These entries may also have contributed to the students' experience of change or transformation alluded to in Chapters 1 and 2 (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). The journal analysis was followed by a review of the SDTLA from the preliminary study and the second interview as discussed above. I believe these multiple data sources have aided in answering the research questions outlined in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Methods Used to Address Key Research Questions

Method	Key Research Questions		
	Students Perception of Change?	Psychosocial Developmental Change?	Experiences that may have contributed?
Out-of-class Experiences Survey	X	X	X
Interviews	X	X	X
SDTLA Data	X	X	
Journal Entries	X	X	X

Data Management

Interviews were recorded using a voice recording software on a Mac computer. Files were saved and password protected. Interviews were transcribed with no more than two weeks

between the time of the interview and the transcription. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed twice for accuracy. Memos were also recorded immediately following each interview to document interactions between the interviewer and interviewee (Patton, 2002). Additionally, during the interviews, when appropriate, notes of non-verbal cues and the environment were taken (Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

Using a case study approach allowed for multiple data sets to be collected, which “in light of the complexity and diversity of the texts” (Keats, 2009, p. 188) presented unique challenges in creating a logical analysis approach. While I had initially anticipated using two common strategies for analyzing the text, “word-count” and “key-words-in context” (Altheide, 1987; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Prior, 2003), I soon realized these methods would fail to help me understand the deeper meaning of the text (Prior, 2003). The constant comparative method (Boeije, 2002; Glaser, 1965; Merriam 1998) was utilized in conjunction to analysis strategies for multiple texts suggested by Keats’ (2009) recommendations for narrative inquiry.

The constant comparative method served as a guide for the analysis process of the data collected. As the name suggests, data collected were “constantly” compared throughout data collection and analysis (Boeije, 2002; Glaser, 1965, Merriam, 1998). Data analysis began in an informal way after the first interviews with participants were completed. I read through interview transcripts and journals in order to prepare for the second interview and in doing so I began to see common concepts emerge. I took note of those concepts in memos I kept of the interviewing procedures and eventually in the data analysis procedures.

Patton (2002) recognized the ability of memos to serve as a part of both data collection and data analysis. I found memos to be quite useful and they were used throughout the research study, from pilot interviews, during the interviews process and during the data analysis phase. The memos were not only used to capture analysis insights observed in the interviews, but also insights from reviewing and coding student journals. Ideas developed were utilized to further analyze the data.

Holistic Review

Keats' (2009) work discussed the use of multiple texts (written, spoken, and visual) as a means to better understand the experience of the participant during their process. Understanding that "each text tells its own story, [and] yet all texts share a relationship in documenting the experiences of a single person, [helps the reader understand that] ... the texts hold many stories that integrate and influence each other" (Keats, 2009, p. 188). With this knowledge in hand, after all the data were collected, I proceeded to conduct an initial reading of all the datasets for each participant to allow for meaning in the texts to become more apparent. This general reading was referred to by Keats (2009) as a holistic review. Conducting a holistic review first was to provide an "initial and more global impression... of the patterns and themes" (Keats, 2009, p. 189) that appeared to be arising. (Insights and initial impressions are noted in Chapter 4.) The holistic review allowed for an understanding of both intratextual and intertextual relationships (Keats, 2009). Intratextual refers to the "relationships between the texts of a single participant" (Keats, 2009, p. 191), and intertextual explores "how the texts are related and influence each other" (Bazerman, as cited in Keats, 2009, p. 191) across the group of participants.

Thematic Development

The holistic review provided initial ideas of themes that were beginning to emerge from the data sets. During this process I used “memo-writing” to record my processes and observations of the findings (Charmaz, 2000). The memos served to help elaborate on the processes I used and identified the assumptions I had within the codes that were applied. The process was iterative, first reviewing all data sets by participant and then across all three participants (Boeije, 2002). The codes identified through this process created a structure for organizing the data (Charmaz, 2000; Morse & Field, 1995). Initially forty-eight different codes were identified, and eventually categorized into twenty-one codes. The technique of memo-writing helped as I “grapple[d] with ideas about the data, set an analytic course, refine[d] categories, and define[d] the relationship among various categories” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 517-518; see also Morse & Field, 1995). As codes were refined, repeating ideas were organized into overarching groups “that express[ed] a common theme” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 61; see also Morse & Field, 1995). This process was time consuming and included multiple conversations with colleagues and committee members as well .

Due to the design of the research questions, after several iterations of coding, codes were compared to the seven vectors of psychosocial development identified in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research. Through this process I was reminded of the study’s focus on psychosocial development. In comparing, many codes aligned with the vectors discussed in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research, and this helped to eventually organize the codes into overarching themes. To aid in answering the research questions, the twenty-one codes were aligned under Chickering and Reisser’s vectors. By identifying commonalities with and diversions from Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors, I believe a better understanding

of transformation or change while participating in study abroad was offered through a lens of psychosocial development. Themes identifying types of experiences participants believed contributed to their psychosocial development are discussed in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

Reliability and Validity

As a qualitative researcher I am keenly aware of the need to produce research that is both valid and reliable (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) identified concerns for qualitative researchers to achieve reliability and validity because most qualitative research is done, “alone in the field” (p. 262). In addition to recognizing my bias in the outset of this study, I strived to increase validity and reliability through an audit trail of my procedures, (as previously mentioned in memoing) and through member checking and peer examination.

Member Checking

The voice of the participant experience was essential to the outcomes of this research study, and as a researcher I wanted to ensure that my participants’ voices had been accurately represented. As a means of enhancing internal validity, Merriam (1998), suggested performing member checks, which meant “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the ... [participants] ... and asking them if the results [were] plausible” (p. 204). To aid in accurately representing student voices I reviewed transcripts for places where I was unable to understand the interview recording. All three participants were sent the thematic findings found in Chapter 5 to ensure their voices were represented appropriately. All three students shared their thoughts via email, and I followed up by phone with one participant to ensure I understood her concerns. I made appropriate changes to her data, which she confirmed as a more accurate representation

of her thoughts and feelings. By taking the time to follow up with the participants, the findings in this study are a more accurate representation of their experiences.

Peer Examination

Merriam (1998) noted peer examination as one of six strategies to increase internal validity. This tactic is just as it sounds, asking peers to examine the research. Miles and Huberman (1994) talk about this idea of peer examination as a “safeguard against self-delusion” (p. 264). By consulting with others my aim was to limit researcher bias throughout all phases of the study. During the course of this study, from developing the interview protocol to analyzing the data, and writing up the findings, peer examination was employed.

CHAPTER 4

CASE DESCRIPTIONS

To provide better context and clarity for understanding the data collected in this study, this chapter will focus on background information of the participants collected through interviews, journals, and the SDTLA dataset. Chapter 5 will be used to report on the themes and patterns that were identified in each case and those that defined the cases collectively. To ensure an understanding of the SDTLA dataset presented in the background description of each participant, a brief review of the SDTLA data will be provided. Following the SDTLA review, a description of my relationship to the participants will be shared. Next, a background description of each participant will be included to provide context for the thematic findings presented in Chapter 5. Pseudonyms were selected for the participants and other identifying information has been altered to protect their confidentiality.

SDTLA Data Set

As noted in Chapter 3, the participants were selected because of their participation in both a pre- and post-test of the SDTLA. As a validated instrument measuring psychosocial development in college-aged students, the SDTLA instrument was utilized to identify change that may have occurred in the participants as a result of studying abroad. The SDTLA focused on three developmental vectors found in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research: *moving through autonomy towards interdependence* (task: developing autonomy), *developing purpose* (task: establishing and clarifying purpose), and *developing mature interpersonal relationships*

(task: mature interpersonal relationships). The three SDTLA tasks have ten subtasks combined between them (see Table 2, tasks are in bold, subtasks are in italic).

Table 2

SDTLA Percentage of Change Scores by Participant

Task/Subtask	Sarah Soph. – Jr.	Jason Soph. – Jr.	Alicia Jr. – Sr.
Developing Autonomy Task	13%	4%	24%
<i>Instrumental Autonomy</i>	-1%	-17%	-14%
<i>Emotional Autonomy</i>	30%	1%	18%
<i>Interdependence</i>	46%	26%	33%
<i>Academic Autonomy</i>	7%	-4%	33%
Establishing & Clarifying Purpose Task	8%	6%	-9%
<i>Cultural Participation</i>	11%	1%	-13%
<i>Educational Involvement</i>	59%	10%	-45%
<i>Career Planning</i>	82%	-2%	30%
<i>Lifestyle Planning</i>	1%	13%	-21%
Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships Task	6%	7%	-3%
<i>Peer Relationships</i>	12%	-14%	2%
<i>Tolerance</i>	10%	20%	-3%

The SDTLA data highlighted positive and backward movement in the tasks and subtasks outlined in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial developmental theory. T-scores were calculated for each pre-and post-test using the normative sample data, and the scores were compared for each individual. Participants exhibited positive movement, marked by positive numbers, in the tasks and subtasks, which suggests developmental growth. In some cases, participants exhibited backwards movement, designated by negative numbers (see Table 2). While positive movement implies progress, negative movement does not necessarily suggest that a student has regressed. Rather it may show Erikson's (1959/1980) idea of each developmental

stage being marked by a “crisis,” propelling the individual into the next stage. Chickering and Reisser (1993) agreed that psychosocial development does not occur as a step-by-step process. Development is messy and backwards movement simply may mean the participants are grappling with ideas or concepts they once believed to be different, or they may have gained new competences and are figuring out how to exhibit them in their day-to-day lives. An example of this negative movement is identified by the instrumental independence subtask on the SDTLA, which will be reviewed more in-depth in Chapter 6.

My Relationship to the Participants

I believe my relationship with each individual played a part in his or her involvement in the study. Additionally, as I interviewed each student I became keenly aware of how my relationship may have influenced the outcome of the interviews, which will be noted appropriately. Therefore, it is important to know the nature of my relationship with each participant because the dynamics may have influenced their participation and their responses.

To better understand my relationship with each of the participants, having a grasp of the program design related to course instruction will be helpful. As described in Chapter 3, the program was broken into three teaching groups consisting of approximately 48 students. Two members from the teaching team led each group of 48 students. During the split weeks students were taught in the larger group of 48 students, and split in half for grading and small group discussions. Only during the first and last week of the program were students taught in the larger group of 147.

My relationship to each of the participants varied due to my role as a Teaching Assistant (TA) on the study abroad program. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the teaching team was made up of two faculty and four doctoral-level teaching assistants. Having previously worked as a TA on

the program, that summer I served as the Lead TA and thus had more teaching responsibilities during the first and last week when all 147 students were together for class. Having more responsibility meant I interacted with more than the students in my teaching group.

My Relationship to Sarah

Sarah was in another teaching group, taught by a different faculty member and TA. Despite this distance, I developed a friendly relationship with Sarah. I interacted with her both in the larger group of 147 students and in a class group of 98 students. In class, I led discussions and Sarah contributed often to the conversation. Her contributions exhibited depth as she connected her out-of-class experiences to the conversations taking place in the classroom. This led to friendly interactions in the hallways and lobby of our accommodations. Conversations would often consist of inquiring where she, along with other students, were going or what excursions they had just arrived back from. However, several times I was able to have deeper conversations with her about her experience in the township, and about her hopes and dreams for the future. Additionally, I, along with other TAs, shared cabs and split fares with her and her friends to go to the more popular (frequented) tourist destinations.

The relationship I developed with Sarah while abroad led her to ask me to write a recommendation for graduate school, which I obliged. While she asked for a recommendation in the late spring of 2013, and I did not conduct interviews until the spring of 2104, I cannot help but wonder how that may have influenced her participation in the study. I speculate that she may have felt a sense of obligation to help me since I helped her by writing recommendations for graduate school. Or, perhaps it was the relationship that was developed abroad that led her to want to help with my research. Either way, I believe our relationship influenced her participation in the study. I also believe my knowledge of some of her experiences abroad, and

knowing her future career objectives helped bring depth to the interview. Having a friendly rapport with Sarah allowed for a more personal conversation that may not have occurred without an existing relationship. I believe my relationship with Sarah was a strength. I have not had interactions with Sarah beyond being Facebook friends and, of course, writing the recommendation for her graduate school applications.

My Relationship to Jason

As previously mentioned, as a TA on the program, I was partnered with another TA and we were responsible for 48 students. Jason was in my teaching partners small group, so he was not a part of my small group discussions, nor did I grade his assignments. However, as a part of the larger group of 48 students, I led discussions and participated in tours with this group. Those interactions allowed for strong rapport with Jason, which was increased further because my apartment in Cape Town was two doors down from his. Living in close proximity provided a greater number of interactions where casual conversations were fostered. Jason was also a “community group leader,” which meant I, along with the other faculty and staff, participated in small group meetings once a week with Jason. As a community group leader, my co-teaching assistant and I would frequently call on Jason to help lead break-out group discussions. Our interactions at these weekly meetings, I believe, also contributed to building a deeper relationship. Along with other TAs, I also split cabs with Jason and his friends sometimes to go to the more popular (frequented) tourist destinations.

Like Sarah, I believe the relationship I developed with Jason while abroad also influenced his participation in the study. He may have felt a sense of obligation to help me since we developed a friendly relationship while abroad. Additionally, his role as a community group leader could have also contributed to his participation. Regardless, I believe my familiarity with

Jason and his circle of friends while abroad offered a deeper insight into his experience. Our conversation was very relaxed and Jason was very open in sharing stories about his experience, including the development of a romantic relationship abroad. I believe my relationship with Jason was a strength because he was comfortable sharing more intimate experiences of his budding relationship with Erin. I have not had interactions with Jason beyond being Facebook friends.

My Relationship to Alicia

Like Jason, Alicia was also in the other half of the group of 48 students that I and my co-teaching assistant taught. While Alicia was not a part of my small group discussions and I did not grade her assignments, like Jason, she was also part of the larger group discussions and class tours. I believe Alicia and I developed a closer relationship because we both came from the same university. This connection quickly led to friendly interactions and conversations. Additionally, Alicia had an interest in hiking, which another TA and I also enjoyed. This shared interest led Alicia to ask us frequently to join her on excursions. While our schedules did not permit us to join on the hikes, we did join her and several of her friends for dinner one night, and like Jason and Sarah, we shared cabs with her and her friends to go to the more popular (frequented) tourist destinations.

The relationship I developed with Alicia was unique because I found myself almost in a mentor role while abroad and afterward. She felt comfortable sharing some of the challenges she experienced while in South Africa, which she also alluded to in her interviews. In particular, despite a passion for photography, Alicia really struggled with taking pictures of what she was experiencing. She grappled with whether or not she wanted to still be a photographer, and we talked at length about some of the issues with which she was struggling. I believe this, and being

at the same university, contributed to a continued relationship beyond the program.

Additionally, my educational background was similar enough for Alicia to want to seek my guidance about her career path and her next steps. I am sure that running into her on-campus also fostered our continued relationship. Prior to her participation in the interviews, we had coffee several times. When Alicia became involved in the study, there were probably four months between our last coffee date and her participation in the study. When she agreed to participate in the study, I had already moved from Athens, and therefore it was not odd for me to no longer have coffee with her. I am confident that our mentor/mentee relationship was a large reason for Alicia's participation in the study. She wanted to help me with my research, and because she met the previous requirements I was happy to have her participate. I approached the interviews with Alicia the same way I did with the other participants, but I know that our relationship may have influenced her responses. One thing I noticed with Alicia was her need to make sure she was saying the right thing, which I noted in one of my observation memos:

After the recording stopped [Alicia] asked how many other students were being interviewed and if they were saying the same things that she was saying: "did they have the same experiences?" There seems to be a constant need for affirmation to make sure she is doing the right thing. [Alicia] is so conscientious and almost worried about her experience not being the "right" one to have. So I assured her that other students shared similar experiences to her and that they talked about similar things. I also wonder how our relationship plays into her responses and perhaps skews or prohibits her responses to me. Is she trying to impress me or not disappoint me since we have a different relationship, having served as mentor to her, and because she sees me as an instructor? (Observation Memo: 4/11/14).

Despite the potential of trying to “please” me, I also believe my relationship with Alicia allowed for deeper insights into her experiences. She was very open with me about things she both liked and disliked. I did not have the same experience of dislikes from the other two participants. I believe my continued relationship with Alicia was beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding of her experiences abroad. I have tried to maintain an awareness of bias in my analysis of Alicia’s materials. I have not had further interactions with Alicia beyond occasional exchanges related to progress on her career on Facebook.

Introduction to Participant Case Studies

I chose to include specific background information related to the type of institution in which participants were enrolled, their prior experiences traveling abroad, and their prior experiences with adventure-type activities because of the context it provides for each of them. I believe that prior life experiences contribute to where an individual may be developmentally and are therefore relevant to understanding the findings. However, the focus on prior experiences and type of institution is not to say that these are factors that contribute to the participants’ psychosocial development. It is merely to provide a context for the reader because I believe it may influence the types of experiences the participants chose to share. Additionally, there has been research (McKeown, 2009) to support greater developmental growth in individuals who are participating in their first study abroad experience. The ISP experience was the first study abroad program for all three students, though both Sarah and Jason had brief travel experiences internationally to the Caribbean and Canada prior to South Africa. The third student, Alicia, had never traveled outside of the country.

Each case presented will start with a brief background of the participant including: basic demographics, type of institution attended, why they chose to study abroad with ISP, information

related to prior experiences abroad, and previous adventure type experiences they may have had. Next, a brief review of the participant's SDTLA tasks and subtasks scores will be provided. To provide context and a better understanding of the tasks and subtasks see Appendix D. The review will highlight both positive and negative percentage of change scores, with a greater focus on scores exceeding twenty-percent. This study does not mean to imply that smaller gains suggested by the SDTLA were not important, rather greater attention has been given to the more dramatic percentage of change scores for the participants. The review of the SDTLA scores will be followed by the participant's overall perceptions of change, identified in the holistic review of their interviews and journals. Following this overview of each case, the most prevalent themes identified from the interviews and journal data collected will be shared.

Participant One: Sarah

Sarah is a Caucasian, female student who attended a large, land-grant university. At the beginning of her participation in the International Study Program (ISP), she had just finished her sophomore year of college. Thus, she was in her Junior year when she completed the SDTLA post-test and in her Senior year when she completed interviews.

As mentioned, Sarah previously traveled out of the country on a cruise to the Caribbean and on family vacations to Canada and has not travelled internationally since her ISP experience (Interview 1, 2014). When asked why she chose the study abroad program she did, Sarah indicated that her desire to travel to Africa resulted from "*a bunch of projects about Rwanda [she had done] ... throughout high school*" (Interview 1, 2014). It appears that her previous research sparked an interest in the continent, and, after talking with her advisor, South Africa seemed to be the safest country for her to travel to: ISP "*pass[ed] all of the tests and had everything [she] was looking for*" (Interview 1, 2014). Part of her desire was characterized by

her “*passion for service in that area of the world*” (Interview 1, 2014). This desire to “serve” may have influenced the experiences she shared in the interviews.

Prior experiences connected to adventurous activities may also have had an influence on the stories Sarah shared. In her first interview Sarah described herself as being “*a little more daring*” than some people would think she was (Interview 1, 2014). This may have contributed to some of the experiences she chose to participate in, and the experiences she decided to share. To better understand the experiences Sarah had, I asked her to describe what adventure means. In her own words, adventure was described as:

something that is a non-normative experience, not something that's necessarily in my comfort zone, and it somehow induces some sort of adrenaline rush, or some other kind of feeling. ... And being there with a group of other people that are going through it as well made it an adventure. If I was alone it would have been just something scary, but being with other people it was kind of an adventure that we were going on together. It was something unusual and unfamiliar, yet exciting all at the same time. (Interview 1, 2014)

Sarah's definition suggests that for an experience to be an adventure it must: 1) be something out of the ordinary, 2) induce an adrenaline rush (characterized by being out of one's comfort zone), and 3) be a shared experience. Sarah's definition was shared without prior knowledge of how adventure was being defined for this study. Despite this, her definition shares similar ideas (underlined) related to the definition of adventure created for this study, which includes: spontaneity, community, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b). Additionally, it is important to note that

Sarah's definition of adventure influenced the experiences she chose to share when asked about adventure specifically.

Sarah's experience abroad was largely influenced by her definition of adventure. When asked to use a word or phrase to sum up her study abroad experience the following dialogue ensued:

I would sum it up as a once in a lifetime opportunity that really pushed me outside of my comfort zone in a myriad of different ways.

Interviewer: In what ways? What are...

Sarah: So, adventure wise. The things we kind of discussed about just those types of activities, really nothing to do with service or being in Africa, just an adventure activity.

Something that scared you, heights, something like that and getting over that fear, umm but also... service that was, that was something, umm I think those are the two big, the two big things. (Interview 1, 2014)

As Sarah shared stories from her studying abroad, there were repeated connections to her adventure experiences and to her time of service in the local township community.

Sarah's SDTLA Data in Brief

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, participants involved in this study were selected based on their previous participation in a preliminary research study I conducted looking at psychosocial development. The participants all completed a pre- and post-test from the SDTLA. Their scores are supplemental to this research and are valuable in helping better understand developmental outcomes that may have occurred as a result of studying abroad.

Sarah's scores on the SDTLA were marked by a positive change on all three task measures: developing autonomy, mature interpersonal relationships, and establishing and

clarifying purpose. Her developing autonomy tasks and subtasks, connected to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *moving through autonomy towards interdependence* vector, were marked overall by positive movement. Sarah's highest scores in this vector related to the emotional autonomy subtask (30% improvement) and the interdependence subtask (46%). From interviews and journals there was only one quote to support positive movement in emotional autonomy, while there were a number of quotes to support her growth in the interdependence subtask. These examples will be shared in-depth in Chapter 5.

Sarah also showed positive gains in tasks and subtasks connected to *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. Her degree of change in this area was not as pronounced as in other areas, but notable nonetheless. She experienced positive movement related to the peer relationships subtask (12%) and in the tolerance subtask (10%). Both subtasks are supported in the findings from her interviews and journals, which will also be reviewed below.

Sarah's greatest growth noted by the SDTLA was in the establishing and clarifying purpose task, which connects to *developing purpose*. Her highest overall gain reported was in the career planning subtask (82%) and in the educational involvement subtask (59%). This suggested growth is seen in greater detail through her interviews. It is important to note, however, that Sarah's year in school may have had some impact on her movement along the *developing purpose* vector.

Holistic Review

In reviewing data from the preliminary study, journal entries while she was abroad, and the interviews conducted in this study, Sarah gives evidence of change from studying abroad. In one of her responses she shared the following:

...and it's been really interesting to kind of see how, the difference from the first two semesters of col-, the first two years of college and my second two. Not in classes, and the academic sense, but just in who I am as a person, umm, besides the fact of just obviously being older and having more experiences with things, but just how I am handling situations, or handling my stress, and umm, so I know those aren't necessarily experiences or activities, but umm, those are by far the two biggest things that I have gotten from the trip. (Interview 2, 2014)

The differences she mentioned invoke the patterns of psychosocial development represented in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory. She also attributes her change or personal growth to her study abroad experience: it forced her to think about certain things differently and to really identify what she valued most (Interview 2, 2014). Having an experience that forced her to identify her values connects to the psychosocial development that is the focus of this study. Her overall statements throughout her interviews consistently suggested growth and change, which will be discussed in further detail in the thematic results section.

Also to be discussed further are the types of experiences that participants believed were influential in their growth. In the holistic review of Sarah's data two main areas of experience rose to the top: adventure and service experiences. There is a consistency in these two areas having a positive impact on her personal development. In the survey questionnaire completed two-and-one-half months after her return she *strongly agreed* that experiences in the township, on Robben Island, and bungee jumping positively influenced her personal development. Eighteen months later, she was still talking about these experiences having a significant impact on her feelings of being changed from her study abroad experience. The impact of these experiences will be found in the stories Sarah shared from her study abroad experience.

Participant Two: Jason

Jason is a Caucasian, male student who attended a small, private, liberal arts university. At the beginning of his participation in the International Study Program (ISP), Jason had just finished his sophomore year of college. Thus, he was in his Junior year when he completed the SDTLA post-test and in his Senior year when he completed interviews.

As mentioned, Jason previously traveled out of the country to the Caribbean and he mentioned going to Canada, in the Likert-scale survey completed two months after returning. Other than another trip to the Caribbean, Jason has not travelled internationally since his ISP experience. When asked why he chose the study abroad program he did, it was largely because of meeting Rick, one of the ISP staffers, who was publicizing the program in the student center on-campus. The recollection of his interaction with Rick offers some context for Jason's selection of ISP's program:

I heard about it my freshman year actually. ... I just happened to see [ISP's] table walking by outside at our student center. ... The guy working the table just kind of grabbed me and pulled me over and said "Hey, you wanna go abroad?" or something, and I was like "Well, yeah that sounds good!" And, South Africa is actually one of the locations I have always really kind of had in mind as a place I wanted to visit someday. ... So that really just sold me, and then you know once he started talking about it I was pretty much sold. And I waited, I ended up waiting [until] ... after my sophomore year ... I chose to wait a year and it turned out for the best! (Interview 1, 2014)

When asked why he chose Cape Town Jason said it was because "Africa really fascinated [him], just the ... diversity that [was] there. the Mediterranean climates, and then the deserts" (Interview 1). When he was looking at programs, he had heard Cape Town was a growing,

upcoming European-style city, which he thought was cool. Jason also seemed to have selected South Africa because it was unique, not a location that was offered by his home institution, like Ecuador and Greece.

Jason's reasons for choosing the ISP seemed to be based on the location and the adventure, not the program's focus on leadership or service. Despite the focus on location, prior experiences connected to adventure were also still relevant and may have had an influence on the stories Jason shared. To better understand the experiences Jason shared, I asked him to describe what adventure means to him. In his own words, adventure has two components,

one side of it, I think is, really taking a step out of your comfort zone and doing something that not only you might not feel a hundred percent comfortable with, but something that intimidates you and even might scare you...cough, cough, bungee jumping. [...] So I think that's one part, and then the other part I would say is really being outgoing and getting to experience something brand new that you are not used to seeing every day, and things like that. So I think there's, there's the extreme version of bungee jumping and really going for it, and then also I think just doing something new with, with new people even, too. (Interview 1, 2014)

Jason's definition suggests that for an experience to be an adventure it must: 1) be something out of one's comfort zone, 2) be something brand new or out of the ordinary, and 3) be a shared experience. This definition was shared without prior knowledge of how adventure was being defined for this study. Additionally, when asked to share personal examples of adventure, he talked about a spontaneous trip he went on with his family during spring break. Talking about that trip he said, *"Okay, this is an adventure. It's something, it's not really out of my comfort zone, but it's new, it's unexpected, it's spontaneous"* (Interview 1, 2014). Jason's definition and

description of adventure experience also has features in common with this study's definition of adventure (underlined), including: spontaneity, community, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b).

Additionally, it is important to note that Jason's definition of adventure influenced the experiences he chose to share when asked about adventure specifically.

Like Sarah, Jason's experience abroad was also largely influenced by his definition of adventure. When asked to use a word or phrase to sum up his study abroad experience the following dialogue ensued:

Well, if I had to do one word, the first word that comes to mind is amazing

Interviewer: Tell me more. Why the word amazing? What about that word captures your experience?

Jason: I just had a lot of different experiences there, that while doing it, in my mind I was always saying "this is incredible!" "this is amazing!" "this is ridiculous even that I am getting to experience this!" And, I think the first "wow" moment, ... for me was probably going up Table Mountain and getting to the top and then just having that panoramic view of everything from the city below you, to the mountain range in the distance, and then you turn around and there's the Twelve Apostles and then looking down is Camps Bay. Oh it's coming back, just having that view it was my first "wow" moment, and then you know everything after that is "wow" on Robben Island, "wow" I'm in the world cup stadium getting a tour, I am on adventure week doing all of this stuff. "Wow" look at the service week and the conditions these people are living in. So I think I choose that word because it was experience, after experience that I really associated with that. (Interview 1, 2014)

In my second interview with Jason, I asked him to explain what he meant by a “wow” moment. To him *“a wow moment [was] one of those moments in your life where you should stop and remember it and live it fully... [a moment you] should stop and take note of and not just fly past”* (Interview 2, 2014). As Jason shares stories from studying abroad, there are repeated connections to his adventure experiences and this idea of savoring the moment.

Also of importance to provide context for Jason’s experiences and his developmental growth was a romantic relationship that began while he was studying abroad. He spoke about his girlfriend, Erin, and how that relationship influenced his experiences, how he behaved in certain situations to be “brave” for her, and how it shaped his return home. Reflecting on his first semester back, he talks about the deepening of their relationship. This is relevant to aspects of the psychosocial development this study is examining and will be noted appropriately in Chapter 5.

Another aspect relevant to interpreting how Jason talked about his experiences was his role as an Ambassador for ISP. Being an Ambassador for ISP meant Jason routinely went to organization meetings on campus throughout the school year to publicize the program with the intent of getting students to choose ISP as their study abroad program. This continual work with ISP meant Jason was well versed in talking about the “best” highlights of the program and this was evident in our interviews. In order to hear about his experience from his own perspective, I first let him share as an Ambassador, and then I would follow up with questions asking him to respond as himself and not as an Ambassador. Regardless, as hard as I may have tried, I know his experience selling the organization influenced how he talked about certain experiences. For instance when I asked him to share an experience that he tended to share with others, he talked about an experience he shared with others as an Ambassador. His memorable experiences are

intertwined with what he chose to share with those he was selling the program to. While they were no doubt memorable, unlike his peers, Jason may have had more time to think about his experience and craft what he shared. His memories and the stories he shared were no doubt influenced in some way by his role as an Ambassador. This is important in understanding Jason's experience and will be noted where appropriate. Additionally, Jason's involvement as an Ambassador, along with the relationship I developed with him while abroad, may have influenced his participation in this study.

Jason's SDTLA Data in Brief

While Jason's scores on the SDTLA noted an overall positive growth, some scores indicated backward movement. Jason's percentage of change in each task/subtask was low, with only two subtasks showing a percentage change greater than twenty percent. Despite the low percentage of change, seventy percent of the task/subtask scores were in a positive direction.

Jason exhibited both positive and negative movement in the developing autonomy tasks and subtasks, which directly connects to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *moving through autonomy towards interdependence* vector. It appears to be a sixty/forty split in forward movement versus backward movement, with the interdependence subtask marked by a change of twenty-six percent. This positive movement in interdependence will be reviewed in greater detail in relation to the findings from the interviews and journals. The second task that showed a higher percentage of change in this vector was the instrumental autonomy subtask (-17%). While this second percentage was marked in the negative, it still indicates change. A potential explanation for this negative movement will also be provided further below.

Jason also showed mixed movement in the tasks and subtasks connected to *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. His growth in this area exhibited his second highest score on

the SDTLA, which was in the tolerance subtask (20%). The other subtask in this section was peer relationships (-14%), on which Jason appeared to regress. In addition to explaining the positive movement in the tolerance subtask, Jason's interviews and journal entries may also help explain the negative movement in the peer relationships subtask.

Jason exhibited positive gains in all but one area of the establishing and clarifying purpose task/subtasks, which parallels Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing purpose* vector. The percentage of change experienced in this area was not very high, but change was experienced nonetheless. Jason's highest percentage of change was found in the lifestyle planning subtask (13%) with his second highest percentage change was in the educational involvement subtask (10%). Changes in both subtasks are supported in the findings from interviews and journals.

Holistic Review

The holistic review of the data collected (preliminary study, journal entries while abroad, and interviews) from Jason also makes a case for an affirmative answer to the first research question regarding "being changed" from studying abroad. Jason spoke repeatedly throughout his interviews about the adventure experiences he participated in; and when asked what experience he felt was more transformative than others he responded with "*probably adventure week, honestly. [...] It just really opened my eyes and helped me step out of my comfort zone, and I mean I know I've said that three or four times now*" (Interview 2, 2014). While this statement brushes the surface, throughout his interviews Jason talked often about gaining self-confidence and building relationships. Additionally, Jason's perspective of adventure being tied to taking advantage of opportunities you might not have otherwise was evident throughout his interviews. While Jason did not recognize his growth as definitively as Sarah did, it was still

evident. Stories shared about gaining confidence, supporting others, and building relationships all connect to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial developmental theory. Jason's statements related to his personal growth and development will be discussed further in the thematic results section.

Also important are the types of experiences participants believed were influential to their growth. While Jason focused largely on the influence adventure activities had on his experience, he also talked about a class excursion to Robben Island (the prison where Mandela was held), and the poverty he saw during his service week experience. There is thus a case for these experiences having a positive impact on his personal development. In a survey questionnaire completed two-and-one-half months after returning, he *strongly agreed* that experiences during adventure week (specifically, bungee and shark-cage diving), touring Robben Island, and participating in the service week positively influenced his personal development. Eighteen months later he was still talking about these experiences having a significant impact on his feelings of being changed from his study abroad experience. The impact of these experiences are evident in the stories Jason shared from his study abroad experience.

Participant Three: Alicia

Alicia is a Caucasian, female student who attended a large, land-grant university. At the beginning of her participation in the International Study Program (ISP) Alicia had just finished her junior year of college and was headed into her senior year. Incidentally, Alicia graduated in December of her senior year, thus she was graduating when she completed the SDTLA post-test. She had been working for herself, as a photographer, for a year when she completed interviews. This is relevant because of the stories she shared in her interviews.

As mentioned, prior to South Africa, Alicia had never traveled out of the country. Since studying abroad, Alicia traveled to Ireland on a graduation trip with family, but she expressed that Africa was still her favorite continent. When asked what led her to study abroad, Alicia's response was that she knew she wanted to go on at least one study abroad program. As a freshman she found out about ISP and had signed up for a program they were offering in a South American country. Unfortunately, the trip did not fill and was cancelled. It was not until her Junior year, as her collegiate experience was quickly coming to an end, that Alicia decided to study abroad again. With her prior knowledge of ISP, she went to an interest meeting and knew the trip to South Africa was the perfect choice. When asked, "why South Africa?" her response was simple: *"because it's Africa...[I've] always had a heart for Africa"* (Interview 1, 2014). Part of her desire to travel to Cape Town stemmed from always wanting to go on a mission trip to Africa to *"give back,"* and because of the experiences she could have, like going on a safari (Interview 1, 2014). These themes of "giving back" or serving others, and having unique experiences are a common thread through the stories Alicia shared in her interviews.

This idea of unique or uncommon experiences connected to how Alicia defined what adventure meant. Her definition of adventure, in her own words, was:

anything new to you, [...] like I don't think it is an adventure necessarily to hike up a trail you have already hiked, but if it's your first time hiking that trail, that's an adventure. You don't know what's going to happen, you don't know if it is going to be terrifying, or awesome, or thrilling. So that's how I would describe adventure, it is just having the guts to do something new. (Interview 1, 2014)

Similar to her peers, Alicia's definition suggested that for an experience to be an adventure it must: 1) be something new or unfamiliar, 2) have an unknown outcome, and 3) require guts to do

it, which suggests being out of one's comfort zone. Alicia's definition can be further expanded by her response to another question asking what her experiences with adventure were prior to studying abroad. In spite of skydiving before, Alicia chose to provide examples that were not solely focused on "*extreme examples of adventure*" (Interview 1, 2014). She felt that an adventure at home could be "*just exploring a new place, or taking a random two hour road trip somewhere with someone*" (Interview 1, 2014), which suggests a fourth characteristic: spontaneity. Alicia's definition was also shared without prior knowledge of how adventure was being defined for this study. Despite this, her descriptions of adventure are similar to this study's definition of adventure, especially those underlined: spontaneity, community, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b). Alicia expressed only two connections with the definition in the research study, and like Jason and Sarah, her definition of adventure influenced the experiences she chose to share when asked about adventure specifically.

For example, Alicia's experience abroad was largely influenced by her definition of adventure. When asked to use a word or phrase to sum up her study abroad experience the following dialogue ensued:

Wow! I think it's hard to sum up an entire five weeks of a ton of different things into one sentence. Umm, I would say honestly the best summary was that it was a life changing experience and it really boosted my confidence, umm, in myself. Like that's, that's the biggest thing I took away from it. It wasn't all the little things that I did, but was an overall understanding of kind of who I am, but in a positive way. [...] So when I mean that it was a confidence booster, I went over there and I had never traveled before. So I had never, I guess had that experience of stepping out of my comfort zone and meeting

people from different cultures, and who spoke different languages, and that was very scary to me. But it was when I got there that I realized I can talk to anyone. You know things I didn't think I would be capable of, just walking over and having a conversation with a random person from a different culture was so easy for me. [...] That's why I loved the hostels, because I could, you know I could sit at the hostel bar and strike up a conversation with a random person next to me, and ask them about their life and learn about them. (Interview 1, 2014)

Her example of striking up a conversation with a stranger fit her definition of an adventure as something that was unfamiliar and new, the outcome of the interaction was unknown, and she had to have guts to speak to a stranger. I believe her experiences also connected to the study's definition including personal control because she had control of how she conducted herself and if she followed through on having a conversation. As Alicia shared stories from her study abroad, there were repeated connections to experiences that had the characteristics of adventure she described in her definition.

Alicia's SDTLA Data in Brief

Alicia's scores on the SDTLA showed a slightly greater negative percentage change. As previously explained, this does not mean she regressed. Rather, it could simply mean that when she completed the SDTLA she was in a state of crisis, which Erikson (1959/1980) believed would propel individuals into the next stage. Despite a greater number of scores exhibiting negative movement, she did have several change scores that were twenty percent or higher than before, which are noted below.

Overall, Alicia exhibited her highest positive movement on the SDTLA task and subtasks connected to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *moving through autonomy towards*

interdependence vector. In the developing autonomy task, she reported a twenty-four percent change. Her highest scores in this vector were in the interdependence subtask (33%) and the academic autonomy subtask (33%). She showed regression in only one subtask in this section, instrumental autonomy (-14%). This will be reviewed in greater detail further below.

Alicia showed very little movement in the tasks and subtasks connected to *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. Her percentage of change in the task/subtasks for this vector were her lowest throughout the entire SDTLA. In the developing mature interpersonal relationships task (-3%), and the tolerance subtask (-3%), she exhibited limited backward movement. Her percentage of change for the peer relationships subtask (2%) was likewise small, although positive in this case. Alicia's interviews and journal entries shared experiences that had a large focus on feeling excluded. Some of her stories should help explain the complexities of why she may have experienced a lower percentage of change related to this vector, which will be shared in the thematic data. Additionally, these scores may not fully represent the developmental growth Alicia alludes to in her interviews, and this will be explored further in this chapter.

Alicia's percentage change in the task/subtask areas related to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing purpose vector* also showed more backward movement than growth. Eighty-percent of the change that occurred was backward, with positive change only occurring in the career planning subtask (30%). Her largest negative percentage of change in the SDTLA was related to educational involvement (-45%). One factor that should not be overlooked, which may have contributed to this backward movement, was her graduation from college close to the time she would have been completing the post-test. Instead of being concerned with her educational involvement, Alicia was seeking out her career options. Additionally, there are several stories she shares represented in the thematic data, which may help to explain this backward movement

further. Alicia's second lowest score was in the lifestyle planning subtask (-21%). This also may have been influenced by her graduation and her decision to become a photographer. Her focus at that time may have largely been on her career, especially because she took the route of being self-employed. Therefore, her focus was on her career and less on planning for activities related to her lifestyle, which would explain a low score on this subtask.

Holistic Review

The holistic review of Alicia's data provides a broader picture of her study abroad, beyond the "experiences." In the interviews I found myself often bringing her back to the topic at hand; thus I have a wealth of information related to her experiences but not always to the questions being asked. I believe our existing relationship may have contributed to her comfort level around me, allowing her to perhaps share more about things she did not always like about the program. One example concerns the rule of traveling in threes. She felt this was extremely limiting, and she shared her thoughts on how much she disliked this rule. This may have been, in part, due to the challenges she expressed in feeling like she belonged and the struggle she had in finding friends with whom to do things. For Alicia, her struggle to find friends was due to not sharing similar interests or life experiences. Despite her negative experience of not feeling like she had anyone she knew there, it was a character building experience where she learned to assert herself and she realized how capable she was.

While it was challenging for me to make sure I had my interview questions answered, I believe her comfort level with me aided in her opening up about both her positive and negative experiences. As reported in the thematic analysis below, she did not grow from just the positive experiences; it appears she also grew from some of the more uncomfortable experiences she had. For example, when Alicia was asked what a more transformative experience was for her, she

brought up the struggle she had in whether or not to be a photographer anymore. She grappled with this while abroad and continued in her final semester following her study abroad experience. This was a significant struggle for Alicia because up until that point she had never really thought about “*the purpose that photography [had in her] life*” (Interview 1, 2014). This contributed to the growth she experienced related to her career aspirations.

Alicia’s career aspirations were only one area of growth she experienced. As a whole, the data collected from Alicia, confirms the first research question of “being changed”. While she spoke largely about her adventure experiences, she specifically highlighted a stay at a hostel while traveling on adventure week where she gained “*confidence, self-awareness, and independence*” (Interview 1, 2014). Two months after the program ended, Alicia responded to the question of “what was most meaningful or that positively influenced your experience?” with “*connecting with families and children during service week [... and] getting to talk to travelers in the hostiles [sic] and learning about their lives and philosophies was really impactful to me*” (Survey Data, 2012). Unless prompted, she did not talk as freely about her service experience, but the survey data regarding the hostel were consistent with the impact she expressed eighteen months later in the interviews. The impact of the hostel experience, as well as ways in which she changed, will be shared in greater detail in the themes of change reviewed below.

Also relevant are the types of experiences participants believed were influential to their growth. Alicia focused largely on the influence adventure experiences had on her. The experiences she *strongly agreed* as having a positive impact on her personal development (from the survey questionnaire) included hiking Table Mountain, bungee jumping, shark-cage diving, the tour of Robben Island, and service week. She talked mostly about the adventure activities

and shared stories, when asked, about Robben Island and service week. The impact of these experiences will be found in greater detail through the stories Alicia shared in her interviews.

Conclusion

These three participants serve as a source of insight into the focus of this study: the experience of change while studying abroad. Each participant's perspective is unique and their stories shed light on experiences that may be impactful in creating perceived change while abroad. Their recollections are more than a simple list of activities experienced; rather their stories offer in-depth insight into how their experiences continue to shape who they have become. Understanding the background of each individual sheds light on aspects of change that may have been experienced. Each individual alludes to experiencing similar aspects of change which are noted in greater detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

THEMATIC FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study analysis was to understand the perceptions of what is gained from adventure-type experiences in study abroad and if students' believed specific experiences contributed more than others to their psychosocial development. A Case Study approach allowed for multiple sources of evidence across an extended time frame to be used in addressing the research questions (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Psychosocial development is not a rapid process, rather it occurs across an extended timeframe. Utilizing the psychosocial development instrument (which was completed six months after returning home), journals written during the trip, and participant stories 18 months later allowed for a deeper understanding of the growth students may have experienced. Additionally, multiple perspectives from multiple participants allowed for a deeper understanding of the influence out-of-class experiences may have had on psychosocial development. In this study, participant journals, scores from the SDTLA (a developmental instrument), and individual interviews were analyzed to better understand the relevance of participants' experiences to their perceived psychosocial development.

The first research question guiding this study was: *do students perceive they have changed (i.e. statements about being changed or transformed) in some way as a result of studying abroad? If so, in what ways?* The themes identified in this chapter focus on the ideas surrounding "being changed" or "being transformed." To help qualify these ideas around change and transformation, a sub-question was included in the first research question: *If change is*

indicated, is it connected to psychosocial developmental change as described in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors. This chapter has been arranged categorically, aligning with Chickering and Reisser's vectors. Themes identified in each category intentionally share language similar to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research in order to clearly understand connections that may be occurring related to psychosocial development. To help set the stage for the larger discussion in Chapter 6, there may be brief definitions of the themes connected to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors. The second research question focused on understanding what experiences students believed were influential: *If/when change is recognized, what in their overall experience do students perceive was influential?* A sub-question was also included for this question: *If change is indicated, how, if at all, was adventure involved?* At the end of each category, a summary of the experiences students discussed is provided to set the stage for a deeper discussion in Chapter 6.

Introduction of Themes

To portray the multiple perspectives of the participants, and to capture the richness and complexity of their experiences, descriptive quotes have been included from interview data, journals, and the SDTLA instrument. From the data collected, a total of twenty-three themes were identified in the study. Twenty themes connect to the first research question of identifying if students perceived they had changed as a result of studying abroad. The three additional themes relate to the participant's experiences, but not in a developmental or transformative way. To help address the sub-question of identifying if change was connected to psychosocial development, the twenty-three themes have been organized into six categories; five categories parallel Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial developmental vectors, and the sixth category consists of findings unrelated to the vectors. As each of the first five categories are

presented, a brief review of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research will be provided to help provide context for a later discussion in Chapter 6. These categories serve to provide a representation of major concepts identified in this research study, and they will follow the organization of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory.

Developing Competence

Developing competence is the first building block of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory. Competence increases as students "learn to trust their abilities, receive accurate feedback from others, and integrate their skills into a stable self-assurance" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 46). Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted three aspects of competence in their research: intellectual, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence. The researchers (1993) used a pitchfork metaphor to try to show the interrelatedness of the three areas of competence. All three areas influence one another and "actions that serve one may overlap, augment, or conflict with the others" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 54). In this study, participants shared stories related to the characteristics found in developing physical competence and interpersonal competence. Therefore this category is represented by two themes: physical competence and communicating with others (which aligns with interpersonal competence).

Physical Competence

Physical competence, as described by Chickering and Reisser (1993), "can involve athletic and artistic achievement, designing and making tangible products, and gaining strength, fitness, and self-discipline" (p. 46). Sarah and Alicia both shared stories about growing in their competence as it related to strength and fitness from their experience hiking Table Mountain. Hiking Table Mountain was a challenge for Sarah that motivated her to do more.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about an instance or a time you felt stretched during your study abroad experience? ... maybe where you felt challenged or stretched to experience something.

Sarah: The first time that comes to my mind is Table Mountain, because I just thought I was in better shape than I was apparently, going up the mountain (Laughter), ... I wanted to get in shape so I started running more and all of that ... Table Mountain was something where, as I am going up the mountain, I am like "This is actually really hard." ... But once again it was ... fun in a sense to be challenged like that because, it really pushes you to kind of push yourself harder in that direction, so then from there on out it was like "Oh my gosh, I want to do all of these hikes now!" you know "I want to see if I can do them, because I want to be able to do them." So, I know that was something that, kind of really pushed me.

Interviewer: What feelings do you remember about what you did...about climbing up Table Mountain?

Sarah: So going up the mountain, I just remember feeling, at times, defeated. ... I knew I wanted to make it to the top because that is just part of my personality of I am not going to ... stop and only half finish something. ... I think a big thing I learned with that ... if I compared myself to everyone else hiking it, that would not have been an enjoyable experience, and I caught myself at times doing that. ... I may be able to run but hiking is different, you know, going up...maybe they have more experience with that. And who cares if they can do it. ... This is something that you want to work on... I am proud of myself for making that accomplishment, and if I spent this whole experience just saying "Oh my gosh! I can't believe, you know, they got up the mountain faster than I did."

Then it would have changed the experience completely... that was a big thing with that. ... Just feelings of achievement and being really happy that I could say that I, I had climbed it, and then just being able to enjoy being up there for a while. We didn't have to rush back down. Just being able to kind of take some time, and ... be in the moment.

Despite being fairly fit because she was a runner, Sarah realized hiking up a mountain was different than anything she had done before. Hiking Table Mountain taught Sarah to never accept defeat.

I guess the biggest thing that I learned, ... [was] to really, one, never accept defeat. You know, embrace the challenge cause' if you set your mind to be able to finish it, you will be able to finish it. So that had never really, I mean you see it on all of the little cliché quotes on things, but it never had really been something that I was able to kind of act out, you know, it was always things you know, it was just kind of weird...I was like I am living these cliché quotes I see all of the time, like "embrace the challenge!" Okay I get it!

No matter how demanding the physical challenge might be, Sarah no longer believed she was unable to accomplish the task at hand. Hiking up Table Mountain was quite an achievement for Sarah; her reflection shows signs of growth in how she perceived her physical self and thus her physical competence.

Alicia's, experience hiking Table Mountain gave her confidence in her abilities because she realized she was more athletic than she thought.

Interviewer: What was your takeaway from your experience on Table Mountain?

Alicia: I took away that I'm more athletic than I thought I was and ... and I enjoyed being able to hang back. I probably could have gone a little faster than some of the people in my group, but I enjoyed hanging back with them and making it more of a leisurely

experience than a trek to the top. It just taught me ... what I am capable of, and now I really love taking on hikes like that and accomplishing things. It feels really good when you get to the top.

Interviewer: Thinking about part of that takeaway being “I realize I am more athletic than I thought.” What’s the significance of that for you, or what’s the importance?

Alicia: Well I guess ... it’s not that I struggle with low self-esteem, but I don’t feel good at a lot of things. So it’s kind of cool when I have the realization like “oh, I can do that.” Or “I am good at that.” Or “I can hang with the other people who do this regularly.” So it’s just a sense of accomplishment. And it’s like a confidence booster.

Alicia went into the hike doubting her abilities, and the hike served to affirm her capabilities.

Alicia’s confidence in her physical abilities grew from hiking Table Mountain because she realized she could complete a strenuous hike. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research found that the demonstration of “athletic prowess almost always [led] to rising self-esteem” (p. 65), which appears to have been the case for Alicia.

While Jason experienced growth in different areas of this study, physical competence does not appear to be one of those areas. Nothing in Jason’s responses to the interviews, his SDTLA or his journal spoke to any gains or losses in physical competence. However, it is still possible that Jason could have experienced gains that were not expressed in this study.

Communicating with Others

Chickering and Reisser (1993) described interpersonal competence as an “array of discrete skills, like listening, asking questions, self-disclosing, giving feedback, and participating in dialogues that bring insights and enjoyment” (p. 72). Using the words of the participants, interpersonal competence is best described as “communicating with others.” All three

participants were asked if there were skills they felt they had gained while studying abroad, and all three participants shared stories related to communicating with others.

Interviewer: Were there skills you felt like you gained while on your study abroad experience? And if so, what's at least one skill you feel like you gained?

Sarah: One skill would be just in how I am communicating with others and building those relationships. Being there knowing absolutely no one, ... it forced me to have to branch out, talk to other people, [and] be more assertive in a way. I think I learned that at a really critical point, just to be able to communicate with professors and interviewers [for jobs and graduate school] and building deeper friendships with people was really important. ... Who would have thought that layover [in Germany] would have actually been such a great thing, ... you are just sitting there and it forces you to talk with them, and you realize once you start talking with them that people are feeling the same things you are and maybe they are looking for that person to come up and say "hello" to them. And you are too, so you may as well be the one who does it. So I think that, that insight was just a really important part of that skill.

Sarah gained confidence in communicating with others and it allowed her to be more assertive in befriending others. She learned to better understand where others were coming from and to respond appropriately.

Jason's response to the same question was similar to Sarah's experience.

Jason: I guess probably the interpersonal skills that I mentioned earlier, being able to relate to people better, and ... just like I said going there not knowing anybody, it really forced me to work on my people skills and kind of adapting to different personalities and being with different people.

Jason felt his ability to communicate with others grew out of necessity. Chickering and Reisser (1993) recognized that “learning to communicate directly and diplomatically involve[d] much observation and trial and error” (p. 75). Being abroad appeared to be a good environment for Jason to hone his communication skills.

Alicia’s perspective on skills that she gained focused more on recognizing skills she already exhibited. This recognition of skills suggested growth in feeling more competent in her interpersonal skills.

Interviewer: Do you think that your communication skills are something that you gained while you were abroad?

Alicia: I think it’s more that I recognized that I have them. I think I have always grown up that way, ... but I think during the study abroad I just realized “Wow, I am really good at this.” I think honestly my skills are a lot more soft skills if that makes sense.

Interviewer: What are the soft skills that you feel like you gained?

Alicia: I will go up to anyone anywhere and strike up a conversation with them and not be scared of rejection, or that we won’t be able to communicate, even if it’s in a different language. So communication skills but also listening skills, making friend skills, being positive is a huge skill of mine. I am actually more proud of some of these personality skills than I am of actual things I can do, because I can’t do that much. I learned on that trip that I can learn to do things, but I guess because I don’t spend my time perfecting different crafting skills, I don’t necessarily have those down.

Alicia discussed being able to communicate effectively with others, including being a good listener. Both characteristics are components of interpersonal skills. In recognizing these skills,

Alicia showed signs of growth in competence, which translated to greater confidence in her abilities.

Sarah, Jason, and Alicia exhibited characteristics suggesting growth in their physical competence and their interpersonal competence. Each individual talked about developing competence in a slightly different way, with some overlap in the experiences that aided in their growth. For Alicia and Sarah hiking Table Mountain was impactful to their physical competence in different ways. For Sarah she was surprised by the challenge and it pushed her in a positive way. In contrast to Sarah's experience, Alicia was surprised because she thought she would struggle more with the physical nature of hiking Table Mountain. Sarah and Alicia had different experiences with similar outcomes of feeling more competent afterwards. Unlike a common experience leading to growth in physical competence, interpersonal competence did not seem to occur from one single experience. Rather it appeared to be a culmination of their entire experience abroad. All three participants on the program acknowledged that they did not know anyone on the trip, or if they did, they had met them briefly prior to departure. Their experience having to make new friends forced them to work on their communication skills. These skills were honed through a variety of experiences, from a layover in the airport on the way to South Africa to traveling during the program. The common denominator seemed to be more about being alone on the experience versus a particular experience aiding in their interpersonal growth. All three participants felt they were successful in befriending others, which suggested growth in their interpersonal competence.

Moving through Autonomy towards Interdependence

The third vector of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory is *moving through autonomy towards interdependence*, which is characterized by three components: emotional independence,

instrumental independence, and interdependence. For this to be achieved an individual must learn “to function with relative self-sufficiency, to take responsibility for pursuing self-chosen goals, and to be less bound by others’ opinions” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 47). This is accomplished by “learn[ing] lessons about reciprocity, compromise, sacrifice, consensus, and commitment to the welfare of the larger community” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 140).

In addition to students’ stories representing aspects of growth in autonomy and interdependence, their scores on the SDTLA instrument also supported movement in this vector. The SDTLA Developing Autonomy Task was connected to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) *moving through autonomy towards interdependence* vector. Related sub-tasks on the SDTLA were: instrumental autonomy, emotional autonomy, interdependence, and academic autonomy. Overall participants showed positive gains on the SDTLA tasks and sub-tasks related to developing autonomy. Despite showing positive gains in emotional autonomy, all three participants talked about caving to peer pressure, which is one of the six themes represented. While students did not exhibit backward movement in emotional autonomy, they did show signs of backward movement on the instrumental autonomy sub-task (see Table 2), which will be noted at the end of this category. Positive growth related to interdependence was manifested in a variety of ways. Stories that alluded to positive growth showed students becoming aware of their independence, exhibiting a commitment to the welfare of the larger community, supporting others through encouragement, and learning from others (reciprocity).

Independence

The idea of needing to first recognize one’s independence in order to fully move to developing interdependence is acknowledged by Chickering and Reisser (1993). Both Sarah and Jason expressed a recognition of independence from family and from authority figures while

studying abroad. Sarah's increased awareness of her independence came from having experiences without her family members. She expressed this idea as:

Sarah: I want to be able to share these [experiences] with my family and my friends, and so...I think just being on the trip and constantly thinking "Oh I wish my family was here." Or "I wish, you know, my sisters were here to share this with me." That was a huge thought that kept coming up in my mind coming back home; I want to be able to share experiences with people, you know? ... I think ... that my relationship with Beth kind of enriched some of those experiences just because she was kind of like that sister I could share the experience with, and so that was, that was just, that was really cool.

Being on her own experiencing South Africa without loved ones, helped Sarah realize that she would have enjoyed sharing those experiences. She recognized being able to share her experiences with someone served to enrich her experiences. Sarah began to realize that, somewhat ironically, having experiences away from her family still provided the opportunity for sharing experiences with them. .

Alicia appeared to recognize her independence because of feeling left out and not accepted by her peers. While she may not have always been invited to hang out by her peers and she expressed frustration because she felt alone, overall she seemed to have a positive perspective.

[Not knowing anyone was extremely frustrating] but in a good way because I got through it, God got me through it. It wasn't always pleasant, but I am really grateful that I went not knowing anyone because I grew a lot because of it and I think that if I had gone with my best friends and realized immediately cliques are staying together, I would have stayed with my clique and I would have had the entire experience with them. It would

have been more about me being with these people and bonding with these people than me having to stand on my own two feet, and having to be out of my comfort zone and always trying to connect with new people and always trying to make the most of my experience, even if I [was] lonely. I mean that was a constant struggle, and that is something I would immediately think of if someone said “how was your experience with this program?”

Despite the desire to belong, Alicia seemed to be aware that the challenges she experienced aided in her gaining independence, which is consistent with her SDTLA score on the emotional autonomy subtask (+18%). This supports what is known about developmental stages or phases influencing one another, and here Alicia’s gaining independence is interwoven with relational growth, which is supported by her recollections of changes in her capacity for intimacy noted later in this chapter.

Experiencing independence for Jason was expressed in the idea of having “freedom” from the watchful eyes of professors and staff. Having this independence was impactful enough for him to want to make sure he shared.

Interviewer: Is there anything else from your experience in Cape Town that you want to share?

One thing I will say, I thought the opportunities we had to really branch out on our own with the ... group of three, which is obviously great for safety reasons, I totally agree with that. ... Just really the freedom that you get in the program to you know, if you want to go out to eat at this one place and then you want to go to this bar on any particular night, you can do it, you could get there. ... I don’t think a lot of other programs would give you, that much freedom in Cape Town. I think, if you go to a super safe city then they might, you know, but being where it is and with the history of you know uneasiness

between people there and things like that ... I just, am thankful for the freedom that they gave us to really you know go out. We could go, weekends you know we could go up to Stellenbosch if we wanted on a weekend. We could go to The Club (laughter)...you know anywhere else really...and nobody would really second guess it as long as you were with two other people.

Jason's experience in having the freedom to travel around Cape Town with just his peers, unsupervised was significant. He experienced independence, but he acknowledged his freedom was bound by rules from the program's leaders regarding safety. This awareness perhaps suggested recognition of a greater interdependence with peers and authority figures (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Commitment to the Welfare of the Larger Community.

While gaining independence is important for growing interdependence, having experiences where individuals "reach their goals, ... [by] learn[ing] courtesy, engagement, and cooperation" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 142) is also integral in this process. Participants shared memorable experiences that exhibited a commitment to the welfare of the larger community. Students exhibiting this characteristic expressed a greater awareness of their role within their community of friends and within the greater community in which they found themselves. Participants' recognized the impact of their actions. A commitment to the welfare of others was represented in the stories about serving others.

Sarah's awareness of the larger community and a desire to serve others grew after her experience in Cape Town. She gained an awareness of the larger community and ways in which she could make an impact.

I think how when we were going and doing service and we were learning from the community it was definitely at least something that I took away that it's something that you don't just have these little service opportunities, but it's almost kind of a way of life, and how you're, you're serving everyone around you. ... I can just do something to make a difference in someone else's life whether it be a smile, or "how are you doing today?" that, you know, even that's kind of a service. Like [I] kind of took that away from it, just kind of a better way to approach the term service... [beyond] the context of "Oh let's go to Habitat for Humanity" as an example...something like that.

While abroad, Sarah grew to recognize others in her community. This awareness and desire to make a difference in someone's life showed recognition of her role within her community.

Alicia also talked about the impact the program had on her desire to get more involved in her community back home. For Alicia, the program *"opened her eyes to all of the problems in the world,"* and it influenced her in becoming more involved in *"community service work and volunteering."* A growing awareness of world events created a greater awareness of being a part of a larger whole (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

While Jason shared stories connected to his service-learning experience, growth related to a greater commitment to the welfare of others, as aligned with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) framework, does not appear to be one of those areas. Nothing in Jason's responses to the interviews, his SDTLA or his journal spoke to any gains or losses in this theme. However, it is still possible that Jason could have experienced gains connected to a greater commitment to the welfare of the larger community that were not expressed in this study.

Supporting Others

In gaining a deeper commitment to the welfare of the larger community these initial stories of helping others, from Sarah and Alicia, are not surprising. However, all three participants also experienced a greater sense of interdependence from encouraging one another through challenging experiences. Sarah, Jason, and Alicia, recognized how they helped others reach their goals, and how others' helped them do the same. Jason shares a good example of helping support others in reaching their goals:

On the bungee bridge a couple of the girls were terrified to the point of you know they were crying; they were having panic attacks; they were freaking out. And then, other people in my group were coming up to them and consoling them and helping them through. And they didn't necessarily even know the person before they went on the trip. So to me that was really cool seeing that and you know somebody in my community group was like that, and I went up to them and kind of starting consoling them telling them "it's okay. You don't have to do this" and they're just like "no I want to." And I was like "oh (laughter) okay, well, okay, you are going to do it. You are going to be okay! You got this!" (laughter) You know, just reinforcing them. And then like three other people who weren't in my community group came over and just started like hugging her and helping her out, and that was, that was cool to me to, me, bonding really, we kind of rallied around you know, pushing each other through these extreme activities that we did. And I think, fear itself really helps motivate that too.

Jason saw an example of people helping each other out, and it propelled him to do the same. It was modeled by his peers and perhaps led him to recognize his own influence within the group. For Jason, the element of fear also created an environment that was conducive to fostering

personal growth in interdependence because he learned about himself and how he related to others (Priest, 1999b).

Once we got strapped in, before you even walked out on the bridge, just seeing a couple of my friends kind of breaking down, and struggling, and just, literally freaking out and panicking and “I can’t do this. I can’t do this.” And then, that made me kind of torn between “Okay, maybe I don’t want to do this,” and “Yes, I want to do this. I am going to help them and try to talk them into doing it and helping them out” in their moment of panic. I think I was kind of torn that way just kind of like (big breath) do I want to do it, do I not. Then I said “Well I have already paid, I guess that’s, like I said, I have to now.” (laughter) So and we all ended up doing it so...every person in our group jumped, but I don’t know how. (laughter)

He recognized his peers as a community working together to achieve personal goals for themselves. Jason was concerned for others.

Jason also exhibited concern for others when it came to a caving experience with his romantic interest, Erin.

The first thing that really connected us was the time in the cave, and ... she told me that she was having anxiety about that before she even got on the plane. That was her one obstacle. ... she was terrified about [caving] the whole trip, and I didn’t even know we were going to do that. And, I think I didn’t want to look scared because then I knew she was going to freak out. ... So that was just a really memorable experience. ... I was just pushing her through all of that, and she still says she doesn’t know if she would have made it through there if I hadn’t of been with her. So that’s our little moment. (laughter) ... Our first big bonding moment as a future couple.

Despite also being terrified, Jason showed concern for someone other than himself. He moved beyond his own needs in order to help someone else in need.

Alicia shared a similar story where she put others' needs before her own.

If someone wants to do something, or someone is passionate about it, I am going to help them do that, and help them accomplish that, and build them up, and be very encouraging. And I think that's why the people I did click with on the trip clicked with me, because I would kind of see something missing from their experience in South Africa and I would say well let's complete that. ... I guess I learned more about how I interact with people, and kind of what my strengths are.

While Alicia expressed a frustration for the rule of three (largely because it was difficult for her to find friends with similar interests), she learned how to work cooperatively with her peers to help them achieve their goals. She exhibited recognition of the group beyond her desires. She learned about herself and how she interacted with others, thus showing signs of developing interdependency (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Sarah also showed signs of growing in interdependence through encouraging and supporting others. Like Jason, the bungee jump experience was fraught with anxiety for Sarah because it was her first adventure from a height. In her journal, Sarah talked about overcoming her fear and the lesson she learned about encouraging others.

Helping others overcome their fears was such a cool experience – it was energizing to be encouraging and supportive to people as they were about to take the jump off the bridge.

When Sarah talked about her bungee experience 18 months later in her interviews, she was still talking about this idea of support and encouragement.

The biggest thing I remember is just everyone was cheering for everyone. It was the greatest support system (little chuckle). ... it was just so sincere. ... I think a lot of times when you are in college and people are like "oh good luck on your exam." It's just a formality and that this encouragement was just so sincere it almost takes your breath away. It was really cool.

Interviewer: What did you gain, if anything, as a result from participating in the bungee jump?

Sarah: I realized I want to be more like these people. I want to be able to encourage people to the extent that they just encouraged me, not in things that maybe are like bungee jumping but just in everyday things. ... I don't want to just say "good luck" you know, I want people to really believe it when I say it. ... I think it was almost the biggest thing I took away because I wasn't necessarily afraid of heights so it wasn't, like "Oh I got over that here" but it was more just in amazement of that type of, that's like the type of person I want to be and I hope I can, I hope I am that type of person.

For Sarah, it was not about getting over a fear of heights but rather a deeper understanding of the effect words of encouragement can have on the collective whole. The way she related her experience focused on the group getting through a challenging experience together.

I think in the end [bungee jumping] was more fun being with everyone, and everyone having done it we could all talk about it and talk about our experience. Not everyone went skydiving so you couldn't really talk that much with people about the experience. ... There were just people talking about [bungee] before hand, how nervous they were. People talking about it after, how proud of themselves they were. So it was just kind of, almost a focal point of the trip because a lot of people, I mean most people are scared of

heights and jumping off of bridges so, that was a big thing. ... And then ... [the] camaraderie, but I think that goes along with doing it in the group, that it was more like “Oh we’re there supporting you and cheering you on.” [audio break] versus all the other adventure stuff it wasn’t like that. I mean shark cage diving was just like “oh it’s your turn to go in the cage.” It was like “oh you can do it.”

There was something special about everyone being together and accomplishing the feat of jumping off a bridge.

Sarah: When we were going bungee jumping it wasn’t even a question for some people whether they were going to do it or not. It didn’t matter if you were afraid, but we were all there together and we had already kind of formed this team together and this big support system, and we were just going to do it as a little family. ... It didn’t matter if we were afraid, we were still going to do it together, which was neat.

Sarah showed a concern for her peers and her peers showed a concern for her wellbeing too; they supported one another. Encouraging and supporting one another through their fear of falling or their fear of heights connected with the idea of interdependence Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified in their research. These connections will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Peer Pressure

While participants’ experience of bungee jumping appeared to render it a positive developmental activity, participants’ stories encompassed language around “feeling like they had to jump.” One participant even used the word “pressure” when she described her bungee experience. While participants showed positive gains on the SDTLA’s emotional autonomy subtask (S: 30%; J: 1%; A: 18%) they each shared stories about experiencing or seeing peer pressure while abroad. Developing emotional autonomy, an aspect of *moving through autonomy*

towards interdependence, was described by Chickering and Reisser (1993) as “freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval from others” (p. 117). The peer pressure participants talked about suggested they were not immune to seeking approval from others or seeing their peers seek approval. In particular, bungee jumping, while optional, was an experience surrounded by pressure.

For Sarah her experience bungee jumping was one of the more memorable experiences she had while abroad. Part of the memory being vivid was due to the group participation, which also seemed to foster an environment conducive to peer pressure.

[Bungee jumping] was definitely the most memorable of all of the adventure, and I think that a big thing was that you participated in it with such a big group, so it wasn't, you know five people are going off and going skydiving today. ... It was more we're on the garden route so we are all doing this together. I think that made it more memorable because I think in the end it was more fun being with everyone, and having done it we could all talk about it and talk about our experience. Not everyone went skydiving so you couldn't really talk that much with people about the experience.

Bungee jumping was an experience that was offered during adventure week. While bungee jumping was optional because it was not a pre-paid activity like the safari or caving experiences, there was an underlying expectation that everyone would participate.

Sarah: The people that signed up for skydiving really wanted to do it. They didn't feel the pressure to have to do it type of thing, so like for bungee jumping it was almost expected that you were going to participate because it was part of the garden route trip, but for sky diving that was just a completely separate side adventure activity you could do.

Regardless of Sarah's plans to jump prior to the experience, the expectation to participate by peers on the immediate trip played as much a role as pressure from participants on the program that had jumped the week before.

[Bungee jumping] was definitely something that I feel like [audio break] a lot of people ... wanted to say they did and I don't think we were the first adventure week so we had heard other kids did [audio break] ...there was just all of this talk and pressure even though you didn't have to do it, and just so many different emotions, and I think, I think the biggest thing is just that we were kind of stuck on the bus for so long that it was really all you could kind of talk about or think about.

While peer pressure may have played a role in how many people jumped, the build-up to bungee jumping was just as impactful for Sarah.

There were just people talking about it before hand, how nervous they were. People talking about it after, how proud of themselves they were. So it was just kind of, almost a focal point of the trip because a lot of people, I mean most people are scared of heights and jumping off of bridges so, that was a big thing.

All of these components shaped Sarah's memory of bungee jumping.

Jason also talked about peer pressure, but in a different way. For Jason it was almost a fear of missing out on the bungee jumping experience because of conversations he had with alumni of the program.

Interviewer: When you signed up to go on ISP, did you know about the bungee jumping?

Jason: I heard many stories (laughter) from people in the past that didn't do it and regretted it, or they did do it and they wish they hadn't, and people that loved it and

people... So I had heard lots of stories of different experiences from that, but overall it was positive and overall it was definitely something that I felt like you kind of had to do.

When asked if he had to participate in all of the activities on adventure week, Jason responded:

No, absolutely not. I think that's a good point. That's another thing that helped having those other twenty-five people there to rally you around is, you didn't have to but it wasn't really a sense of peer pressure like, "oh everybody else is doing it, I gotta do it." But at least I didn't get that feeling. But to me it was more ... we are doing it as a team. You know we can do this together more or less than doing it on your own. I think that helped. It helped with my fears. I mean I can honestly say I don't think I would have jumped off of that bridge if I had been there by myself ... just doing it.

While he did not feel pressured into jumping, he would not have jumped had he been alone.

Being with his peers encouraged him to push through his fear and accomplish his goal. Jason had peer support, not peer pressure. Perhaps this explains his low percentage of change score in emotional autonomy; he was already high on emotional autonomy (not seeking approval from others).

Like Sarah, Alicia shared a similar recollection of feeling pressure to bungee jump.

I felt a lot of pressure to do it [bungee jumping]. And I think a lot of people also felt that way on the trip. It kind of became, well don't be the only person who doesn't do it. Because unlike some of the other adventure activities, that really was a group one, and I just felt like maybe there was too much pressure. I still would have done it probably either way, but I know some people their decision was based on "Are we going to be perceived as lame if we don't do this?" And, and there became like group rivalries like

“What if our whole group does it?” versus someone sat out in your group “Then we won!” you know...

While Alicia said she probably would have done it either way, her bungee jump was not a positive experience because of her prior feelings towards jumping.

I knew I wouldn't enjoy the feeling of my stomach going up and down. I can't even do roller coasters. That is why bungee jumping was such an extreme for me, is because it is already something that I hate, so I just thought I want to try it once. ... I think that experiences, even when they are awful, are great. If that makes sense? So I am really glad I did it. But at the end of the day I wouldn't do it again. I didn't super enjoy it.

Despite not having a positive experience bungee jumping, Alicia was still glad she jumped.

Earlier in the interview she had mentioned that something great comes from every bad experience. That statement prompted the following conversation:

Interviewer: You said something about even every bad experience there is something great that comes from that, so what was great that came from this?

I can say that I conquered my fear of bungee jumping. I can say that I have bungee jumped off of the highest bungee bridge in the world! Which makes me sound super cool and accomplished. I am proud of myself. I think that's a big thing, is overcoming a hurdle even if it was a bad hurdle. You can say I did that, and that gives you kind of some pride, and you know self-confidence that you could do something like that.

Alicia's statement “sounding super cool and accomplished” lends itself to the characteristic of “seeking approval from others.” This characteristic of peer pressure is a component of

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *moving through autonomy towards interdependence* vector.

While she claimed that she would have jumped either way, peer pressure was still influential on

her experience. Despite feeling pressure to participate, and despite a negative experience, she still viewed the experience as one in which she grew positively.

Alicia had another experience that pushed her out of her comfort zone. The conversation began with her talking about her experience at a restaurant that provided cultural entertainment. She began talking about how she let loose that night. As the conversation continued she talked about her experience with a similar regard of “seeking approval” or perhaps it was “finding approval” from her peers.

Interviewer: One of the follow up questions that I wanted to ask you, ... since we are talking about Moyo, one of the things that you had said in your journal was that it was the first time that you really let lose. Can you tell me a little bit more about what you mean in that regard?

Alicia: That’s funny I wrote that in my journal because that is still what I remember, is letting loose.

Interviewer: So what does letting loose mean?

Alicia: It just means stepping out of my comfort zone and just having fun and ... not restricting myself. (laughter) If people were dancing, and looking ridiculous, I did it too. ... It was just a time of I’m not gonna worry really about my actions and I am just gonna have fun.

Interviewer: [long pause] Is there another experience or activity that you want to share about?

Alicia: While we are talking about letting loose. Is it appropriate to talk about The Club?

Interviewer: Yeah [okay] yeah.

Alicia: So there’s a club in the middle of a mall, and did you go?

Interviewer: I have seen The Club.

Alicia: Okay. (laughter) so that is also the opposite of my norm. I don't go out to clubs. I don't go drinking. I don't go dancing. Umm, I just don't put myself in those situations here, in the U.S., ...it took me a while to go. ... I waited till the end of the trip to go. I thought, you know, I have to have that experience. Everyone loves it and when I was in Africa, my mantra was kind of like get every experience possible. Even if it's not one you want. ... And so I went and ... it was definitely a crazy experience but a lot of fun. I really did love it. There were a lot of cliques on the trip, but when you're in places like that those walls come down too, and the cliques accept you and want to dance with you, and want to have fun with you and they kind of forget about their friend groups for the moment, you know. It's easier during the day when it's bright out and you are sober to stay in your little groups and go off and do similar interests but I think that levels the playing field when you are all doing the same thing. You are all just having fun. So it was great.

Interviewer: You said it was a crazy experience. What do you mean?

Alicia: I don't know, it was crazy in a great way, in a "I never experienced this" kind of way.

Alicia went out of her comfort zone to experience something new and she had a fulfilling experience. Her classmates frequented *The Club*, which prompted Alicia to finally make the decision to go. As she recalls her experience she talks about how on the dance floor she was accepted by cliques she did not typically spend time with. Dancing together, having the same experience leveled the playing field. This idea of "being together, doing the same thing" created an aspect of bonding that other participants also talked about. In this particular experience, for

Alicia it was intermingled with “fitting in,” which suggested an aspect of peer pressure may have influenced her decision to go to *The Club*. As a whole, Alicia viewed both bungee and *The Club* positively, and her percentage of change on the emotional autonomy subtask was eighteen percent. While her recollections suggested a desire to fit in, her experiences may have led to positive growth as suggested by the increase in her SDTLA score in that category.

Reciprocity

Participants also exhibited interdependence in the recollections they shared of learning from others. For Sarah and Alicia the idea of reciprocity showed up in service experiences and through class discussions. From Sarah and Alicia’s statements it seems they believed they would “serve” or “give back” more to the people in the township and thus were surprised at what they felt they *received* from the experience.

Sarah: I felt like I had gotten something, he [Anthony] had almost served me more than I had served him type of thing.

Alicia: Service week was really rewarding. Getting to connect with locals, learn more about their lives, and kind of feel like, you know, you are making an impact, as well as they are making an impact on you.

Sarah and Alicia appeared to be surprised that they learned from the community members. While Alicia and Sarah’s experiences in the township also contributed to broadening their perspectives (which will be discussed in further detail in the tolerance theme), their statements show reciprocity by recognizing both parties were able to offer the other something beneficial (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

Sarah also exhibited this idea of reciprocity in learning from her peers. One of her memories about class represents this idea:

It was interesting how we all kind of were able to kind of lead each other in our discussions and in how we used our time together in discussing certain issues. We learned from each other, and I would hear someone talk about something and it kind of made me think more about who I am. ... Maybe they were doing more service back in their hometown, and maybe that is something that I would like to look into. ... I think that hopefully in my discussions I was able to have that same influence on the other people in our group.

Reciprocal learning was also represented when Sarah and her friend Beth tried to go see a sunset from a picturesque location in Cape Town. Unfortunately, their third person backed out and below is part of her recollection:

We were just really down and disappointed that other people didn't share that kind of "seize the moment" type of adventure attitude of, you know "we're only here once. Let's just go out there and do it." ... I guess we just gained a better perspective of you know, making the most of the situation that you are in ... because here we are with this great opportunity ... [and], why would we let that kind of ruin a beautiful night. ... We saw the sunset on the roof of the hotel, but we saw it almost in a different way because we had this kind of, we helped each other find this new appreciation for being content in whatever circumstance you are in, and I think that was an attitude I definitely remember that night. And I have carried over that lesson I guess through today.

What was an initially disappointing evening, turned into a memorable night because conversations watching a sunset from the roof of the hotel led to a shared learning experience.

Together, Sarah and Beth were able to find an appreciation for being content in the circumstances in which they found themselves. For Sarah, that was a valuable lesson she learned through her friend.

Jason's experiences in the township opened his eyes, but he did not recognize his experience as a "reciprocal learning" experience as Alicia and Sarah did. Nothing in Jason's responses to the interviews, his SDTLA or his journal spoke to any gains or losses in this theme. However, it is still possible that Jason could have experienced gains connected to reciprocity that were not expressed in this study.

Instrumental Independence

While positive growth was exhibited in a number of ways, participants also experienced backward movement in instrumental independence, an area of *moving through autonomy towards interdependence*. Instrumental independence is described by Chickering and Reisser (1993) as "the ability to organize activities to solve problems in a self-directed way, and... it means developing that volitional part of the self that can think critically and independently and that can then translate ideas into focused action" (p. 47). Because all three participants exhibited negative movement in the subtask on the SDTLA, I asked targeted questions related to instrumental autonomy in the second participant interview. The first question I asked was about what they remembered life being like when they returned their first semester back from being abroad, and did anything change for them?

Sarah did express that things had changed for her after returning from her experience abroad.

Definitely. ... I just kind of realized that there ... bigger problems than whether you are going to get an A or an A-. ... [I'm] more down to earth, as far as that's concerned. ... I

didn't want to lose that sense of adventure cause' I think that having that excitement in your life and just having that, that whole like sense of adventure not in a sense of you always want to go and do an activity but just you're just more open minded about things and umm excited about life in general, and so I think that, that changed. And, I knew I wanted to be [in my profession] but I also knew that I wanted to enjoy life, and so it was important for me to find a better balance, and so I think that the biggest thing coming back is I have definitely tried to find a better balance in family, friends, fun activities, school work, things like that.

When Sarah came back from South Africa she expressed an importance in finding a better balance in “family, friends, fun activities, school work, [and] things like that.” When asked to explain what she meant, her response is a good example of why she might have experienced negative movement in *instrumental autonomy*:

It was definitely hard [to find balance]. I think I have gotten better at it as the semesters have gone by, cause' it's so easy to fall back into what you were doing before and it takes different like “Oh my gosh! I missed out on that.” Different moments like that to kind of make you shift focus again and realize “Okay, I came back from this great experience with all of these ideas of how I wanted to better my life, or how I wanted to change things, and you know now I actually have to implement it.” You know, easier said than done. ... I know I am way better at it now when I am even more stressed with writing a thesis and grad school stuff, than I was you know, junior year coming back (Sarah: Int. 2: line 946-957).

Junior year, when Sarah came back, is when she completed the SDTLA post-test. Reflecting on her experience in the interviews provided a better understanding of why she might have

experienced backward movement related to instrumental autonomy. Sarah realized certain priorities were more important to her and she struggled to fit those priorities into her life. Junior year seemed to be a bit of trial and error in this department.

For Jason he talked at first about his participation in class increasing and becoming more outgoing in meeting people. Having a history with Jason, I knew certain information that made me probe deeper into his experience.

Interviewer: Would say that your ... participation went up? Do you feel like your relationships with your friends family etc. was the same as from before, or you went about your relationships with people the same way, or with new people?

Jason: The people that I knew previously, probably, the same way or similar

Interviewer: Okay.

Jason: Well one thing I will say I, obviously, you know, meeting Erin was a big relationship change, that's not really on your topic, but umm...

Interviewer: No, it is.

Jason: Okay, when we first got back, we were kind of unsure of where things were going to go, and then she called me up one night and she was like "Hey, let's go meet somewhere." And I was like (big sigh) "Where do you want to meet?" So she "Oh well I looked halfway on the map XYZ is halfway between us and I was like "Seriously?" (laughter) She is very, she is a very spontaneous person, ... and I am the more deliberate one. (chuckle) So somehow she talked me into it ... (laughter) She always tells me that I am a lot more spontaneous now then I was before that trip. And she, and I mean she even said that last week about something (laughter).

Jason started a romantic relationship abroad that continued to grow upon his return. Jason had to learn to become a little more spontaneous to foster his relationship with Erin. In the beginning he had to learn how to allow for a new romantic relationship that was long distance.

Interviewer: [Did you] notice any changes in how you kind of organized or restructured your life?

Jason: In the beginning it was definitely challenging. Coming back from Africa we weren't technically dating yet.

Interviewer: You said it was challenging in the beginning.

Jason: It was challenging obviously logistically traveling to see each other like that, and ... just not really knowing what it was going to be like and... actually being by ourselves, not with other people as well, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: So, now is it challenging?

Jason: The long distance part is still a little challenging. I feel like dating someone for this length of time, I should be able to go out on a Tuesday night and have dinner with her or something like that, but ... I think, I think developing kind of a system of "Okay, let's see each other, you know once a month kind of thing. And as time went on we were like okay "every three weeks" kind of thing. ... After we kind of got a system down and got into the rhythm of things then it was, it was still a challenge but it was, it made things a lot easier.

As Jason talked about his relationship evolving with Erin, he identified that it was challenging at first for this to fit into his normal routine. He and Erin had to problem-solve to create a system that worked for them. His recollection of his first semester back (when he took the SDTLA post-

test) supports backward movement in instrumental autonomy because he was still figuring out how to make things work with Erin.

When asked if anything had changed in the way she structured or organized her life, initially Alicia was not sure.

Well, hmm...[long pause] ... I don't know. I was more chill. Assignments wouldn't stress me out, ... and I think my goals changed a little bit. I wasn't as uptight. ... I spent a lot more time you know, working on myself outside of school. Like my physical form, being more active, having more experiences. Just being more spontaneous and if that meant not completing an assignment on time I think I was more willing to do that, after going to South Africa. Yeah, I think that definitely changed.

After studying abroad Alicia's priority towards her academics changed, which allowed her to use her time differently. Her view of her time and how it was spent upon returning suggested growth in her autonomy. She became confident in making decisions in how she spent her time, even if it meant not putting as much time into an assignment for school.

Interviewer: What contributed to that, or created that change?

Alicia: Maybe it was the whole, the big picture you know. People in South Africa had this big picture of life and here we are so stressed about the little things, and the details, and the milestones, and always progressing. I have realized if I graduate, I will be okay. I don't need my GPA to be the highest. I don't need to be so competitive. I don't need to stress about these little things that are really just stepping-stones and in the big picture not that important, does that make sense?

Interviewer: It does.

Alicia: It's not that I don't value school. I love what I learned. I loved my classes. I loved my coursework, but especially if it was like what I consider a busy assignment where I am not getting much out of it, and it's just busy work. Yeah, I wasn't all about that (laughter) when I got back. I just got through it.

Upon returning, Alicia changed the priority she put on things. Before studying abroad it seems that she put a higher priority on her scholarly endeavors, whereas when she returned she was not as uptight. She took time to play more and to be spontaneous. Like Sarah and Jason, the semester after she returned was about restructuring how she used her time.

Sarah, Jason, and Alicia had both similar and different experiences relative to *moving through autonomy towards interdependence*. While they showed backward movement related to instrumental independence, they also exhibited a number of positive gains related to independence, a commitment to the welfare of their community, supporting others, and learning from others; all building blocks in developing interdependence. A variety of activities and experiences seemed to aid participants in growing in their interdependence. For Sarah and Alicia the township community, which was connected to the service-learning portion of the course, fostered relationships that left a lasting impact. Sarah not only grew in her commitment to the welfare of others, but she even learned lessons related to reciprocity from her relationship with Anthony. From their experience in the township, both Sarah and Alicia returned home with a desire to make an impact on bettering their communities.

The experience in the township was not the only impactful experience. Sarah and Jason's growth in interdependence was also impacted by their bungee jumping and caving experiences. Sarah and Jason both shared stories where they talked about supporting others in a way they had not experienced before. This was magnified even more for Jason from a caving experience with

his romantic interest. Sarah and Jason experienced the impact supporting others could have on their relationships with others.

Bungee jumping also elicited stories connected to peer pressure and “seeking the approval of others.” All the participants, despite talking about elements of peer pressure experienced, maintained they would have bungeed anyway. While Sarah and Alicia talked about feeling pressure from their peers, Jason talked about the pressure more in terms of peer support. In addition to talking about bungee jumping, Alicia also talked about an experience visiting a popular nightclub with other participants. Despite alluding to giving in to pressure all three participants showed positive gains on the SDTLA emotional autonomy subtask (which is connected to peer pressure).

Aside from larger experiences of bungee jumping, caving, and interacting with community members from the township, having the freedom to make choices in how free time was spent, within the rules of the program also seemed to support growth. While different from Alicia’s experience, The Club was also an impactful experience for Jason because it signified his freedom from the watchful eyes of authority figures. Despite participants exhibiting backward movement in instrumental autonomy, which may have been related to trying to implement changes into their life, all three participants appear to have exhibited positive change. This positive change can be seen through the participants’ stories and their scores on the SDTLA. This positive growth in interdependence was a good foundation for development in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) next vector: *developing mature interpersonal relationships*.

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) *developing mature interpersonal relationships* vector is characterized by two components: capacity for intimacy and tolerance (Chickering & Reisser,

1993). Additionally, the SDTLA instrument (Winston, et al., 1999), which is based on Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research, identified two subtasks associated with the *mature interpersonal relationships task*: peer relationships and tolerance. While Winston, et al.'s (1999) categories for *developing mature interpersonal relationships* differ slightly by using the label "peer relationships," it parallel's Chickering and Reisser's (1993) capacity for intimacy sub-category (see Appendix D). To aid in a more succinct discussion in Chapter 6, themes in this category have been divided into two sub-categories: capacity for intimacy and tolerance.

Capacity for Intimacy

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) description of a capacity for intimacy provides a foundation for better understanding this category. The authors (1993) posited that a capacity for intimacy was an integral part of developing relationships that were "reciprocal and interdependent, with high levels of trust, openness, and stability" (p. 172). Development in this component meant "more in-depth sharing and less clinging, more acceptance of flaws and appreciation of assets, more selectivity in choosing nurturing relationships, and more long-lasting relationships that endure through crises, distance, and separation" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 48). Students exhibiting growth in a capacity for intimacy become better at balancing friendships, time alone, and romantic interests (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Based on this description, the capacity for intimacy theme is characterized by: sense of belonging; making new friends; bonding with others; being vulnerable; and being selective in friendships.

Sense of Belonging. In the case for developing intimacy, Chickering and Reisser (1993) note the research of Loevinger, where

Weathersby contends that most traditional-age college students start out at the conformist or self-aware stage of Loevinger's model of ego development. At the conformist stage,

interpersonal style is dominated by a concern with belonging and by a tendency to try to be 'nice' to everyone. As Weathersby says, 'A student at the Conformist Stage would be concerned with appearances and social acceptability; would tend to think in stereotypes and clichés, particularly moralistic ones; would be concerned about conforming to external rules; and would behave with superficial niceness" (p. 161).

This description of the conformist stage parallels statements expressed by Alicia and Sarah as they described wanting to belong and to find a sense of belonging among their peers.

Sarah felt challenged because she was the only student from her university and she did not want not knowing anyone to negatively impact her experience. Her desire to belong, can be seen in the following statement:

Being with a whole bunch of people I did not know, and feeling like you know to make this experience special I want to be able to, I want to be able to be with people. I mean everyone looks like they are having so much fun. A ton of people knew each other and I just felt like I want my experience to be like that. I don't want being the only one from my University to, in any way, negatively impact this experience.

For Sarah, wanting to belong served as a catalyst for her to take the first step. Her communication skills (previously noted) aided her in finding a sense of belonging among her peers. The intertwined nature of development can be seen through her increased competence, which helped facilitate action:

You're just sitting there and you are just, you are just, it forces you to talk with them, and you realize once you start talking with them, that, you know, people are, are feeling the same things you are and maybe they are looking for that person to come up and say "hello" to them. And you are too, so you may as well be the one who does it.

Alicia shared similar stories of wanting to belong, but she appeared to have a greater struggle, as is evidenced in her journal. When asked “What were the three most challenging moments of the first week, and why were they challenging?” her response included the following:

Cliques – The first couple days were very difficult because I entered this trip not knowing anyone, and everyone else seemed to be sticking with already-formed groups. I felt invisible.

Her struggle to find a sense of belonging shaped her experience, which is evidenced through the stories she shared. When Alicia was asked to share an experience that was really impactful she talked at length about being alone and not knowing anyone. She expressed frustration at this because, from her experience, no one else was alone. In reviewing the transcripts she noticed that she sounded like she had a “*tough time fitting in and creating relationships with people,*” which was not like her. She clarified why she felt she didn’t fit in: “*those people (in general and at large) were not in my demographic whatsoever.*” She felt very strongly about this because a rather large percentage of students on the trip were a part of Greek life, were younger than she, still in their “*college partying phase, with wealthy parents who were paying for the trip, and most importantly came with their friends.*” She acknowledged that she was making generalizations of the other students. Regardless, finding a sense of belonging for Alicia was difficult because she did not fit in with the dominant group. Not feeling like she belonged was a challenge.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about an instance or time where you felt stretched during your study abroad experience?

Alicia: So I am a very umm submissive person. I'm not, I don't have adjectives for this. I don't force myself into situations. I don't force myself into friendships, you know? I am not the type that will invite myself to a party. I would just hope and pray that I get invited. It's because of that kind of personality that I think made it very difficult for me to make friends. I am so natural at communicating with people, you know. I can very easily make friends if there is a reciprocated effort, but I felt like even once I did have kind of my group, I would realize "oh they are all off doing something." And because I didn't show the initiative to always make sure [I was included], ... I was left out of those things. And that's when I felt stretched. I would feel depressed, and that sucked. ... I think I even addressed [being left out] to a couple of them and said you know, next time will you like make sure to invite me and they would be like "oh I didn't even think about it! Sorry!" you know, but I just don't have that personality to always be the pusher umm, so that was difficult.

Not feeling like she belonged was so impactful for Alicia that her memories of being alone are slightly skewed. Initially, I would have thought she spent half of her five weeks abroad not feeling like she had friends, but in reality within the first night after arriving she was making friends.

The first week we did go to ... a restaurant. That was a great experience just because of the bonding. Everyone kind of let their walls down, and there was dancing and talking to people at your table and taking pictures together, and the face paint that they would do at the tables was really cool. I was struggling that first week with not feeling like I fit in or I had any groups to hang out with and then this group of girls welcomed me at their table and we hit it off, and those were the people I spent the rest of the trip with.

Interviewer: How did you feel in that moment? What do you remember?

Alicia: I just remember feeling joyous, and really happy, and enjoying myself. ... It was also kind of a release cause I had been experiencing a lot of anxieties about the trip, and so that's when I really relaxed and realized that it was going to be great.

Interviewer: What would you say was the thing that you learned or the takeaway you gained from that experience?

Alicia: I honestly think I just gained friendship that night, you know, ... more relaxation about the trip, more peace of mind, feeling better going forward, feeling like I had people at least that were nice.

In her reflection she remembered this experience as occurring in the first week, but in reality it was the first night after they had arrived. The depth of feeling alone for less than twenty-four hours amongst her peers was so great that it shaped her overall view of the entire first week. Perhaps this was magnified because of the anxiety she had about coming alone on the trip. She eventually found a silver lining, which signified personal growth for her. Regardless, the choice to attend the program alone was deeply impactful for Alicia; finding a sense of belonging amidst her peers aided her growth in developing *mature interpersonal relationships with others*.

While Jason shared stories connected to growth related to a greater capacity for intimacy, gaining a sense of belonging was not one of the specific areas he appeared to experience growth. Nothing in Jason's responses to the interviews, his SDTLA or his journal spoke to any gains or losses in this theme. However, it is still possible that Jason could have experienced gains connected to a greater sense of belonging that were not expressed as such in this study.

Bonding with Others. Connected to the idea of finding a sense of belonging is “making new friends,” or “bonding with others,” which all three participants talked about in multiple

facets. The quotes selected from each participant for this theme dealt directly with the idea of making friends and bonding as it relates to growing in their capacity for intimacy with others. One of Alicia's earliest memories of the trip was climbing Table Mountain in the first week. In her journal reflection climbing Table Mountain was one of her top five highlights of the week.

Alicia [Journal]: Climbing Table Mountain ... was a bonding experience with those I climbed with.

Her experience hiking Table Mountain was a memorable experience that stood out to her beyond the five weeks of the program. In her second interview Alicia was asked what other activity or experience stood out to her, and she elaborated on her experiences on climbing Table Mountain:

I actually did it several times. The first time was the big group where everyone did it and that was probably the best just because it was early on in the trip. I still hadn't met a lot of people or made a lot of friends but people congregated into little packs that could stay at the same pace while going up and so, it was a great bonding experience, with the people around me. And that's when I met the girl who is now one of my best friends.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research suggested growth in the capacity for intimacy included "more long lasting relationships that endure through ... distance, and separation" (p. 48). In Alicia's first week she was bonding with others and even becoming friends with another girl who would eighteen months later, be one of her best friends.

Making new friends was also important for Jason, as seen in his response to a journal entry asking what the top five highlights of the week were, and why?:

Meeting new people. Bonding during the group flight was a great way to establish friendships ahead of time.

Jason said he “*knew a couple of faces*” among fellow travelers but no one personally, which was different from Sarah, being the only student from her school, and Alicia, not knowing anyone. Regardless, a long layover on the flight to Cape Town aided Jason in meeting enough people to not feel completely alone. When asked to give an example of one type of activity or experience that he tended to share with others, Jason’s response was:

Jason: I didn’t know anybody really, [...] I had a few [acquaintances] leading up to this, but that first week when we hiked up Table Mountain ... was when I really got to know not only like my roommates and you know a couple of others that I had hung out with previously that week, but I got to know a lot of other people as well on that hike and really branch out and get to know some new friends. ... That was the first point where I was really kind of you know, outgoing in a sense and it’s easy to do there ‘cause you know, you are on a hike, and everybody’s around you so you just “Hey, what’s up?” So I would say that was the first moment that really kind of (...) did that for me.

Jason’s memories of his initial experiences were characterized by the friendships he began to form, and he continued to share the significance of those relationships by telling others they would “*meet some amazing people [...] and get really close to them, even [become] best friends with [them].*” Other stories of significance for Jason related to the characteristics of bonding with his fellow peers were influenced by adventure week.

Jason: Just doing those kinds of activities [adventure] with those people just really, you form bonds with them just from you know conquering things that you are afraid of doing, experiencing that kind of adrenaline rush with people is one thing. And the other ... I think just kind of the layout of, on adventure week together in the hostels together, really helped us bond, whereas you know at the apartments it was kind of like “now this group

is going to go to Stellenbosch for the day. This group is going to go to Kirstenbosch for the day. ... We are going to do this kind of thing. Whereas we were all on that truck together, we were all doing the same things. ... I think staying in those hostels ... being able to do those things during the day with them and then taking a step back at night and being able to kind of talk about them with those people. ... We went out and did cool adventure stuff together, but then at night was when you could really kind of have a serious conversation with them and get to know them more, not in adventure mode kind of thing.

For Jason, bonding increased on adventure week because his smaller group of 47 were all doing the same things together, versus being back at the apartments where it was easier to be lost amidst the other 148 students. However, it was not only about having the adventure experiences together, it was also about being in a place that fostered deeper conversations. Perhaps these deeper conversations served as a means of reflection that aided in a richer experience. As noted in Chapter 2 a cornerstone of deeper learning from an experience is that it is not activity alone, rather activity must be coupled with reflection (a.k.a. experiential learning) (Berry, 2011; Breunig, 2005; Chapman, et al., 1992; Itin, 1999). As Jason's recollections suggested, he experienced developing deeper friendships while abroad. Additionally, while stories related to his relationship with Erin are not shared here, it is important to note the budding relationship.

Sarah talked largely about bonding in a way that suggested a special or deeper relationship with her peers because of the experiences she had with them. For example, she first shared in her journal about an experience at the *V&A*, a touristy shopping plaza, where she and a group of friends went to dinner. The assignment was the first week where students were asked to

reflect on their top five highlights and to explain why they had chosen that experience. Sarah's top five included the *V&A*, and she shared the following:

Going to V&A for dinner w/friends—this was so much fun—but again it was such a great bonding experience w/new friends & people I had just met.

For Sarah, the *V&A* signified an experience where she bonded more deeply with a small group of her peers. Her experience at the *V&A* was more memorable because of her “*interactions with people.*”

I just remember that being one of the most fun nights, because it was just ... a small group so it wasn't, like we had to spread our attention. It was just, like we had great conversation and it was just a really cool experience. And I kind of almost miss that, I almost wish they were my friends and we went to school together because there was just, we just kind of bonded on a different level.

A seemingly simple experience of having dinner with friends was one of her more memorable moments because of the deeper level of bonding that occurred with a small group of her peers. Her response to “what made that experience stand out more than others?” confirms this observation:

I mean that was kind of where we really realized that you know we had such a close bond together, and it was just really fun to hang out with each other, so... [...] I guess it was ... kind of when we were able to create that kind of friendship.

Her experience hanging out in a smaller group of her peers, exploring one of the local tourist areas, fostered deeper bonds amongst her peers. Her connection to others relates to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vector of *developing mature interpersonal relationships*.

Vulnerability. Capacity for intimacy is also characterized by “relationships [that] are interdependent, [and have] high levels of trust, openness, and stability” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 172). In the data analysis, this concept of having a high level of trust and openness with another was coded as vulnerability. Both Sarah and Jason shared experiences that exhibited this characteristic. Jason shared being vulnerable with his girlfriend, whom he met while abroad, most notably in “break[ing] down his... walls,” and Sarah gave a good example of this idea of being vulnerable as openness and trust found in a friendship she developed with Beth.

The first memories that comes to mind is [Beth and I] on the upper deck. [...] We went up on the roof and we watched the sunset and we were just talking about..., we really covered a lot between our families, between our relationships with our boyfriends, and things like that, and we talked a lot about just how different aspects of the trip could have been better. Just that bold hypocritical kind of idea, we were talking a lot about, a lot of people that were like going out at night and partying, and we were kind of bonding over how that wasn't really our scene and we didn't really care if we missed out on that [experience].

In Beth, Sarah found a friend in whom she could confide. They shared personal stories of their families, their relationships with their boyfriends, and how going out at night and partying was not their scene. Sarah's relationship with Beth was characterized by a mutual trust and openness, which suggested an increasing capacity for intimacy.

While Alicia experienced growth in different aspects of greater capacity for intimacy, growth in vulnerability does not appear to be one of those areas. Nothing in Alicia's responses to the interviews, her SDTLA or her journal spoke to any gains or losses in vulnerability.

However, it is still possible that Alicia could have experienced gains connected to vulnerability that were not expressed in this study.

Being Selective in Friendships. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted that development in the capacity for intimacy was also characterized by “selectivity in choosing nurturing relationships” (p. 48). Sarah talked about this idea of being selective when she was reflecting on her dinner experience at the *V&A*:

It also kind of taught me a little bit about friendships and relationships. ... Make sure that your, you are having meaningful friendships and meaningful relationships, and not just surface ones 'cause you think that you should be going out, and so who will go out with you, that type of thing. ... If I am going to go out I want to have an experience with people who I know care about me and I care about them type thing.

This concept of being selective in friendships was one of the bigger differences she recognized after studying abroad. In the second interview Sarah made a comment about being able to see a difference in who she was as a person her first couple of years versus her last couple of years in school. When asked what she believed contributed to that difference, she responded with the following:

So a difference would be in my friendships with people. Like I was talking about dinner that night [at the V&A,] I made time for the people that I know are sincere and that's made a big difference, not just hanging out with people because I feel like I should. ... Just trying to make sure that I am surrounding myself with people with the same ideals. And that's been a really big thing. Especially being [in my major] you kind of are, already secluded from a lot of things because of workloads and things like that, so, I

really want to be mindful of my spare time, in a sense, you know? And who I am interacting with.

Sarah's reflection demonstrates a greater capacity for intimacy, which included an appreciation of assets possessed by others, and also through exhibiting greater selectivity in choosing friends (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Neither Jason nor Alicia appeared to have experienced a change in being selective in friendships. While Jason's SDTLA scores allude to a positive change in *developing mature interpersonal relationships*, Alicia's scores did not. Additionally, nothing in either Jason's or Alicia's responses to the interviews or their journals spoke to any gains or losses in that respect. However, it is still possible that Jason and Alicia could have experienced gains connected to being selective in friendships that were not expressed in this study.

Sarah, Jason, and Alicia's scores related to the developing mature interpersonal relationships task and the peer relationships sub-task on the SDTLA varied broadly. Sarah and Alicia both showed small positive gains, while Jason showed positive gains in the overarching task, but backward movement in peer relationships (see Table 2). Despite these varying scores, Sarah, Jason, and Alicia all shared stories that suggested positive growth in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) capacity for intimacy sub-category. By gaining a sense of belonging and bonding with others they could let themselves become more vulnerable. In Chickering and Reisser's (1993) capacity for intimacy, vulnerability is the crux; it is where students "must reveal themselves and see their [friends] clearly, imperfections and all" (p. 167-168). This concept of vulnerability found in the capacity for intimacy is one aspect that aids an individual's growth in *developing mature interpersonal relationships*.

Tolerance

The second component of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing mature interpersonal relationships* is tolerance. The authors (1993) expressed tolerance as "how people experience cultural differences" (p. 151). An increase in tolerance, therefore

involves reassessing assumptions about people we do not know. It means moving

beyond initial disapproval or impetuous labeling to try to understand the basis for the

difference, and even to appreciate how it is a contributing part of a larger whole. (p. 150)

In addition to using Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Model as a guide to help represent these

ideas, Chickering and Reisser (1993) also highlighted the role of empathy in developing

tolerance. Participants shared multiple stories related to reassessing their preconceived ideas,

and themes represented in this category parallel descriptions used in Bennett's (2004) model.

Themes for this category are: defense against difference, minimization of differences, acceptance of differences, and empathy.

Defense Against Difference. Using Bennett's model (as cited in Chickering and Reisser, 1993), defense against difference is described where "differences are acknowledged but disliked. The greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation" (p. 151). Alicia's journal reflection on an interaction with a young man in the township community represents this idea of defense.

When I was with my family in the township, a 20-year old boy named Kristopher told me that I should use my photography to "show the world how the people in Africa suffer." I became depressed upon hearing this, and it made me not want to do it even more.

Basically, I am leaving S.A. with a dedication to helping the world.... I am just not sure how I will do it.

She first talked about her experience in her journal, and in our second interview I asked her to tell me more about her interaction with Kristopher and her changed perspective about photography.

Yeah, it seems like that should make me want to do it, but he said it in such a negative way. He said it in a way that's like "Oh good you have a camera so you can..." [sigh] I don't know, it made me feel guilty for the life that we live over here in that it is so different. It, I don't know how to explain it. It just wasn't a positive thing when he said that. ... I think he just meant it like, "I want to make people feel guilty, so take a picture of these awful surroundings and situations, and show that to the world because no one knows how we live." And he was very angry about it. He didn't have a lot of respect to any of us actually.

Alicia's reflection was a negative evaluation of her interaction with Kristopher. This memory showed some resistance to implications of social inequity. However in the same interview, Alicia also shared memories that showed signs of an increasing tolerance as she exhibited characteristics of minimizing differences. While Jason and Sarah experienced growth in different aspects of *tolerance*, growth related to Bennett's defense against difference does not appear to be one of those areas. However, it is still possible that Sarah & Jason could have experienced gains connected to this aspect of tolerance that were not expressed in this study.

Minimization of Differences. Chickering and Reisser (1993) described a minimization of differences as a focus on similarities "rather than pointing out the differences between [oneself] and the group" (p. 152). Alicia's memory of her interactions with other community members in the township provides a good example of this concept.

I learned a lot, one of my key takeaways was how happy everyone was and they have way less than we do, and I feel like Americans are always unhappy. Just always wanting more. ... The family, and specifically one girl that I connected with was talking to me about how God gets them through everything and the people in the township seem to have a lot of faith even though they don't have a lot of blessings. Whereas I feel like in America a lot of our faith comes from "oh, God answered this prayer and gave me this," and they don't always have that, but they still have that faith.

Alicia's reflection personifies the idea "that all people are basically alike physiologically, all subordinate to a particular supernatural being [or] religion" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 152). Her faith is important to her, and it influences her perspective; even as it relates to issues of poverty. The people in the township community are not unlike the people in her own community experiencing different hardships and having faith in God. Jason and Sarah also did not appear to experience growth related to minimization of differences. However, it is still possible that Sarah and Jason could have experienced gains connected to this aspect of tolerance that were not expressed through their interviews or their journals.

Acceptance of Differences. Signs of increasing tolerance are recognized in Bennett's (2004) ethno-relative states, "meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. ... people with this worldview are able to experience others as different from themselves, but equally human" (p.6). In this stage of intercultural development Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest that "interest grows in the underlying causes of difference" (p. 152). In the study, all three participants shared experiences where they became less judgmental of others and where they grew more open to different points of view. Sarah's response in her journal to

the question “*how are you a different person than when you left the U. S.?*” expands on this idea.

Upon leaving the US, I had generalizations & assumptions about Africa & its people. I thought the people in poverty had put themselves in their situations, & I was naïve to the idea of Apartheid. I also made judgments about [classmates] I met in the Atlanta airport. ... I think through this whole experience I have learned that assumptions are more often than not incorrect & ignorant! I am not as quick to judge anymore, and I have a better understanding that there is always a story behind things that we do not know about.

Sarah also shared in her journal, an interaction she had with a young man in the township:

Anthony showed me that my pre-determined judgements and assumptions of the people in the township were wrong. ... Talking to Anthony has helped me realize that it was really Apartheid that put the people of the township in the ‘rut’ they are now in.

Sarah elaborated on this further in her second interview:

I just saw that those preconceived judgements that we have of maybe that they are just, you know they are happy where they are but they are not going to try any harder, were kind of [audio break] because I saw that he [Anthony] was trying harder, and he, he did want to learn, and maybe that’s not necessarily true for everyone, but it was just nice to see a little of that, in that community.

Sarah had believed that the people in the township were happy where they were and that they did not want to change their circumstances. She had prejudged the members of the community.

Between her experiences meeting members of the township and other classmates she became less judgmental. She recognized this as a change within herself.

Interviewer: Thinking about where you are today, would you still say that you changed as a person while you were abroad?

Sarah: I do think so. I am always you know giving the benefit of the doubt for some people. Not being really quick to judge, everyone has a story. ... It's so easy to, when you are in college to think things about different people you see, ... but just kind of realizing that there may be a reason why they ... act [a certain] way, or you know, that there is so much more to it than that, and kind of not judging them. ... That's the biggest thing I think that's changed in me.

Rather than continuing to find fault with those different from her, Sarah sought to understand the “underlying causes of the differences” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 152). She grew in accepting others for who they were, enjoying the diversity they represented.

Jason also showed signs of trying not to judge others through a journal reflection about his experience from the service week.

Service week taught me to appreciate my life and the things I have and to take nothing for granted. Also, that I must keep an open mind towards others and that perhaps the best way of helping people is through getting to know them and spending quality time with them.

Jason's journal response showed an appreciation for cultural diversity, and it extended to his wanting to share with others what he had learned:

I would like to show as many people back in the states of how lucky we are and how we should have an open-mind to see the world and see different cultures. So many of my friends, family, and others in general could benefit from my experience and I hope to share my story and what I've learned with as many of them as possible.

Alicia's reflection on staying at a hostel while traveling during their adventure excursion also showed an appreciation of people and cultures different from her own.

I loved the hostel because there were locals that I got to talk to and I got to connect with and just people that I had never met before. [They] came from a very different lifestyle ... that's why I loved it, ... and I just thought, "This is so cool, that I am having this experience with people from across the world. ... I loved seeing just a different concept of how to live your life ... I just think that cultures tell you different things depending on where you are.

Alicia was intrigued by others and by their way of life. She not only "accept[ed] and respect[ed] [others] differences, but [she was] interested in exploring them further and [she] valu[ed] the fact that those differences exist[ed]" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 160).

Empathy. Interwoven in developing tolerance is what Chickering and Reisser (1993) refer to as empathy: being able to understand and be sensitive to the experience of another (as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Both Sarah and Jason shared experiences that alluded to empathy towards others. Sarah shared an experience driving from the airport to the apartments and seeing the townships on the way. She exhibited emotions towards others, representing a very basic characteristic of empathy.

I know that drive from the airport going to our hotel. I almost started crying because ... I didn't think we were going to see that. The townships, ... there are some really poverty-stricken areas, ... you know it's just, it was sad. It was very sad.

Sarah's experience visiting Robben Island also elicited feelings of sadness. Her feelings of sadness transcend beyond a surface level as she talked about putting herself in someone else's shoes.

Robben Island was [also] something that really stood out to me learning all about Nelson Mandela and being kind of immersed in the history. ... [the] whole story seem[ed] more real ... coming from the actual prison guard and you saw the prison cell, cause' it's so different reading about it or even just hearing about it, but being there is kind of scary to think that, that's the way things used to be. It kind of brought that whole issue of Apartheid and history of South Africa to, to the forefront, and it was, ... it was really sad to think that, that's the way things were and kind of still are in some areas. So, I think that was another really big thing.

Interviewer: What's your take away from that [experience]?

Sarah: It kind of made me think more about all of those things that I am learning about or things that are happening now and just these are real people, these are real families, and I can't even imagine going through something like that. ... And so many people that I have shared that story with I don't feel like I was able to convey to them what I experienced there, or the emotions that I felt. ... That's almost a hard thing, when you are sharing something like that and people don't seem to be on that same level of introspection.

Hearing the story of Mandela by a former prison guard and seeing where Mandela was held, gave Sarah a perspective that opened her to feel emotions for another person's trials. She was saddened greatly by the injustice Mandela experienced. She saw beyond herself and experienced empathy for another human being.

Jason's recollection of visiting Robben Island also showed signs of experiencing empathy. In Jason's first interview he shared the following about his trip out to Robben Island.

Another thing ... is the trip out to Robben Island and getting to see, you know, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for so long and just the conditions out there and even his individual cell. ... I don't know how he made it! I don't know how I would be able to do that!" ... He could look over and see Cape Town every day from where he was but yet there was that barrier there that he couldn't get, he couldn't break through, he couldn't get back.

Interviewer: How did that experience make you feel?

Jason: A sense of entrapment, if I were him I would have felt so trapped in that place and just so confined to these tiny little quarters. ... So I think putting myself in his shoes, that's the first thing that comes to mind. And also a little bit, obviously a little saddened by the fact that that happened to him and everybody else that was in prison there that, you know. ... It is hard not to feel a little remorse for them and what they went through there. ... [just] experience[ing] it and just understanding and visualizing firsthand what he went through and what his conditions were.

Visiting the cell where Mandela was imprisoned created the space for Jason to imagine what it must have been like to be in his shoes. He mentioned that feeling again in his second interview.

I just started imagining if that had been me and if I had been in that prison cell that was right in front of me ... and how tough that would be.

Sarah and Jason shared stories of Mandela's imprisonment on Robben Island as an experience where they felt emotions for another human being; feelings that arose from imagining what it must have been like to be in Mandela's shoes.

All three participants exhibited signs of a growing openness to others' ideas and cultures. This growing tolerance allowed for the possibility of deeper emotional connections with others

(Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This thematic category was also a subtask on the SDTLA; where both Sarah and Jason showed signs of positive growth. For Jason, growth in tolerance was his second largest percentage of change score (20%) on the SDTLA, and his recollections from his experience abroad appear to support growth as it related to an appreciation for different cultures. While Alicia's percentage of change score (-3%) suggested backward movement related to tolerance, the stories she shared suggested growth related to intercultural tolerance described by Bennett's model (in Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

Developing tolerance and developing a capacity for intimacy share the characteristic of accepting individuals for who they are and learning to appreciate differences (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Maturation of these qualities leads to growth in *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. Despite not showing signs of large gains on the SDTLA (see Table 2) all three participants recounted stories related to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fourth vector, which therefore suggests an increased capacity for intimacy and tolerance.

Participants shared a variety of experiences, with minimal overlap, that helped foster their growth in *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. In developing a capacity for intimacy, participants highlighted experiences that shared a common thread of feeling alone, which increased an individual's desire to find a sense of belonging with others. This sense of belonging was fulfilled through their experiences bonding with others. For Jason and Alicia, hiking Table Mountain was an activity that fostered an environment that was conducive to bonding with others. Jason also experienced the concept of bonding with others while on an extended layover and while on adventure week staying at the same accommodations. Sarah recalled an evening out at the *V&A* with peers that gave her a deeper sense of belonging. For Sarah, her evening at the *V&A* also taught her to be more intentional with whom she spent her time. Development in a

capacity for intimacy appeared to be related more to conversations and interactions that occurred versus a particular experience.

Growth in tolerance on the other hand appeared to have been fostered greatly through activities or experiences connected to the service-learning course. All three participants shared stories related to their perspective changing or gaining a greater appreciation for differences from their interactions with individuals from the township. Additionally, Sarah and Jason also talked about the impact visiting Robben Island had related to their empathy for others. Alicia's growth in tolerance was also impacted by an experience she had interacting with other travelers at a hostel.

The common denominator of this category seemed to be rooted in participants growing in their friendships with others. These friendships were marked by a deeper appreciation for both commonalities and differences. All three participants felt they were successful in deepening their friendships and in appreciating others' differences, which suggested a growth in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing mature interpersonal relationships* vector.

Establishing Identity

While not represented by the SDTLA instrument, aspects of *establishing identity* were represented in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fifth vector, which was characterized by seven different components, one of which was self-acceptance and self-esteem (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Reisser (1993) highlighted development in this vector being "marked by greater self-confidence, faith in one's abilities, feeling useful to others, knowing that one has valuable qualities and is basically a good person" (p. 200). Participants described experiences of change by expressing a greater awareness of self and a greater self-confidence, both of which are

connected to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) concepts related to self-acceptance and self-esteem. Themes in this category are represented as: self-awareness and confidence.

Self-Awareness

Participants expressed feeling a greater awareness of self through their experiences abroad. This awareness included both positive characteristics and a greater awareness was seen initially in comments made in Sarah and Jason's interviews about being "your true self." As noted earlier, Sarah learned to be more selective in her friendships, which was a result of gaining a greater self-awareness.

It also kind of taught me a little bit about friendships and relationships in a sense that ... if I am going to go out I want to have an experience with people who I know care about me, and I care about them type thing.

Interviewer: What do you think contributed to that?

Sarah: I think being in an airport for twelve hours and being in those types of situations with someone you almost kind of, you are, you are your true self, more so than someone that you may just hang out with for an hour or two one night, or one weekend. You know you're spending long durations, and having these, these different experiences with them. And you just you're, you can't pretend to be someone else for that long you know, like you're, its more of the real you coming out, I guess in those situations. ... You know you were all from different places so you could kind of be whoever and not feel like you were being judged because you were going to go back home, and they knew you before, or they were going to know you for an extended period after, so it was just kind of, umm, it was different.

Sarah was able to be what she described as her “true self.” She did not have to put on a persona or impress other people. Jason also talked about this idea of being one’s true self from a follow up question related to one of his journal entries where he said that he had “*changed as a person.*” In the interview I followed up by asking “*where you are today in your life, would you still say you have changed as a person?*”

Since that trip? yes! ... Since then really try to work on myself and then try to develop a sense of self more and just try not to be what the world wants me to be, but try to be who I want to be.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say “try to develop a sense of yourself more?”

Jason: Sticking to my beliefs and sticking to my values even if other people think differently, instead of just going along with the crowd, just kind of being my own person, and being true to myself more. [okay] (long pause) and relying on my strengths too.

In order to be true to one’s self, Jason recognized the importance of sticking to his beliefs and values and not trying to impress others by being someone he was not. For him, it meant having a greater awareness of what was important to him. Sarah echoed this idea of “*mak[ing] a concious effort to have [her] values resonate in all of [her] actions and decisions.*” This idea of being being true to one’s self was represented by a deeper awareness.

All three participants shared stories related to having a greater sense of self as a whole. While abroad, it appears that each participant had experiences where they gained greater self-awareness. For Jason, he journaled about experiencing “*a new sense of self-awareness*” while hiking Table Mountain.

Seeing the poverty below [Table Mountain] and then being kind of above it on the mountain for me it just kind of, it reminded me to don’t just, don’t just live life, to live life,

it was, it's kind of like, you know, really appreciate every moment that you have. ... When you are in an amazing place and, or even you know at school and something fun just happened you just take a moment to kind of step back and look at it and remember it, and laugh and enjoy it while it lasts. I think that goes with my self-awareness just kind of again, I have, this is my life I want to live it to the fullest kind of thing, ... and I don't just want to go somewhere to go somewhere and go through the motions, I want to do it to the best of my ability and to enjoy every little challenge in the way.

Hiking Table Mountain opened Jason's eyes to being present in the moment. He realized he had a choice in how he experienced life. For him, it was about gaining insight into his actions, which contributed to his enjoyment of life. Sarah had a similar awakening hiking Table Mountain.

Just realizing that when you got to the top, if you hadn't enjoyed the journey up, then half of that experience is just completely kind of wasted, you know? ... There is a view from every step up that mountain, just turn around for a second. ... I know I tried to remember as I was hiking up to just turn around and kind of take it in, at each level. ... We had almost been half way up before we were like "Oh we should turn around and look behind us!" And it was just like "Wow, like look what we are missing!" like "We have to, we have to really appreciate this!"

While hiking Table Mountain, Sarah learned that *"it [wasn't] about the destination, but the journey."* Similar to Jason, Sarah also learned about being present, mindful, and not missing out on what was around her. While Jason's greatest realization was his choice in how he experienced things, Sarah realized some additional things about herself.

Helping each other up the mountain, ... you just learn so many things about yourself as far as determination, and your motivation to get there, and then you know not comparing yourself to others and realizing that it's about you.

Hiking Table Mountain gave Sarah a greater awareness of her own determination and motivation. Sarah gained a greater self-awareness from her bungee jumping experience too.

As mentioned in the interdependence theme, while bungee jumping Sarah learned that she was not afraid of heights, like she originally thought. While Sarah's bungee jumping experience exhibited growth in her interdependence, the experience also fostered a greater awareness of who she was and that people have different fears. This awareness of herself helped shift her view on supporting others through their fears.

We are on this bridge that you can see through the bottom, [and] it's scary if you are afraid of heights. I remember realizing at that moment that I am not actually that afraid of heights, cause a lot of people were really nervous. ... I have my own fears and this may not be mine, but it's someone else's and so that feeling of these people are probably 100 time more scared than I am at this exact moment and just trying to encourage them and be like "it's okay." Just trying to help each other get to the point where they would be able to jump.

Sarah's greater self-awareness from bungee jumping helped her encourage and support others through their fears.

Alicia's reflections did not indicate growth in self-awareness in the same way as Sarah and Jason shared in their reflections. Alicia's growth in self-awareness was tied into her growth in self-confidence, which is expressed below. It is still possible that Alicia could have experienced additional gains connected to self-awareness that were not expressed in this study.

Confidence

Jason's growth from his bungee jumping experience included both greater self-awareness and increased self-confidence.

Interviewer: What did you gain if anything, as a result of bungee jumping?

Jason: I had never felt really that strong of an emotion of fear before, when I was falling. So I think the takeaway from that for me is that I can really put myself out there and do something crazy like that. It's still out of my comfort zone, but it's not something that I have never felt before now. I think I can apply that to not only the crazy adrenaline rush adventure things that I do in my life but like the little things that I may be more scared or nervous about, I can go back and say "hey, I jumped off a bridge in South Africa, I can do this. I can get through this presentation and talk about it in front of 200 people or something like that." That's nothing. So just little things like that even that sometimes I reflect on that experience and say well I did that so this is no problem.

Jason gained a self-awareness about his ability to push himself out of his comfort zone and succeed. This greater self-awareness led to a greater confidence in his daily life. Bungee jumping for Jason was an experience he came away from thinking *"I can really do anything."*

Alicia also talked jointly about self-awareness and an increased confidence from her experience staying at a hostel while traveling with the group. When asked *"what did you gain as a result?"* her response was:

Confidence! Umm yeah, self-awareness. Realizing my strengths, that I am good at communication. I am good at going out on my own. Independence was huge! Feeling like I can do this on my own, I don't need anyone around me as a crutch. ... So, confidence, self-awareness, independence. ... [And] it was just something that happened while I was

over there. I think a lot of it has to do with what I was saying with adventure and taking yourself out of your comfort zone and that is when you learn the most about yourself, and I was definitely out of my comfort zone, since I didn't know a single person on that trip, and a lot of them seemed to have their buddies and their cliques already and I was the outsider, and that, that was an adventure.

For Alicia, growth in self-awareness and confidence were synonymous. Having a greater awareness of self, helped her recognize her strengths.

I just realized when I was over there, it was like a lightbulb moment; I thought, "I can do this!," you know "I am actually good at this!" I have the capability to travel and to connect with people, and I think it's a strength of mine. That was a huge confidence booster. Just feeling like "wow, I can do this independently. I don't need to travel with my parents."

Alicia recognized she was good at connecting with people, and from her experiences meeting new people in a hostel, bungee jumping, and even navigating an unfamiliar city, she returned with the knowledge that she could *"survive through anything, ... which [she] never used to think [she] would be able to do."* Her confidence grew by knowing she could be self-sufficient.

Jason shared a similar realization in feeling more confident in befriending new people. *Probably the biggest thing for me that I learned about myself, was that I can meet people quite easily. (laughter) I have more confidence about doing things that I don't really know many people in and knowing that, that I can always find people I have in common with and talk with and things like that.*

Jason's confidence in meeting new people changed his behavior when he returned to school.

Some of the classes I took that first semester after coming back, I could tell a difference in A) my participation in classes went up I guess just from having confidence to speak up in class more and B), before, ... I remember my freshman and probably some of my sophomore year, I would go to class and you know whoever sits beside me, sits beside me, and it's whatever, like I never talk to them or anything. And then this year, and I guess last year too, you know somebody sits next to you, you are just like "Oh hey, how's it going? I'm Jason, I'm an XXX major." And just kind of introduce yourself and learn to know people that way.

He became more comfortable speaking up in class and introducing himself to classmates.

While Sarah experienced growth in self-awareness related to *establishing identity*, she did not appear to express signs of change related to a greater self-confidence. Nothing in Sarah's responses to the interviews, her SDTLA or her journal spoke to any gains or losses in this theme. However, it is still possible that Sarah could have experienced gains connected to self-confidence that were not expressed in this study.

In developing self-awareness and confidence, participants shared stories encapsulating a variety of experiences. A greater self-awareness for Sarah was influenced from a 12-hour airport layover, bungee jumping, and hiking Table Mountain. Jason also showed signs of a greater self-awareness from hiking Table Mountain. Both Sarah and Jason gained a greater sense of who they were from their experience on Table Mountain. This was influenced in part by the concept of being in the present moment because you only live life once (YOLO). This concept of YOLO will be described in further detail in the *developing purpose* category. While Sarah gained a greater self-awareness from bungee jumping, Jason's bungee experience instilled a greater self-

confidence. Jason's growth in confidence was also gained from the realization that he could make friends easily. This was a result of the overall trip, and not one particular moment. Alicia also shared similar sentiments about growing in confidence because she "survived" going on a program where she knew no one. Implied in her confidence is the sense that she was good at making friends too. All three participants showed signs of growth in establishing their identity through various experiences.

While Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *establishing identity* vector was not represented by the SDTLA, all three participants shared stories that recognized gains in a greater sense of who they were. Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested that the "primary element [of identity] is [a] solid sense of self, [an] inner feeling of mastery and ownership that takes shape as the developmental tasks for competence, emotions, autonomy, and relationships are undertaken with some success" (p. 181). As individuals' identities become more developed, a stronger framework is created for developing characteristics related to the vectors of *developing purpose* and *developing integrity* (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Developing Purpose

The final category is tied to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) sixth vector of *developing purpose*, which is characterized by three elements: vocational plans and aspirations, personal interests, and interpersonal and family commitments. Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe *developing purpose* as "an increasing ability to be intentional, to assess interests, and options, to clarify goals, to make plans, and to persist despite obstacles" (p. 209). Development in this vector is marked by a greater commitment to "coursework and co-curricular activities, which are valued as relevant to career goals or at least valued as stepping-stones to higher-level professional training" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 224). As an individual develops purpose,

answers to questions related to “where am I going? What are my goals and ideals? [and] What kind of life do I want to lead as I complete my college experience” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 209) become clear. This category is represented by three themes: recognizing values, vocational and life aspirations, and YOLO (You Only Live Once).

Recognizing Values. A sense of how Sarah and Jason’s sense of purpose grew was recognized through their reflections on what they valued and how those values connected to their futures. For Jason, he valued being an authentic person and he talked about this in his journal reflection.

The culmination of week 4 for me was a service at church. I really learned what I have to do in my life to be a more authentic person, through my faith and through my secular life as well. I learned that as I become a more authentic person, I will benefit in so many ways. That day, I felt like I really found out who I am as a person. Now I just have to go out and fine tune my life along with figuring out parts of my future.

When asked a follow up question in the interview, about how he felt he had changed as a person while abroad, Jason brought up being authentic.

Another thing ... that I think is definitely still relatable is being an authentic person. ... I really try to work on myself and then try to develop a sense of self more and just try to be, not try to be what the world wants me to be, but try to be who I want to be.

The idea of being true to himself, which has already been connected to self-awareness, is a characteristic that Jason values. For him, being true to himself meant living authentically and it influenced how he viewed his future career aspirations.

Sarah also shared stories of how her study abroad experience helped solidify her values. As she shared about her experience, she has often been asked where she learned about

mindfulness and how she developed her values. While values are not developed over night, Sarah shares how her study abroad experience helped her identify the things she found to be important in her life.

Every time I talk about mindfulness or my values, they say, “oh well where did you first hear of mindfulness?” South Africa, or you know “How did you develop these values?” and it was South Africa, because no one ever forces you to sit down and think of these things. ... South Africa was the perfect catalyst for that, or [ISP] I guess, was the perfect catalyst for trying to, to kind of hone in on “Okay, what is the most important things in my life?” or “What are my values and what are my strengths?” and “How can I really use this?” and it’s been really interesting to kind of see how, the difference from the first two semesters of col-, the first two years of college and my second two. Not in classes, and the academic sense, but just in who I am as a person, besides the fact of just obviously being older and having more experiences with things, but just how I am handling situations, or handling my stress. ... Those are by far the two biggest things that I have gotten from the trip.

Sarah also talked about how her values impacted her view on her career. As previously mentioned, Sarah expressed a value of “*enjoying the journey, not the destination,*” which was an aspect of gaining a greater self-awareness. This value was expressed as she talked about her major changing.

The semester I came back from study abroad is when I changed my major.

Interviewer: Did the study abroad program influence that at all?

Sarah: It very well could have just been that whole mindset I came back to school with. Just trying to really enjoy life and the ... major it was more just so rigid and I think I

realized that if you are not enjoying the journey then the destination isn't worth it. ...

This program, ... while it is may be more stressful in certain ways, it will be less stressful in more important ways, and so I definitely feel like I'm enjoy my experience more, than I would have been if I had kept that major.

While abroad, she realized how much she valued making sure she enjoyed the journey. She changed her major to reflect this value.

Another value Sarah realized from her study abroad experience was the importance of being able to have an impact in the lives of others. When asked if her bucket list had changed since studying abroad, Sarah talked about adding "having an impact on others" to her list.

I think if I had to rewrite [my bucket list], it would pretty much encompass all of these things. ... I think if I was to add anything it would just be, ... to become more enlightened. ... To be able to kind of leave here and have that kind of profound impact on others and kind of gain that kind of profound impact from, from my experiences. So, that's something I would change or add.

Having an impact on others was important and it tied into her desire to have a career focused on service. While Sarah confirmed her major changing after returning from her study abroad, she believed it was a result from where she was in her program. However, when asked if she believed the "study abroad experience influenced [her] career planning at all?" Sarah believed it did have an impact on her career goals.

I definitely think it did. Very much so, in the sense that I wanted my career to be focused on service. I think that is so important ... and [I] just [want to] mak[e] sure that at the heart of it all, that [I am] serving [my] community. And I think that, that's kind of like the legacy I want to leave behind. ... That I was able to serve people and so I think that,

that's been huge. It's shifted the way I kind of look at my career, ... realizing that I am so fortunate to be able to [do what I want to do]. ... When you're in the township and you see the conditions they are living in, it changes everything

Sarah valued having an impact on others and giving back to her community, both of which guided her career choices.

While Alicia experienced growth in different aspects of *developing her purpose*, growth in her values did not appear to be one of those areas. Nothing in Alicia's responses to the interviews, her SDTLA or her journal spoke to any gains or losses in this theme. However, it is still possible that Alicia could have experienced gains connected to values that were not expressed in this study.

Career and Life Aspirations

Stories shared by participants encompass a mix of vocational and life aspirations, which Winston, et al. (1999) identified in the SDTLA through the Career Planning subtask and the Lifestyle Planning subtask. The label, "vocational plans and aspirations" was selected as a theme because data collected from the participants allude to both, with some overlap between the SDTLA's descriptions (see Appendix D) of career planning and lifestyle planning. Unlike the SDTLA, career and lifestyle planning was not separated for this theme because of the intertwined nature in which all three participants talked about their futures.

Alicia's story of pursuing her chosen career exhibits this idea of developing vocational pursuits that occurred from her experience abroad. In her journal she wrote about how she had *"definitely changed as a person,"* so much so that she was *"unsure of [her] future career aspirations."* She was no longer sure if she ever wanted to pick up a camera again, and in the interview, I asked her to tell me more about that experience.

Yeah, so when I went to Africa I kind of rebelled against having my camera, because it wasn't what I thought it would be. I thought I would get there and be so inspired because I'm a photographer and that's what photographers do. They get to new places and they take pictures, and when I realized I didn't fit into that stereotype, then I felt like "oh, am I not a photographer if I don't want to travel the world with my camera?" you know? ... And then also the pressure from people on the trip. ... I was the most qualified person there, and I had the best gear there, and so that was a constant pressure. ... I didn't feel like I could just take whatever I wanted. I had to get certain shots. I didn't love having my camera over there, and I got to this point where I just wanted to leave it behind. ... Obviously that has changed now because I still am a photographer, but my reasoning for being a photographer, I have come to realize I see it differently now. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: It does. What is it that you see differently?

Alicia: For me to not identify with [other photographers] made me feel less of a photographer, but now I realize my camera, is just my tool for connecting with people. ... I can ... give them something in return that is a tangible product that will change their lives. That is why I love photography. I think I just couldn't separate that when I was in Africa. And I was like "what am I doing? I don't want to take photos. Am I changing the world?" But now I know that I am, you know? Even if it's just like one couple at a time. Giving them you know, timeless, priceless images.

Alicia struggled immensely with her career goals of becoming a photographer. It was not a choice she questioned before her study abroad experience, but her decision to become a photographer was strengthened by her experience and her faith.

Alicia: I think it was great that I questioned it, that I prayed about it, that I you know (pause), I think that it helped me gain a better understanding for why I do what I do.... Now I really understand the purpose that photography has in my life, and I think that I gained that from struggling with this.

Interviewer: What is the purpose that photography has in your life?

Alicia: It is what I give people. It is how I serve people. I have always wanted to serve people, and I didn't know how, and it seems silly to think of photography as serving people, but it really is. I have had people tell me that I have changed their lives, and I have had people tell me that what I gave them is priceless and that they have never had anything like it. I have seen people break down into tears from what I do, and just connecting with them, it is also a mission field in itself. I meet new people every day. I have experiences with them. Pictures aside, the time we spend together is so valuable and rewarding, that's also my purpose of being a photographer is really giving to people and giving myself to people, and then giving them something tangible.

While Alicia's experience was unique, and not directly as a result from one particular experience, going abroad forced her to think about her vocational purpose. She developed a greater sense of purpose for what she sees as her calling in life. This greater sense of purpose in her career path influenced her perspective on her life aspirations. Alicia made a comment about giving up on her bucket list that illustrates her life aspirations changing as a result of her career goals.

It's just kind of impossible for me to imagine myself ever doing these things. And umm, it's not necessarily a bad thing. The way I see it, is I'm not, it's not that I am giving up my dreams, it's that my dreams have changed, you know? When I went on this trip I

didn't have any plans and therefore my future was so open and I could sculpt it to do whatever I wanted. But now it's really not open, now it's like this is what I am doing in this season of my life and I will have to put off everything else, but who knows what will happen in the future.

The realization of her bucket list changing was significant enough for Alicia to bring it up on her own, in her second interview.

So I am not sure if we were going to go over my bucket list or not, but so I was looking at my bucket list this week and it made me kind of sad, but I am still content, but basically when I was in Africa I was on this high of like "I am going to try everything and I am going to have all of these around the world experiences and just like explore and learn. What I have had to realize over the last week or so after I read my bucket list, was it's not that I am not learning or growing or doing what I love, it's just that it's contained right now [where I live]. So my priorities I guess have changed. ... They're, they're different but that doesn't mean they are worse, or less exciting. ... I really am content with the fact that maybe someday I will do them. And my bucket list isn't really things I need to do before I die, it's things that I would enjoy doing, umm but if they don't happen I am not going to be upset.

In this reflection, Alicia exhibits a deeper understanding of herself and what is important to her. She shared that when she first read through her bucket list she felt sad because she was not pursuing what she had written on her list. However, this feeling evolves into being content because of the pursuit of her career. Her deeper sense of fulfilling her purpose makes not fulfilling her bucket list okay.

Jason also talked about his bucket list helping him hone in on his purpose and becoming more adventurous.

I didn't really have a list per say that I could write out, just from memory especially. So I had to go through and you know kind of think, like the deep thoughts kind of like where I want my life to go, things I want to do

Interviewer: Why are these things important to you? What makes them be the things that you chose to put on your bucket list, in that moment in time?

Jason: I was like okay "First, what am I passionate about?" and [I] looked at my passions. ... Then from there I went to like "okay where do I want my life to go?" so I was like "I want to be passionate for my job. I want to be a successful father." Things like that, ... to make a difference in someone else's life. Kind of those things...

Creating a bucket list for his life forced Jason to think about what was important to him. He realized his passions should be a driving force to what he hoped to accomplish in life, including being a successful father and being passionate about his future career.

Sarah's reflection on her bucket list also exhibited signs of gaining a deeper sense of her purpose in her career and life aspirations. Even though Sarah did not "*like the whole idea of the bucket list, [it helped to get] her hopes and dreams ... rolling.*" Sarah's bucket list was not about what she perceived to be checking off the list; rather it was about being intentional in her choices.

I don't think that all of those things that you want to do should be in the format of "Oh I just want to be able to check it off, or cross it off the list." That type of thing. I like to think about it as more ... sincere than that, that you really want to see it, and you want to be able to experience that moment, not because you want to cross it off, but because you

want to be able to carry that experience with you, and learn from it or grow from it or share it with others. ... If you are not really in the moment or enjoying it or you know taking anything away from it, then what did you really do? Or what did you really see? That type of, I think those types of questions would come to mind.

Sarah's aspirations were about being able to grow from her experiences and to share her experiences with others. Her value of being present in the moment was intertwined in her aspirations. As Sarah continued to express what she believed to be her purpose, her values can be seen as a ribbon running throughout.

Sarah also expressed a desire to make an impact and to serve people. These ideals were at the heart of her career objectives. Helping others is what kept her going, and she expressed that idea as:

If the destination to [be in my future profession] was the only thing on my mind then, I don't think I would be able to go through [extra] school because, I mean every, every time you talk to [someone in this profession] they are like "oh get out of it now before..." and it's like "Well, that's really encouraging, thanks for that!" but I think ... realizing ... "Okay, I am doing this because I want to help [others]." That type of thing. That's definitely something I have to remind myself every day, to just you know, you have to enjoy this, or else it, it's going to be a long road.

Sarah showed a deeper sense of her purpose and she recognized how that could help her achieve her professional dreams. This recognition of keeping her values at the core of her work was cultivated while she was abroad.

I don't know how else to explain it, but just how we don't really think into things that much, and just kind of taking a deeper look at who we are as a person, and how we want

our lives to be and what's important to you, and, and that's I mean, for a big overlap of my answer, but that's just been, that's just been really huge.

Becoming a more mindful and reflective person was a central lesson for Sarah, and it helped her become more purposeful in her career and life aspirations.

YOLO

An aspect of becoming more purposeful included the idea of “you only live once” which is the meaning of the acronym: YOLO. I was reacquainted with this term while traveling abroad on ISP. This term came up frequently in participant interviews and encompassed the idea that life is short; take advantage of the present opportunities. The concept of YOLO was characterized by a recognition of “what is important in life,” which was the idea that you should enjoy the moment you are in. For Sarah this idea was personified by her experience spending time with new friends at the *V&A* waterfront.

Yeah, I think that [going to the V&A] was the moment that I kind of realized “like wow! You’re in South Africa! You’re meeting all of these wonderful people. ... All of these things you are getting to see, ... it was just stress free. ... That moment it was like “you know what, this is the, just you need to stop thinking about school and stop thinking about the future and all of those plans, and just live in this moment because you are not going to get this moment back.” ... And so it was just one of those moments where it was like this is what it’s all about. It’s about these experiences. It’s not about worrying about everything. That was just something I really remember about that day.

Interviewer: How has that experience, if at all, carried forward into your life today?

Sarah: I think in different ways. ... I do think that it really struck me that you know, you, you, you’re young. You have, I mean there are people who aren’t as fortunate as you.

Take advantage of these opportunities and just be in the moment. I mean our whole lives are planning ahead, and so it kind of helped me to take a step back and realize that I should really be living more in the present moment and being more mindful of what I am doing at that time, instead of always thinking ahead.

Sarah's experience having dinner with new friends brought a greater awareness to her of what was important in life. Stressing and fretting about the future was not the purpose of life, rather, she learned that it was to enjoy the moment. To enjoy the people you found yourself with, and if you were not enjoying the people, then changes needed to be made because you only get one shot in this life.

And it also kind of taught me a little bit about friendships and relationships in a sense that you know, if the experience, and you are going out and having fun with people, if it isn't as true as it was with those friends and you are not, then it may not be, it may be a waste of your time in a sense, you know. Make sure that your, you are having meaningful friendships and meaningful relationships, and not just surface ones 'cause you think that you should be going out, and so who will go out with you, that type of thing. So there's more, like if I am going to go out I want to have an experience that uh, with, with people who I know care about me, and I care about them type thing.

Sarah became more purposeful and intentional in how, and with whom, she spent her time.

Jason talked about the idea of YOLO as he was discussing his bucket list. When asked if his bucket list had changed since his ISP experience, he credited ISP with influencing what he included on his list.

I thought, it's a bucket list, like I know I am supposed to do things on here that are out there and things that I actually have to work to get towards and to you know have

courage to do, but I, I don't know if I would have put them on there. ... I think that changed in a sense that it really just like opened my mind. I can do anything. I can go anywhere type thing. ... I realize like it's my life; I only live once. If I want to go do this then I am going to go do it, and not worry about kind of what I am missing at home or you know, actually making a point to take the time to do that.

Interviewer: What do you think contributed to that from your, what things contributed to that mind change?

Jason: I think mostly was the adventure activities. I think just that feeling of being able to do anything and at the same time, just kind of taking a step back and saying "Wow, this is such an amazing place, like if I had not had the guts to come here I would have missed out on this." It kind of made me wonder you know, what else am I missing out on

Like Sarah, Jason gained a greater desire to live more in the moment. This realization was influenced through his reflection on his bucket list and from his adventure experiences abroad.

Alicia also exhibited a change that incorporates the idea of living more in the present moment. In her first interview Alicia had talked about how she didn't plan ahead anymore.

I never really knew what I wanted to do and that stressed me out. It's not that I needed a future plan, but the world told me I did. ... I think the only difference for me was that I didn't have a plan and I was stressed about that, to where now not having a plan doesn't stress me. I am totally relaxed not knowing what the future lies ahead, you know...and it's still a very strange concept.

Interviewer: What do you think contributed to that change for you?

Alicia: Maybe it was Africa. I didn't really think about it until now. Because I didn't realize that change had happened but now thinking back I definitely am different now. I

just have peace in that. On this trip I struggled with what I wanted to do with my life, and now I think I feel comforted by the fact that my life doesn't have to start now. ... I have the rest of my life, hopefully, ahead of me ... and I just don't need to worry all the time.

For Alicia, her reflection shows layers of her psychosocial development. A part of her comfort in being okay where she was in life connected to her increased self-confidence; she established a greater sense of identity for herself. Her greater self-confidence translated to a stronger sense of purpose for herself because she no longer needed to please others or live up to other people's expectations. A part of developing her purpose led her to step back from over planning her life. Rather than worry about the future, she found value in living in the present. While she did not explicitly use the words "you only live once" there is a certain characteristic that relates to the idea of living in the moment.

SDTLA data connected to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing purpose* vector consisted of one task (establishing and clarifying purpose) and four subtasks (cultural participation, educational involvement, career planning, and lifestyle planning). Most relevant to this category are the establishing and clarifying purpose task, the career planning subtask, and the lifestyle planning subtask. As previously noted, Sarah's percentage of change for all five tasks and subtasks were positive, with considerable gains in the educational involvement subtask (59%) and the career planning subtask (82%). Her percentage changes on the SDTLA were supported by the stories she shared from her experience. For Jason, all but one of his percentage change scores in this category were positive. Jason showed slight backward movement related to the career planning subtask (-2%). Data collected from his interviews were inconclusive related to this subtask, but perhaps the fact that he did not talk about his future career aspirations was an

indication of his backward movement. However, Jason did show positive growth in lifestyle planning (13%) which was supported by his recollections. Alicia on the other hand, reported primarily backward movement related to the tasks and subtasks associated with this category. The only positive percentage of change for her was in career planning (30%), which aligned with her experience grappling with her future career path. She gained a greater awareness of what she wanted to do with her life (career) and that is portrayed both in her interviews and the SDTLA data. While she had a greater sense of what she wanted to do professionally, Alicia's lifestyle planning subtask (-21%) score suggested she was not quite as sure of the direction of her personal life. While speculative, this backward movement may have been influenced by her desire to live more in the present and to rely on God for direction. While Alicia's growth appeared to be limited based on her SDTLA scores, her interviews suggested positive growth in developing her sense of purpose. Perhaps Alicia regressed to make progress.

From Sarah's and Jason's reflections, developing a greater sense of purpose seemed to largely be the result of their cumulative experience studying abroad. In Sarah's interviews she reflected on her mindset changing as a result of her overall experience during her five weeks abroad. Also instrumental in recognizing her values and helping to define her career and life aspirations were Sarah's experiences in the township, going to dinner at the V&A, and writing her bucket list. Jason and Alicia also shared stories related to their bucket lists serving to solidify their sense of purpose related to their career and life aspirations. The bucket list assignment was instrumental in having all three participants think more deeply about their purpose and their future life aspirations. Jason's experience attending a local church service was also helpful in validating his desire to live a more authentic life.

All three participants shared stories related to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) sixth vector, *developing purpose*. Themes in this category related to participants' recognizing their values, gaining a greater sense of purpose through "YOLO" type experiences, and better defining their career and life aspirations. While percentage of change scores of *developing purpose* varied on the SDTLA, participants' recollections suggest positive growth in this category.

The source of influence on developmental outcomes in the three cases considered are represented in Table 3. Changes are highlighted by themes and are associated with an adventure, service and/or other type of experience.

Table 3

Experiences and Developmental Outcomes

	Sarah			Jason			Alicia		
Source	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other
Developing Competence									
<i>Physical Competence</i>	Tbl Mtn						Tbl Mtn		
<i>Communicating with Others</i>			layover			X			X
Moving towards Interdependence									
<i>Independence</i>			X	freedom					
<i>Commitment to Welfare of Community</i>		X						X	
<i>Supporting Others</i>	bungee			bungee					X
<i>Peer Pressure</i>	bungee			bungee			bungee; Club		
<i>Reciprocity</i>	sunset	X							
<i>Instrumental Independence</i>	ADV?		X			X			X

SarahJasonAlicia									
Source	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other
Dev. Mature Interpersonal Relationships									
Capacity for Intimacy									
Sense of Belonging	layover		alone						Alone & Moyo
Bonding with Others	V&A			Tbl Mtn/ Adv wk		layover	Tbl Mtn		
Vulnerability	Sunset					girlfrd			
Being Selective in Friendships	V&A								
Tolerance									
Defense Against Difference								X	photo
Minimization of Differences								X	
Acceptance of Differences		X	Rob. Is.		X		hostel		
Empathy			Poverty/ Rob. Is.			Rob. Is.			
Establishing Identity									
Self-Awareness	Tbl Mtn. & bungee		Overall & Layover	Tbl Mtn.		X			
Confidence				bungee		Mtg. new ppl	bungee; Hostel & nav. city		

	Sarah			Jason			Alicia		
Source	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other	ADV	SVC	Other
Developing Purpose									
<i>Recognizing Values</i>		X	Overall exp.; bucket list			church			
<i>Career & Life Aspirations</i>		X	Bucket list			Bucket list			Photo; bucket list
<i>YOLO</i>	V&A					Bucket list			Overall exp.

Notes. Abbreviations have been used throughout to note specific activities students mentioned in their interviews and journals. For example: Tbl Mtn = Table Mountain; V&A = shopping center/dinner experience; alone= the experiencing of feeling alone. The words used relate to the stories shared.

Unexpected Findings

This study was aimed at learning more about the changes or transformations experienced by students studying abroad. Therefore, the themes reported in this study were directly connected to change or development. While participants shared many stories that allude to developmental outcomes, there were also stories that connected to themes unrelated to development. For example, the participants talked about experiencing *fear* through adventure activities and even traveling in the city. Stories shared were about experiencing fear in a moment or from participation in a particular activity. Fear was not expressed in such a way that individuals were learning to “manage” that emotion. Rather fear served to mitigate other experiences and potentially aided in other aspects of psychosocial growth. Those experiences related to “fear” are represented in the analysis, but there were other vignettes that referenced the emotion of fear that did not suggest development in any particular area.

Participants also talked about going out of their comfort zones and trying new things while they were abroad. Being ‘out of one’s comfort zone’ described many of the adventure experiences. While being out of one’s comfort zone certainly may have been conducive to

change, which was noted in some themes, it was not always indicative of developmental change. Being out of one's comfort zone was a characteristic found in only some of the experiences participants' believed were more influential to creating change in their lives.

Another theme recognized in the research was the participants' view of adventure as "fun." While many stories were shared related to developmental growth related to adventure experiences, there were also components of the participants' stories that reflected the impact of an adrenaline rush or a "cool" factor. These characteristics were used in describing the "fun" aspect of an experience. Neither an adrenaline rush nor an activity being perceived as "cool" appeared to directly connect to change as a developmental outcome.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on presenting the findings from the three participant case studies of college-aged students participating in a short-term study abroad program. Included in this chapter were data collected through interviews, journals, and a quantitative developmental assessment instrument. Five categories from Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research were represented by twenty themes identified from the data. The last section identified themes that were unexpected and did not relate to change, transformation, or development as described by the students. The conclusion for each category included a cross-case analysis and a review of the experiences participants believed contributed to their development. This chapter lays the foundation for further discussion addressing the exploratory research questions in the next chapter. The final chapter will also present implications for educators and suggest areas for future research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this exploratory research study was to understand perceptions of what is gained from out-of-class study abroad experiences, and how, if at all, adventure-related experiences contribute to those gains and to a participant's development. Through analyzing the stories of three students, their journals, and their Student Development Test (SDTLA) results, the goal was to better understand the idea of being changed or transformed and how it might connect to psychosocial development, and to better understand the experiences that may have influenced feelings of change and transformation.

Psychosocial development does not occur overnight; rather it takes time for development to occur. To account for the complexities of psychosocial development, this study utilized a case study approach in collecting multiple datasets across time to better understand the participants' experience around change and transformation. Participants were three students who had attended the same study abroad program and had completed the SDTLA instrument from a preliminary research study I previously conducted. The current study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) Do students perceive they have changed (i.e. statements about being changed or transformed) in some way as a result of studying abroad? If so, in what ways?

- 1.1. If perceived change is indicated, was it connected to psychosocial developmental change as described by Chickering & Reisser's (1993) seven Vectors?

2) If/when change was recognized, what in the student's overall experience was influential?

2.1. If change was indicated, how, if at all, was adventure involved?

This chapter begins with a discussion of the limitations of the study, followed by a critical review of the findings in relation to previous research, and the potential implications of this analysis for educators and for further research.

Limitations

It is important to note that this study was an exploratory case study and therefore causal inference and generalization cannot be made with any confidence. This study involved the experiences of three individuals whose prior life experiences and upbringing influenced their choices and experiences abroad. Their experiences may or may not reflect those of other individuals who choose to study abroad. Thus, findings are not generalizable; rather they serve as a guide for future research. Through the completion of this study, I have recognized three main components of the study's design that should be looked at further: number of participants; diversity of participants; and usage of the SDTLA developmental instrument.

Three individuals participated in this study due to their prior completion of the developmental instrument (SDTLA) used in a preliminary research project I had conducted the summer before. The preliminary study was done in cooperation with the leaders of the study abroad program. Initially I had anticipated collecting data for only three of the ten subtasks, but the program's leaders decided they wanted to use all ten subtasks. There was no incentive for participants, and I believe responding to a 153-item survey may have severely reduced participation. While I believe it was extremely beneficial to have access to the participants SDTLA percentage of change scores, requiring a pre-post comparison limited the number of participants that qualified for this study to four people, with only three individuals agreeing to

participate. In hindsight, I believe it would have been beneficial to start this study from scratch versus using the existing SDTLA data from my preliminary study. I would have offered an incentive for participation, and I would have reduced the number of questions by omitting those of subtasks (e.g. tolerance) that this research study was not concerned with.

As previously stated in Chapter 4, I had a relationship with all three participants. I believe this influenced their decision to participate because I did not have a relationship with the fourth individual who had completed the SDTLA, and she elected to not participate. While it was beneficial to have knowledge of them because I was able to ask deeper questions, I cannot help but wonder if there would have been any benefit to not knowing the participant. While it was beneficial for the sake of time to use existing data from my preliminary study, I believe it would have been a stronger study had I elected to start from the beginning utilizing an incentive structure in securing participants. This may have provided for a greater number of participant's experiences, and a broader representation of students not primarily involved in my group of 48 students.

Based on the previous year's demographics of this study abroad program, I believed I would have access to a more racially and ethnically diverse population. However, the number of students representing racial and ethnic diversity attending the program the following year was minimal. This is not a program specific issue, rather lack of representation of diverse populations is an industry wide issue (cf. Kasravi, 2009). Having a better representation of racially and ethnically diverse students would benefit educators in understanding the developmental impact for these students. Perhaps soliciting a greater number of study abroad programs would have aided in obtaining a better representation of racially and ethnically diverse students.

Participants may have also lacked diversity related to socioeconomic standing, but I do not have the data to support this statement. In addition to asking questions about racial and ethnic self-identification, I would have also asked a question related to socioeconomic status. I believe the participants' socioeconomic status may have played into their prior experiences that may have contributed to their development, as well as how they may have used their time abroad and the experiences they elected to have. This notion is based on a comment made by Alicia during one of her interviews. I believe this is worth exploring to better understand if developmental outcomes abroad are influenced by socioeconomic status.

Additionally, having only three participants limited a broader representation of gender. While two females and one male were representative of the national average of males (34%) and females (65%) studying abroad (Institute of International Education, 2014), having multiple perspectives from both genders may have shed light on particular experiences offering greater developmental outcomes based on gender. Nor does this small group include any who are gay, lesbian or transgendered; their experience may also be different and should be considered in future research.

Class-standing was another demographic limitation of this study. While two rising juniors and one rising senior represented the national average of a greater number of juniors (34%) studying abroad versus seniors (24%), having sophomore students represented would allow for an initial understanding of how study abroad may aid in moving a student from one developmental outcome to the next. Essentially, would a sophomore student having studied abroad achieve better developmental outcomes than another who choose not to study abroad in that year? I believe a greater representation of class standing would have provided an interesting look into how studying abroad may or may not contribute to developmental outcomes and

intentionally selecting participants based on class-standing may prove to be beneficial in the future.

While I have already noted the length of the SDTLA instrument being prohibitive to some, I must also recognize the limitations of the SDTLA instrument for measuring development. While the SDTLA was selected because it was a validated instrument, the psychosocial development that could have taken place from a short-term (5-week) may have been minimal. The post-test was given six-months after students returned. Thus, it is important to be aware of other influences outside the study abroad experience that may have contributed to the participant's development. While it was cautioned by one of the instrument's designers (D. Cooper, personal communication, 2012) that a post-test immediately after the study abroad experience might be a waste of effort, the fact that some changes were observed suggests that waiting longer was not entirely necessary, though it might have yielded something different (either more change or a regression to the mean). If coupled with post-tests six-months later, an even clearer picture of psychosocial development occurring as a result of the study abroad experience may have come to light. Rather than class-standing being a typical indicator of growth related to career pursuits/purpose, perhaps certain experiences also contributed to that growth. If not positioning the SDTLA differently, perhaps an entirely different psychosocial developmental instrument would have been beneficial. I also realize how the SDTLA has influenced the direction of this study, even down to the research questions.

Additionally, allowing for a broader representation of psychosocial developmental theory may have been beneficial in having a broader representation of developmental outcomes. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) developmental theory was chosen because of how psychosocial growth was represented via the vectors and because of the SDTLA instrument that was

developed to identify movement through the vectors. While their theory is a seminal work in student development, it is lacking in some areas. For example, they broadly identify self-awareness and self-confidence as *developing identity*. While these are certainly areas of developing one's identity, the authors' (1993) broad description of these two characteristics was ambiguous. Self-awareness may indicate gains in self-confidence, but the two may not be synonymous. While Sarah and Jason both shared experiences that tied their growth in self-confidence to self-awareness, there were other experiences that appeared to solely describe self-awareness without an increase in self-confidence. In the discussion, self-awareness and self-confidence were combined because of the overlap identified by Chickering and Reisser (1993). In the "presentation of the data" (Chapter 5), I tried to represent a separation between the two by having separate categories.

It should also be noted that Chickering and Reisser's (1993) sixth vector, *developing purpose*, could also closely align with characteristics of self-awareness. The authors (1993) recognized this, but represented developing purpose separately for unclear reasons. A stronger case for why self-awareness should remain separate from developing purpose would help clarify characteristics of psychosocial development that may be occurring. Regardless, at times it was challenging to distinguish between the two, but the best efforts were made to represent developing purpose as Chickering and Reisser (1993) did.

Last, but not least, the duration of the study certainly influenced the findings. This study was designed from the preliminary study I conducted using the SDTLA. As a result, the participants were involved in this current research study for a year and a half, which certainly influenced their recollections. While beneficial in looking at psychosocial development, the extended time between the SDTLA post-tests and the interviews certainly was a confounding

factor for interpreting the influence of participants' experience on their psychosocial development. What they believed was impactful a year and half later may have been slightly different from what they felt six to nine months after their experience. Although, the greater time in between certainly suggested a significant impact if they remembered those experiences above all others, I wonder if their recollections of growth would have been the same. The study did not focus on experiences after the study abroad program that may have influenced their development; instead it focused on recalling only influential experiences from their time abroad. For a clearer understanding of each participant's development, documenting their experiences at multiple times after returning would have likely added additional insight into any self-identified growth.

Recognizing the limitations of this study is necessary to avoid overstating the significance of the findings. While hindsight has certainly provided a much deeper understanding of ways this research study could have been strengthened, it is important to consider those findings from the study that offer fresh information and therefore promise to inform the body of literature aimed at identifying developmental outcomes of students studying abroad and the potential impact that out-of-class experiences may have on psychosocial development. The findings of this research will be further discussed by using the study's two research questions as a guide.

Reconsideration of Relevant Literature

As the literature review in Chapter 2 highlights, students often return from their study abroad experience indicating that they "have learned abroad in special ways – in ways they presumably would not have had they stayed home" (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a, p. xi). Often students characterized this idea of learning in different ways as being transformative to some

degree, having changed them from who they were when they left to study (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). The students' testimonials offer little information about "what" they have learned and even less about "how" precisely they have changed. While growth in global competency or intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2012; Hammer 2012; Lewin, 2009; Vande Berg, et al. 2012b) has had a large representation in the literature, other aspects of development have not been well considered or examined.

Do Students Perceive they Have "Changed?"

The findings in this study support the idea of students experiencing change, as described by many who study abroad (Vande Berg, et al., 2012a). Participants shared stories about their experiences and how those experiences contributed to their feelings of change or transformation. As a reminder, in this study change is represented as psychosocial development. A collection of interviews, journals, memo-writing, and the SDTLA dataset aided in identifying six areas of developmental growth. The interviews were instrumental in understanding the participants' scores on the SDTLA instrument. While the first interview was beneficial in learning about the experience of the participant, the second interview was slightly different for each participant in an effort to better understand the individual findings from the SDTLA. Through the second interview, a better understanding of the tasks and subtasks the participant addressed and especially where the SDTLA results indicated signs of regression.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) did not believe development to be a linear process where stages would be completed one by one. Rather the authors viewed development as complex and unique to the individual. Instead of proposing stages, Chickering and Reisser (1993) utilized "vectors" and "proposed a sequence in order to suggest that certain building blocks [made] a good foundation" (p. 37). Chickering and Reisser (1993) intended the vectors to be a framework

that was fluid, where “movement along any one [could] occur at different rates and [could] interact with movement along the others” (p. 34). This movement along the vectors did not rule out a “return to ground already traversed” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 34), which can be seen through the backward movement noted in the participants’ SDTLA scores. Their regression was not a sign of not changing, rather it was an indication of movement that was to come, which was discovered through the interviews. From the collection of interviews, journals, and the SDTLA, the six areas of developmental growth identified were: 1) feeling greater competence, 2) recognition of others, 3) deeper relationships with others, 4) growth in tolerance, 5) growth in self-awareness and self-confidence, and a 6) stronger sense of purpose. All six of these areas connect to psychosocial development as described by Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research. While participants may or may not have changed in all seven of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) “vectors,” the findings offer insight into those I believe to be most relevant for educators. In this next section I will offer a brief review of developmental growth suggested in this study and experiences that may have contributed to a participant’s growth.

Feeling greater competence. Participants shared stories of their experiences related to feeling a greater sense of competence in two ways: in their physical abilities and in communicating with others. As presented in Chapter 5, participant’s growth in developing competence connected to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory related to their physical abilities and their interpersonal skills. Gaining a greater sense of competence sets the stage for deeper developmental outcomes, which is seen through each of the participant’s stories. Establishing greater competence can aid in the development of gaining a stronger sense of self-confidence. These characteristics are relevant to an individual progressing further in their psychosocial development.

While developing competence has been a characteristic in literature connected to developmental growth in adventure education (Klint, 1999; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998; Sibthorp, et al., 2007) and in college-aged students (as cited in Chickering & Reisser, 1993), it has not been sufficiently considered in the study abroad literature. Instead of psychosocial competence, literature connected to study abroad education has focused on language or intercultural competence (Bennett, 2012; Hammer 2012; Vande Berg, et al. 2012b). While these are important skills gained while abroad, competence related to physical or interpersonal skills are just as relevant and worth further exploration. Studying abroad may provide unique opportunities for individuals to experience developmental growth, pushing them further in their overall development.

All three participants shared stories about feeling more competent in general, but only Sarah and Alicia felt a gain in physical competence. Although the study only offers generalizations, I wonder if gender had a critical influence on their experience. Sarah and Alicia's feelings of physical competence were influenced by their experience hiking Table Mountain, whereas Jason did not share stories of gaining physical competence through adventure. Historically, men have a higher propensity to participating in high-risk (a.k.a. adventure) activities (Raiola & O'Keefe, 1999; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000) and perhaps this explains less change specific to this item for Jason. Both Sarah and Alicia chose to study abroad in Cape Town for the service-learning component of the program, whereas Jason chose the program based on the adventure component. Did this mean Jason had a greater predisposition for adventure-type pursuits and hiking up a mountain than the two women and therefore was less affected by it as a result? This study did not look at gender differences, but this aspect warrants further exploration.

Recognition of others. Participants shared a number of different experiences that indicated a greater understanding of self in relation to others. Participants were able to see beyond themselves and their independence and recognize their interdependence with others. This was recognized by their support of others through challenging experiences, in learning from others, and in recognizing their growing commitment to the welfare of others through their experiences with locals in a township community.

Of particular interest in gaining a better understanding of self in relation to others were the participants' percentage of change scores on the SDTLA's instrumental independence subtask. Despite all three participants showing overall positive growth on the SDTLA's overarching *developing autonomy* task, scores on the instrumental independence subtask showed backward movement. The semester the participants returned was about restructuring how they used their time; for Alicia, her academic priorities changed, Sarah recognized certain priorities were important and she struggled to restructure her existing life to honor those priorities, and Jason was challenged to fit his new romantic relationship into his life. The backward movement shown in their SDTLA scores may support Erikson's (1959/1980) belief that each developmental stage was marked by a "crisis" that an individual would have to work through in order to move through the current stage and into the next. The participants' negative scores appeared to reflect a destabilization that I believe resulted in further developmental growth as shown through the experiences and stories they shared. The participants all returned home having to learn how to live in their old lives as changed individuals.

I believe studying abroad affords the opportunity for individuals to change in ways described by Chickering and Reisser (1993) in their third vector, *moving through autonomy towards interdependence*. As a part of this vector, Chickering and Reisser (1993) recognize

aspect of moving towards interdependence is acknowledging others and how they fit into the life one has designed for himself or herself. Studying abroad awakened participants to living a life where their values and priorities were identified and focused on. Sarah sums up this idea of awakening for all three participants when she said “*I came back from this great experience with all of these ideas of how I wanted to better my life, or how I wanted to change things, and you know now I actually have to implement it.*” Implementing those ideas was a struggle. All three participants shared stories where they struggled to reprioritize different aspects of their lives when they returned; thus backward movement was experienced in instrumental independence. While their scores did not reflect positive growth towards developing interdependence, perhaps the destabilization that occurred aided in further development after the fact. While the backward movement, if indeed it occurred, may have only been a product of this particular program for these particular students, I believe further research to identify possible declines in instrumental autonomy as a consequence of increasing interdependence is worth undertaking. If this is a common occurrence in students studying abroad, educators may be able to use such information to more effectively aid students in transitioning back to their home campuses.

Relationships with others. As noted in Chapter 5, participants in this study shared a number of different experiences that related to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vector of *developing mature interpersonal relationships*. Of significance was the concept of being in or having relationships with others. By making new friends, having a sense of belonging, and being vulnerable, participants exhibited signs of growth in their capacity for intimacy, one of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) tenets for *developing mature interpersonal relationships*.

Wright and Larsen’s (2012) research on study abroad and extraordinary experience suggested three components were needed to create extraordinary experiences: travel, magic

moments, and community. The concept of community described the personal bonds that grew between participants (Wright & Larsen, 2012). While Wright and Larsen's (2012) research was beneficial in identifying community as a common theme that created change, they still did not clearly identify what was meant by change. I believe this research study helps shed further light on the growth of personal bonds between participants as an element of psychosocial growth, as described by Chickering and Reisser (1993). The personal bonds between individuals were characterized by experiences where participants developed a sense of belonging, where they bonded with others, and where they were able to be vulnerable with one another. Growth in a capacity for intimacy allowed individuals to become better at balancing friendships, time alone, and romantic interests (cf. Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Developing along Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vector of *mature interpersonal relationships* paralleled growth in Erikson's (1959/1980) sixth stage of intimacy versus isolation. Erikson (1959/1980) suggested an individual's ability to develop romantic and platonic relationships more deeply leads to healthy development. Educators working with students studying abroad may have the opportunity to potentially aid students in developing their capacity for intimacy. Understanding how relationships are cultivated and shaped while abroad may aid educators in helping students experience psychosocial growth.

Growth in tolerance. As identified in Chapter 2, literature used to support student learning abroad has been proliferated with research on global competence and intercultural learning (Bennett, 2012; Che, et al., 2009; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Engle & Engle, 2012; Lewin, 2009; Lou & Bosley, 2012; Medina-Lopez-Portillo & Salonen, 2012; Nolan, 2009; Paige, et al., 2012; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Smith & Mitry, 2008;). While there has been a common assumption among some educators (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; cf. Vande Berg, et al., 2012b) that

“going abroad” means students will naturally become more culturally competent, more recent research has proven this to be untrue, suggesting intentional experiences are key (Brockten & Widenhoeft, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Smith, & Mitry, 2008; Vande Berg, et al., 2012b;). Thus, it came as no surprise that students in this study expressed growth in their own views related to becoming less judgmental of others and becoming more open to different points of views because these are among the stated and rehearsed purposes of the particular program. I believe this study supports research suggesting that educators must be purposeful to help individuals experience growth as it relates to gains in tolerance and intercultural competency. Participants’ stories related to growth in tolerance did not appear to occur because of happenstance; rather growth was largely suggested because of planned interactions with community members via the program’s service-learning curriculum, such as when Sarah said *“Anthony [a boy in the township] showed me that my pre-determined judgements and assumptions of the people in the township were wrong.”* These ideas will be discussed further in the next section aimed at looking more deeply into “what” experiences students’ perceived as influential.

Greater self-awareness and self-confidence. Participants in this study also shared stories that suggested growth in self-awareness and self-confidence. While Chickering and Reisser (1993) combined these characteristics as aspects of *developing identity*, I tried to represent the two separately in the presentation of the data. For the purpose of answering the first research question of “do students perceive they have changed” the two characteristics have simply been combined in the heading as a way to represent *developing identity* through greater self-awareness and self-confidence. The two characteristics will first be represented separately and then the overlap will be addressed. All three participants elected to study abroad without the

safety net of their friends. Their feeling of being alone in their experience seemed to elevate their feelings of growth in self-awareness, which in turn assisted in achieving a higher degree of self-confidence. By striking out on their own and achieving success in a number of experiences perceived as difficult or challenging their confidence grew.

Throughout interviews, and noted in the themes identified in Chapter 5, all three participants shared stories related to not knowing anyone and feeling alone on the trip. While their memories of feeling alone were not always associated with a specific activity, there was one activity in particular that prompted the feeling of being alone for all three participants: the 12-hour layover on the flight to South Africa. Waiting in an airport for 12-hours, not knowing anyone, was a significant experience for all three of them. In sharing stories related to being alone and not knowing anyone the participants grew in their confidence because they were able to “survive” that experience. Sarah characterized her experience in the airport as an experience where she gained a greater awareness of her “true self;” she realized she did not have to put on a persona or impress other people. Each participant rose to the challenge of trying to make friends during that layover and they grew in different ways related to their individual self-awareness.

There were other experiences students shared where they seemed to gain a greater awareness of self that translated into a greater confidence after the fact. While all three participants talked about the impact their bungee jumping experience had on their self-awareness and confidence, Jason gave a good example of how self-awareness and confidence were synonymous. Jason’s takeaway from that experience was a self-awareness that he *“could really put [himself] out there and do something crazy like that,”* which he recognized as giving him a greater confidence; *“I can go back and say ‘hey, I jumped off a bridge in South Africa, I can do this. I can get through this presentation and talk about it in front of 200 people or something like*

that.' That's nothing." It appears that sometimes a greater self-awareness could lead to a greater self-confidence.

By proving to themselves that they could accomplish the feat set before them, whether it was hiking a mountain, making new friends, bungee jumping, or getting around a new city, the participants became more confident in their own abilities. As expressed by Jason and Alicia, the feeling of "*I can do this*" seemed to be a strong characterization of their experience. I was not surprised by this outcome because I too returned from completing an internship abroad in college with similar feelings. I believe this aspect of growth while abroad may occur more frequently than realized and should be explored further. While the literature related to adventure experiences supports interpersonal growth related to self-awareness (Hattie, et al., 1997; Hirsch, 1999; Klint, 1999; McKenney, et al., 2008; Miner, 1999; Sibthorp, et al., 2007), the study abroad literature is limited (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Vande Berg, et al.; 2012a).

Stronger sense of purpose. Gaining a greater sense of purpose related to career goals and life aspirations was another area of growth participants experienced studying abroad. For the participants, gaining a stronger sense of purpose connected to finding themselves; they became more confident in what was important to them, which translated to having stronger career and life goals. Study abroad research connected to "career" often focuses on the intercultural sensitivity and competencies a student gains from studying abroad (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Orahood, Kruze, & Pearson, 2004; Toral, 2009), rather than how it has helped an individual find a sense of purpose. The perspective of studying abroad benefiting one's career by preparing him to better interact with a diverse workforce has been a focus of the literature (Lincoln Commission and Program, 2005; cf. Brewer & Cunningham, 2009). While

this is uniquely valuable, personal growth related to gaining a stronger sense of purpose may be just as important. By gaining a greater sense of purpose an individual has the opportunity to potentially be more successful in both career and life choices.

What Experiences do Students Perceive were Influential?

This research study has focused on looking at change experienced while studying abroad in an effort to qualify what is meant by change. As noted in the introduction, I believe more than just growth in intercultural competency or tolerance is occurring; and I set out to understand if psychosocial development was also happening, at least in individual cases. Intertwined with seeking to identify what change meant has been my belief that certain experiences may create an environment more conducive than others to fostering the changes that have been commonly reported and espoused. As reviewed in Chapter 5, through interviews, certain experiences were identified by students related to change they discussed experiencing while abroad. From the data analysis and memo-writing process, the experiences students seemed to share more frequently involved adventure type experiences and interactions connected to their experiences in the service-learning course. There were two “other” experiences that also impacted the students’ experiences and they will be discussed as well.

Adventure experiences. As reviewed in Chapter 3, one of the four content areas of the International Study Program had a focus on adventure. In many cases the opportunity to experience adventure while still engaged in their studies was one of the reasons students selected the International Study Program. Noted in Chapter 2, Priest (1999b) defined adventure as activities that occurred in the outdoors, were entered into voluntarily, were intrinsically motivated, and had an uncertain outcome. While this definition has been used primarily to describe adventure, I believe adventure to be more ambiguous in a study abroad program, and

therefore experiences described by participants that fulfilled the definition of adventure used in this study were included: *activities where there is spontaneity, community, a sense of personal control, and an uncertain outcome* (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Priest, 1999b).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, researchers (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Paisley, et al., 2008; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning, 2004) have found qualities of adventure activity experience to be facilitative of personal growth, enhanced interpersonal skills, and group development. The experience of all three students in the current investigation related to adventure lends support to this earlier research. Common aspects of growth alluded to from participating in adventure focused on developing *mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity* (self-awareness and confidence), and *moving through autonomy towards interdependence*. From the interviews, the two most significant adventure experiences all three participants' believed contributed to their growth while abroad was hiking Table Mountain and bungee jumping. These adventure experiences, when combined with other more spontaneous community-based experiences seemed to approximate what Arnould and Price (1993) and others (Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Wright & Larsen, 2012) referred to as extraordinary experience. Additional experiences that shared similar characteristics were experiences navigating the city, visiting a hostel, watching the sunset from the hotel roof, and a night out at the "V&A." While the participants did not experience the latter adventures collectively, they are worth noting because of the growth they associated with them.

While each participant's growth experience varied, hiking Table Mountain and bungee jumping was especially impactful for all three. Stories shared of hiking Table Mountain suggested growth in physical competence, a capacity for intimacy by bonding with others, and

greater self-awareness, while it appears that bungee jumping supported growth in interdependence and self-confidence in particular. As noted in Chapter 5, all five of these characteristics connect to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research on psychosocial development. Additionally, growth via these types of activities was to be expected based on existing research connected to personal growth and adventure experiences (Berry, 2011; Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Klint, 1999; Paisley, et al., 2008; Priest, 1999b; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning, 2004; Sibthorp, et al., 2007).

The idea of personal growth as an outcome of extraordinary experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Jefferies & Lepp, 2012; Wright & Larsen, 2012) as discussed in Chapter 2 had six common characteristics: travel, magic moments, community/group identity/being with friends, spontaneity, being outside in nature, and reflection. While it was suggested by those authors that all of these characteristics needed to be present for personal growth to occur, organized adventure activity appear to have achieved the same effects without being spontaneous. Although neither bungee jumping nor the hike of Table Mountain were spontaneous events, students did indeed share stories of personal growth connected to bonding with others and supporting others. It is also important to note that a critical part of the structured adventure experiences in this program involved a reflection process (journaling), something not incorporated in all adventure-type additions to study abroad programs. Perhaps journal reflections may have contributed something special to the participants' feelings of growth from these experiences. This is consistent with research on both service-learning and experiential learning that emphasizes the importance of reflection in learning (Butin, 2007; Gass, 2008; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993; Itin, 1999; Kraft, 1990; Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2010; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pagano & Roselle, 2009; Wurdinger & Priest, 1999).

While participants shared a variety of stories related to their experience, adventure experiences like bungee jumping and hiking Table Mountain were discussed at length and shared by all. These experiences also add support to the propositions of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) developmental theory. I believe this research study confirms research that suggests an adventure experience could be significant in multiple developmental outcomes (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Klint, 1999; Paisley, et al., 2008; Passarelli, et al, 2010; Sibthorp, et. al, 2003, 2007). While research has been limited to other types of adventure experiences that may be considered as "out-of-class" experiences, it is worth noting that growth may be occurring through these types of activities as well, and largely because of the "adventure-esque" or extraordinary type of experience it is. Further exploration on ambiguous adventure activities is warranted.

Service experiences. As previously noted, the study abroad program used in this study had a service-learning designation for one of the two courses students completed. This designation translated to intentional experiences in one of the local township communities. Interactions with the community were fostered through afterschool programs for youth and connections to a group of women known as "soup-moms" who helped feed children in their community. The intentional connections with community members appear to have fostered a deeper appreciation of others' viewpoints and ways of life, particularly with Alicia and Sarah but also noted by Jason. This comes as no surprise based on the literature related to service study abroad experiences (Butin, 2007; Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2010; Pagano & Roselle, 2009). These experiences may have supported a greater growth because reflection was an integral piece of the service-learning course (Butin, 2007; Itin, 1999; Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2010; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pagano & Roselle, 2009). While there have been claims to greater growth in cultural competence/tolerance as a result of longer-term experiences (Education

Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Donnelly-Smith, 2009), all three participants in this study suggested that growth did occur during their short-term program. Students pointed to experiences with community members in the township as challenging their preconceptions, which supports researchers' views (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Vande Berg, et al., 2012a) that intentional interactions between community members and individuals are essential to supporting personal growth. Short-term experiences may have similar benefits if designed appropriately to foster these types of interactions.

For Sarah, serving in the township community and interacting with locals was an experience that opened her eyes and changed her perspectives on what she deemed as important for her future career plans. Sarah's interactions with locals during the service experience made her realize that serving her community was vital to her career path. Giving back through her vocation translated to living out her values in every facet of her life. While this research study was not focused on the benefits of service-learning on student's vocational experiences, for Sarah, it had a definite impact. Although Alicia did not speak specifically of a service-learning experience impacting her desire to serve others in her vocation, it did appear that those ideals were solidified indirectly through her experience in the township.

The service experiences also appeared to have aided Alicia and Sarah in their growth related to interdependence (as described by Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Their experience in the township fostered relationships with others where growth in a commitment to the welfare of others and lessons of reciprocity were learned. These themes (commitment to the welfare of others and reciprocity) connect to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) developmental vector related to interdependence. Research has suggested that service-learning and volunteer experiences provide an environment where growth is supported because an individual is forced to confront

“their way of thinking about and engaging with the world” (Butin, 2007, p. 179; see also Furco, 1996). Both Sarah and Alicia grappled with their career choices while abroad; Sarah realized serving others was fundamental to her career and Alicia questioned whether she should continue to pursue photography at all. Interactions with community members appear to have aided Sarah and Alicia, especially related to their careers, in experiencing change connected to gaining a stronger sense of purpose.

Collectively, through their service experiences in a local community, all three participants seem to have exhibited signs of growth related to purpose, interdependence, and tolerance. Alicia’s and Sarah’s growth from these experiences seems to be more apparent than Jason’s. While Jason shared some stories connected to his service experience and interactions with locals in the township community it was not as distinct as Sarah and Alicia’s recollections. Perhaps motivations for choosing to study abroad factored into why some experiences were more impactful than others. Both Sarah and Alicia chose ISP’s program because of the service-learning component, whereas Jason had selected the program because of the adventure component.

Other experiences. Participants also shared a number of other experiences they believe contributed to their growth or change. While there were a number of experiences shared, only the most prominent of these other experiences will be discussed in this section. Those experiences that were more prevalent (experienced by multiple participants) were the bucket list and the tour on Robben Island. While these specific other experiences will be noted below, participants also mentioned the “overall experience” as being impactful. It was hard to specify exactly what that meant, but those statements may be connected to other experiences not recognized in the interviews, or it may simply be a culmination of the entire experience. If the

latter, this supports research that suggests growth or change may sometimes be a by-product of interviews in the research process (Patton, 2002). Perhaps it was the interviews and conversations after their experience that helped them recognize their growth from their overall experience as well.

An aspect of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) *developing mature interpersonal relationships* was growth in tolerance. While growth in tolerance was largely influenced by experiences connected to the service-learning component of the program, participants also shared an experience touring Robben Island that was just as impactful to their growth. The Robben Island excursion was a cultural tour included in the program, but did not directly relate to the adventure or service experiences and thus was categorized as other. Robben Island was unique in providing an experience that combined history with first hand stories from former prisoners and guards of the island. As participants talked about what it was like being in the place where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned and hearing stories from former prisoners and guards they exhibited what appeared to be empathy for the men who served time. Chickering and Reisser (1993) recognized empathy as an important aspect of growth in tolerance. While some educators (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Donnelly-Smith, 2009) argue that short-term programs lack the ability to provide opportunities of growth, participants' experiences on Robben Island suggests perhaps intentional cultural tours may aid students in their psychosocial development.

Also included in other experiences was the participant's bucket list. The bucket list was an activity that was included during the adventure week, but based on the earlier definition outlined in Chapter 2 of adventure experiences, it did not meet those specifications. Thus it has been classified as other. The bucket list was an activity that required students to make a list of

the things they wanted to accomplish before they “kick the bucket.” The participants’ lists ranged from completing physical feats to furthering their careers and establishing strong family units. The bucket list forced all three participants to think more deeply about their futures. For two of the participants, Sarah and Jason, it forced them to really think about what was important for them to accomplish in their life, and it served as a guide for them. The third participant, Alicia realized, after writing her bucket list and being asked to reflect on it in the interview, that her goals had evolved and changed as she had continued to grow in her career. The bucket list activity required participants to reflect on their goals and desires in life. Perhaps it was the reflective nature of the activity that aided participants in their growth of gaining a deeper sense of purpose related to career and life aspirations (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Berry, 2011; Breunig, 2005; Chapman, et al., 1992; Furco, 1996; Itin, 1999).

Summary of Implications for Practice and Research

My underlying hope for this study was to be able to provide insight to educators taking students abroad that would both guide and support curriculum design in study abroad programs. The exploratory nature of this study offers suggestions for educators to consider and areas where more research may be warranted. Following are some findings that are interesting to speculate on and suggest that there is a connection to developmental growth abroad by being out of one’s comfort zone, having deeper interactions with locals, and having opportunities for autonomy (freedom to explore). The ability of educators to utilize these types of experiences to enhance a student’s development while studying abroad, I would argue, is critical to optimizing the study abroad opportunity.

Creating Connections with Locals

As reviewed in the data analysis, participants may have also shown growth related to tolerance and interdependence. Both of these developmental changes appeared to stem from interactions with the locals via service-learning experiences and through interactions staying at hostels while traveling. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there has been a common belief that short-term programs are limited on cultural exposure because students have limited interactions with individuals from the host country (Education Abroad Glossary, 2011; Engle & Engle, 2012; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; see also Donnelly-Smith, 2009). However, the participants in this study appear to have exhibited greater cultural understanding based on both their recollections and their SDTLA scores. Noted in Chapter 5, one participant exhibited backward movement on the SDTLA; however, her stories alluded to growth in tolerance. What appears to have made the difference were interactions with local community members. Short-term study abroad programs may have the ability to be just as effective in achieving cultural growth (i.e. tolerance/intercultural competency). Educators leading short-term programs should be intentional in creating opportunities for students to connect with locals. Examples of opportunities could be encouraging individuals to engage with locals by attending an event or activity in the community, designing speakers to come and share their personal stories connected to course content, or providing opportunities to engage with local community members through service-learning opportunities. For instance, a number of students in the program featured in this investigation attended a local community church and were able to engage with community members around a shared interest. Another experience shared by a participant that seemed to change her perspective occurred from interactions with locals traveling through a hostel she stayed in which, incidentally, were accommodations chosen by the program. These are just a

few suggestions of ways that educators may be able to create intentional experiences that have an organic feel to them.

While this case study was exploratory in nature, the stories students shared related to growth from connecting with locals is worth further exploration. While a number of researchers believe short-term programs are not as effective as long-term (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; cf. Vande Berg, et al., 2012b), studying growth in tolerance achieved by intentional experiences may prove otherwise. Additional research to understand how intentional experiences with locals aids a student's development would allow for stronger programming to occur while abroad. I believe, as some educators do, that short-term programs may be able to achieve a perfect balance between challenge and support that leads to greater growth and development in individuals (Vande Berg, et al., 2012b).

Impact of Experiencing Risk and Being Out of One's Comfort Zone

A common characteristic that appeared to trigger growth across developmental themes connected to the idea of being out of one's comfort zone which usually involved an inherent element of risk. The phrase of being out of one's comfort zone was used throughout interviews as participants shared stories of feelings that they had changed as a result of studying abroad. Sometimes being out of one's comfort zone was about being alone and not knowing anyone, or doing something new and unfamiliar. Other times being out of one's comfort zone was used to represent risk involved, for example, in bungee jumping. The element of risk was often a characteristic of adventure type activities, and perhaps why certain experiences including "navigating an unknown city" may have also been seen by participants as an adventure. Stories shared about being out of one's comfort zone appear to have contributed to developmental outcomes related to competence (both physical and interpersonal), confidence, a capacity for

intimacy, and even interdependence. As this exploratory study suggested, creating opportunities for students to be out of their comfort zone may in fact be beneficial for developmental growth while abroad.

In addition to sharing stories about feeling changed from their adventure experiences, participants they also talked about experiences unrelated to traditional adventure as being impactful while abroad. The characteristic of being out of one's comfort zone was also used to describe social situations. The feeling of being alone on the program and having to make new friends during the program was an uncomfortable experience for all three participants. Further research on being out of one's comfort zone or of having an element of risk as necessary for participants to experience psychosocial developmental change may be beneficial in aiding educators in creating opportunities that would allow for further development in individuals. Whether it be traditional adventure experiences or simply encouraging students to take a risk identified by them (i.e. doing something new or unfamiliar, or making new friends), it would be beneficial to understand the tipping point for creating change.

I believe educators have chances to create opportunities that force students out of their comfort zones while abroad. Recognizing these types of avenues could be instrumental to their psychosocial development. One way to create an out of comfort zone experience would be pushing students to try something new or unfamiliar. Secondly, participants referred to many of the adventure experiences as forcing them out of their comfort zones. In my limited experience working in the university sector, discouraging students from adventure type experiences often seemed to be the approach taken by educators because of university insurance policies. Perhaps this and other research serves as sufficient justification for adventure experiences to be more favored when benefits and risks and costs and benefits are being weighed, instead of an all or

nothing approach. Encouraging students to seek new opportunities may be the push students need to get out of their comfort zone, which would thereby encourage growth. Additionally, educators working in study abroad education could benefit from existing literature connected to outdoor and adventure education, which identifies positive growth and development through risk-taking and being out of one's comfort zone (Ewert & Garvey, 2007; Gass, 2008; Hattie, et al., 1997; Klint, 1999). To better understand the growth that may occur from being out of one's comfort zone while abroad, further research is needed.

Reflection

The study abroad program in this study was designated as a service-learning course, which meant reflection was utilized to aid in student learning (Eyler, 2002; Weigert, 1998). Students would participate in service activities in the township and reflect on their experience through journaling. The journals asked questions to help students connect course material to their service experience in an effort to increase their critical thinking skills, and thus their learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler, 2002; Weigert, 1998). While most questions were targeted towards content related to the service-learning and leadership courses, there were instances where students were asked to reflect on their overall experiences too (see Appendix C).

One explanation for the impact adventure activities had on participants' feelings of being changed by their experience may have been reflection. As noted in both the experiential learning (Berry, 2011; Breunig, 2005; Chapman, et al., 1992; Itin, 1999) and service-learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler, 2002; Weigert, 1998) literature, reflection aids in student learning, and in some cases, developmental growth (Berry, 2011; Klint, 1999; Paisley, et al., 2008; Sibthorp, et al., 2007). The reflection in this study abroad program often included both in- and out-of-class experiences. Thus it appears that while reflection began through journaling, it seemed to also

benefit from conversations between the participants. For example, during the adventure week Jason talked about *“being able to do those things [bungee, caving, etc.] during the day with them and then taking a step back at night and being able to kind of talk about them with those people.”* There is an idea that organized adventure does not become developmental unless there is a reflective process (i.e. experiential learning/experiential education) (Warren, et al., 2008; Wurdinger, 1995; see also Carver, 1996; Itin, 1999). How much did the course design influence the growth that may have occurred through adventure experiences on this study abroad? Did having to reflect in class create an ethos of reflection outside the classroom too? Additionally, did this informal reflection aid some experiences in becoming more significant than others?

There also appears to be a link between connecting with locals and growth experienced, which was perhaps enhanced by the reflection that students did as a part of the service-learning course. Many of the stories participants shared about “connecting with locals” occurred from interactions that occurred in the township community, which was a part of the service-learning course. Students were required to think about their experience in the township community, which forced them to think about their interactions with community members. Did their reflection increase feelings of growth or change from interacting with those unlike themselves, or would they have experienced growth regardless of that reflection? The service-learning literature related to growth through reflection suggests the former (Eyler, 2002; Weigert, 1998).

While there is some research to support reflection beyond service-learning courses abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Pagano & Roselle, 2009; Paige, et al., 2012; Robinson, 2012), perhaps further research would benefit the intersection of reflection and experiences beyond the curriculum. Utilizing research connected to experiential learning (Breunig, 2005; Carver, 1996; Chapman, et al., 1992; Dewey, 1909/1998; Itin, 1999)

may prove useful in this quest. Understanding the impact reflection may have on students' feeling changed from in- and out-of class experiences would allow educators to challenge and support students' psychosocial growth.

Allowing Opportunities for Freedom/Autonomy

Another characteristic worth mentioning may be for educators to create chances for students to have greater freedom or autonomy while abroad. Participants shared a number of stories related to growth in self-confidence from opportunities that allowed them the freedom to make decisions about how they chose to spend their free time. There was a certain level of autonomy that students were given in how to spend that unplanned time. Whether it was choosing to travel to the countryside to explore beyond the city or simply getting a small group of friends together to go to a nightclub, the common denominator was the ability of the student to make that decision without input from authority figures. Even despite parameters being set forth with the "rule of three," students still felt a sense of freedom in how they chose to spend their time. They were able to choose where they went and who went with them. It was through these experiences that they gained a greater sense of self-confidence. There appeared to be value added for the participants to be able to choose how they spent their time versus being shuffled from one activity to the next, having every moment planned for them.

For educators, providing greater autonomy and freedom may be as simple as scheduling in free time for students to have the opportunity to make their own decisions on how to spend that time. This may be readily achievable in long-term programs but perhaps may not occur as frequently on a short-term program due to limited time away. Additionally, in my personal experience working with another short-term study abroad program, students did not always use their free time to explore the area, but rather seemed to prefer spending their time lounging by

the pool with their peers. As an educator, I see this as a waste of time, but perhaps even laying by a pool can aid in developmental change because the choice was by the student. Another factor educators from a previous institution grappled with regarding free time abroad was the safety of students, particularly related to the misuse of alcohol. What was different for students participating in this program versus the previous program I worked with? I am not sure. Was it the duration of free time (having more than one day) to explore? Was it being stationed in one place versus moving every four to six days? Perhaps these are questions that need to be explored further.

While the study abroad literature does not speak to the idea of having freedom of choice or a greater sense of autonomy supporting growth, this concept directly parallels a key component of adventure experiences (Priest, 1999b) and extraordinary experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993) of having a sense of personal control. Researchers (McKenzie, 2000; Sibthorp & Arthur-Banning, 2004) in the adventure education literature have found the concept of personal choice or personal empowerment to be significant in a participant's development. Perhaps study abroad educators could benefit from this research and its relevance for the adventure of studying abroad.

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APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH STUDY: OUT-OF-CLASS EXPERIENCES

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

Participants accessed the survey through survey monkey. Participants had the option to skip each questions if they chose and they were asked at the end of the survey to either discard or submit their responses to be included in the study.

Consent To Participate

I am Mallory A. Anderson, a Teaching Assistant with ISP – Cape Town, and a doctoral student in Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Georgia within the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. As a part of my research, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Kleiber, (706-542-5064), and in partnership with ISP, I am conducting a study exploring the psychosocial development of students participating in a study abroad experience and I invite you to participate in this study.

There are no direct benefits associated with your participation in this study. However, I hope to learn more about the psychosocial development of students' studying abroad that can be used to better assist faculty and staff leading study abroad programs. Additionally, data collected will assist ISP in better understanding how studying abroad through their program may have contributed to your development.

Your participation in THIS PORTION OF THE study will involve providing basic demographic information and answering questions about your participation in certain aspects of your International Study Program EXPERIENCE. Your participation is voluntary and will not affect your grade in the course. You can skip any question, refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. THIS questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Your participation will be confidential. Only myself, and Dr. Douglas Kleiber will have access to information that individually identifies you. Your individually-identifiable information will be encrypted and password protected. This information will be used to link this survey with the survey YOU MAY HAVE taken prior to your experience, and with the survey that will be taken at the end of the STUDY.

ISP has funded this study and will have access to data collected. Data shared with ISP will be stripped of any individually-identifying information to ensure confidentiality. Generalizable results of the research study will be shared with ISP, and may be published. Both the information shared with ISP and the published results will be presented in summary form only and individually-identifying information will not be made available. Additionally, your information will be stored on a secure network and one year after the start of this study your individually-identifying information will be removed from the data collected.

Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. If you are not comfortable with the level of confidentiality provided by the internet, we understand your desire to not participate in the study. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call (706-542-5064) or send an email to mallorya@uga.edu or dkleiber@uga.edu. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

By completing this questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project. Please print this page for your records.

Thank you for your participation.
Sincerely,

Mallory A. Anderson, M.Ed.
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
University of Georgia

Survey Questions

For the following questions, please mark the box that you most identify with:

1) I have read the consent form and:

☐ Yes, I choose to participate ☐ No, I choose not to participate

Your email address will only be used by the researchers for one of two purposes. (Note: It is not required for you to have participated in the earlier questionnaire to participate in this one). 1) If you participated in the earlier questionnaire this will allow us to connect previously submitted responses to that data. 2) To potentially contact you if we need to clarify your response for any reason.

2) What is your email address? _____

3) Is UGA your home Institution?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4) If no, what type of institution do you currently attended?

☐ Public ☐ Private

5) As a transient student, did you transfer course credit back to your home institution?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6) Were you a community group leader?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7) If we want to ask you further questions about your experience in Cape Town may we contact you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Study Abroad Experiences

Study Abroad programs offer a unique learning environment where classroom knowledge is often complemented or enhanced through out-of-classroom experiences. We want to learn more about how certain activities may have contributed to your study abroad experience. Following are questions that will aid us in exploring this area of study. It will require only about 20-30 minutes for you to complete this questionnaire. Take a moment to reflect on your experience during the International Study Program. Then, rate your level of agreement with the following statements (select your response for each item):

8) The following service opportunities in the township positively *influenced my personal development*:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Overall week of Service with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Field Day	1	2	3	4	5	0
Dinner with your host family	1	2	3	4	5	0
Creating dances with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Mural Painting	1	2	3	4	5	0
Arts & Crafts with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Playing games/sports with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Final Gathering at the Creche	1	2	3	4	5	0

9) The following service opportunities outside the township positively influenced my personal development:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Visiting Amy Biehl Foundation prior to service week	1	2	3	4	5	0
Amy Biehl Foundation during service week	1	2	3	4	5	0
Soccer with youth (Adv. Week)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Pillow-making/mosaic (Adv. Week)	1	2	3	4	5	0

10) The following cultural experiences positively influenced my personal development:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
City Tour your first day	1	2	3	4	5	0
Robben Island/Nelson Mandela Tour	1	2	3	4	5	0
Slave Lodge	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hiking Table Mountain	1	2	3	4	5	0
Cape Point/Cape of Good Hope	1	2	3	4	5	0
Winery Tour	1	2	3	4	5	0
Rugby Game	1	2	3	4	5	0
District Six Museum	1	2	3	4	5	0
The Nelson for High Tea	1	2	3	4	5	0

11) The following adventure activities positively influenced my personal development:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Shark Cage Diving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Bungee Jumping	1	2	3	4	5	0
Zip-Lining	1	2	3	4	5	0
Caving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Ostrich Farm	1	2	3	4	5	0
Elephant Sanctuary	1	2	3	4	5	0
Suspension Bridge Hike	1	2	3	4	5	0
Game Drive	1	2	3	4	5	0

12) The following leadership experiences positively influenced my personal development:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Strengths Lessons	1	2	3	4	5	0
Social Change Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Authentic Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Culture and Leadership Session	1	2	3	4	5	0
Situational Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Vision Values Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Vision Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Power of WOW/Bucket List	1	2	3	4	5	0
Influence Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Gratitude Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Overcoming Obstacles	1	2	3	4	5	0

The following questions are similar to the previously asked questions, however these questions are related to LEARNING. Please take a moment to reflect on your experience LEARNING the course material/content

13) The following service opportunities contributed to my learning of the course material:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Overall week of Service with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Field Day	1	2	3	4	5	0
Dinner with your host family	1	2	3	4	5	0
Creating dances with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Mural Painting	1	2	3	4	5	0
Arts & Crafts with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Playing games/sports with the kids	1	2	3	4	5	0
Final Gathering at the Creche	1	2	3	4	5	0

14) The following service opportunities outside the township contributed to my learning of the course material:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Visiting Amy Biehl Foundation prior to service week	1	2	3	4	5	0
Amy Biehl Foundation during service week	1	2	3	4	5	0
Soccer with youth (Adv. Week)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Pillow-making/mosaic (Adv. Week)	1	2	3	4	5	0

15) The following leadership experiences contributed to my learning of the course material:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Strengths Lessons	1	2	3	4	5	0
Social Change Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Authentic Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Culture and Leadership Session	1	2	3	4	5	0
Situational Leadership Model	1	2	3	4	5	0
Vision Values Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Vision Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Power of WOW/Bucket List	1	2	3	4	5	0
Influence Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Gratitude Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	0
Overcoming Obstacles	1	2	3	4	5	0

16) The following cultural excursions contributed to my learning of the course material:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
City Tour your first day	1	2	3	4	5	0
Robben Island/Nelson Mandela Tour	1	2	3	4	5	0
Slave Lodge	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hiking Table Mountain	1	2	3	4	5	0
Cape Point/Cape of Good Hope	1	2	3	4	5	0
Winery Tour	1	2	3	4	5	0
Rugby Game	1	2	3	4	5	0
District Six Museum	1	2	3	4	5	0
The Nelson for High Tea	1	2	3	4	5	0

17) The following adventure activities contributed to my learning of the course material:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Shark Cage Diving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Bungee Jumping	1	2	3	4	5	0
Zip-Lining	1	2	3	4	5	0
Caving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Ostrich Farm	1	2	3	4	5	0
Elephant Sanctuary	1	2	3	4	5	0
Suspension Bridge Hike	1	2	3	4	5	0
Game Drive	1	2	3	4	5	0

18) Reflecting on your time in Cape Town, what was one activity that most positively influenced your study abroad experience? Please use the space below to name and describe the experience that was most meaningful and why.

19) Continuing to reflect on your overall experience, was there one activity that negatively influenced your study abroad experience? Please use the space below to name and describe the experience that was least meaningful and why.

20) Were there other activities you believe positively influenced your experience, that you would encourage every participant to experience? If so, which ones, and why?

21) Was there a specific activity during the program that was most effective to your learning of the course material during your experience in Cape Town? Please share which experience and why.

22) Was was the most important thing(s) you learned from the leadership course? (1-3 things may be shared for this question.)

23) Was was the most important thing(s) you learned from the service-learning course? (1-3 things may be shared for this question.)

24) Was was the most important thing(s) you learned from the adventure experience? (1-3 things may be shared for this question.)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview #1: Individual's Background & Details of their Experience

Introduction

Hi. It's good to see you [since I was a TA on their program there is some familiarity]! As you may remember, I'm a doctoral student in the Recreation and Leisure Studies program at UGA. I am conducting a research project examining how different activities on study abroad may influence an individual's experience during their program and possibly afterwards. I believe there are many unique opportunities for different types of experiences abroad, and I hope to provide insight into those experiences for future study abroad educators. As an alum of the International study abroad program, you are able to provide a unique perspective connected to a variety of out-of-class opportunities. I appreciate you meeting with me today to provide greater insights into your experience.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to remind you that the information you share will be kept confidential, as outlined in the consent form. Also, as a reminder, you may choose to skip any question you don't wish to answer and you may elect to end the interview at any time.

As mentioned before, I anticipate the interview taking approximately an hour to an hour and a half. During this first interview I will be asking you questions about your background and your study abroad experience. In your responses I want you to give me as many details as you can about what you did, what you enjoyed, what you didn't enjoy, etc. The more specific details you can provide will help my research to further study abroad programs. If at any time you have a question about the interview, or need clarification, please feel free to ask. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Part 1: Individual Background & Basic Program Background

Topic: Participant background information. *[Sidebar: These questions are being asked to better understand who the participant is and what their experiences have been because their growth or non-growth may be influenced by prior life experiences.]*

- 1) So I can get to know you a little bit better, I want to start off by asking you to share some basic information about yourself
 - a) Tell me where are you from?
 - b) Tell me a little bit about where are you in school? *(or where you went to college)*
 - c) What is your year in School? *(& when you were abroad)*
 - d) What is your current Major (or major you graduated with)? *(Is it the same as when you went on ISP?)*

- e) Did you study abroad prior to GL? (If so, where? Tell me more)
- f) Had you traveled internationally prior to ISP? (If so, where? Tell me more)
- g) What about since ISP, have you study abroad anymore?

Topic: Program background from the participant's perspective.

- 2) If I were someone you just met, how would you describe the ISP: Cape Town program to me. [Tell me about the overall details of the program...Not what you did specifically, more about the overall program].
 - a) What led to your decision to participate in the ISP study abroad program?
 - b) They offered 3 sites, what about Cape Town stood out to you?
 - c) Would you describe the area as rural? Urban? Other important features?

[Sidebar: This next question is meant to be low-stakes to learn what they share with others. I am curious if there is crossover from the memorable experiences they share and what they have chosen to share with others. I believe this could be telling for my research.]

- 3) Thinking about the past year and a half, what have you told others about your study abroad experience?
 - a) If Yes: Give me an example of one type of activity or one experience you had that you shared to others.

Prompts:

When you have shared your study abroad experience with others, what was the context? Was it for them to study abroad too? Or was it to share a part of your study abroad experience with others?

- a. Why did you pick these things to highlight? What made them worthy of making the cut?
- b) If No: Why do you think you haven't shared your study abroad experience?
 - a. Is there a specific reason why?

[Sidebar: The next question is to understand the ISP program from the student's perspective and to help them recall things that they participated in while abroad.]

- 4) You may recall ISP emphasized Leadership, Education, Diplomacy, and Adventure as the pillars of the International Study Program. I'll review each pillar with you and I want you to describe in as much detail as possible how you experienced these concepts. If you need a reminder of what these concepts mean, I can provide ISP's definition. [Prompt them with ISP definitions of pillars if needed.]
 - a) How did you experience leadership in the program? From your perspective, what did leadership consist of?
 - b) How was education experienced in the program?
 - c) Diplomacy? How was diplomacy experienced in the program?
 - d) Adventure? How as adventure experienced in the program?
- 5) Tell me more about the types of adventure activities that were included in your study abroad.

Prompts:

- a) What activities did you do as a part of the curriculum?
- b) What activities did you do that were not a part of the curriculum (i.e. sign-ups through the adventure tour company?)

[Sidebar: From the question below I hope to understand what these things look like for the student, and if there is crossover between experiences (i.e. leadership and adventure; or SL and Leadership, etc.).]

- 6) We've reviewed ISP's definition of the pillars and I want to know how would you personally describe or define what Adventure means? (There is no right or wrong answer – it's completely subjective. I'm curious to know your view so I can better understand your experiences while abroad.)
- 7) Based on how you have described adventure, what were your experiences prior to ISP with these types of experiences?

Part II: Personal Experiences on Study Abroad

Transition: Thank you again for telling me a little bit about yourself and about the International study abroad program. Shifting gears I want us to talk about your personal study abroad experience. I want to learn more about what your time abroad was like for you. I know it's been a year, which is so hard to believe! So, take a minute and think about your study abroad experience in Cape Town. I want you to think about what you did while you were there; as a part of class and on your own during your free time. What images, sights, sounds, people, come to mind for you? I'll give you a couple of minutes to think about those things before the next question.

Topic: Personal stories of experiences abroad.

- 8) In a word, or in a sentence, how would you sum up your study abroad experience to others?
- 9) When you think about your study abroad experience, out of the activities you participated in while you were abroad, what is something that stands out the most?
What is an activity or thing that you did that best captures your study abroad experience?

Prompts:

- a) Describe one of the activities you participated in? [Be specific]
What did you do? (Who was a part of the activity/experience?); How did it make you feel?; What were your actions during the activity? What was the outcome from participating in the activity? (What did you gain, if anything, as a result?)

- b) I have a pretty good idea, but can you remind me, was the experience you've described a part of the program's curriculum, or was it something not a part of the program curriculum?

[repeat a & b to get more examples]

10) Is there anything else from your experience that you want to share?

- If so, what made you want to share this moment/experience in particular?

Wrap-Up

I want to thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I really appreciate your insights and enjoyed *(unless it was a negative experience, then I won't say that)* hearing how your study abroad experience has impacted you. If I have any follow-up questions to clarify your responses, may I contact you again?

Interview #2:

Reflection on the Meaning of their Study Abroad Experience

Introduction

Hi. It's good to see you again. As I mentioned in our last interview, we'll be talking more about the meaning of the experiences you had while in Cape Town. Again, I appreciate you meeting with me today to provide greater insights into your experience.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to remind you that the information you share will be kept confidential, as outlined in the consent form. Also, as a reminder, you may choose to skip any question you don't wish to answer and you may elect to end the interview at any time.

As mentioned before, I anticipate the interview taking approximately an hour to an hour and a half. During this interview I will be asking you questions about what your study abroad experience has meant to you. If at any time you have a question about the interview, or need clarification, please feel free to ask. Before we begin, what questions do you have?

Part 1: Reestablishing Rapport & Reviewing Conversation from Interview #1

Topic: Review from Interview #1 to refresh the memory of the interviewee.

Transition: When we met two weeks ago, we talked about the things you did during your study abroad in brief. Today I want us to go deeper into what your experience was like for you – so my questions will be centered around that concept. As a reminder, I'm looking for as many details you can share about what you did and experienced while you were abroad.

- 1) Last time we spoke, you talked about the following activities you remembered from your study abroad _____, _____, _____. Since our last meeting you may have remembered some more activities or experiences that you participated in that were memorable. What is another activity or experience that stands out to you?

Prompts:

- a) Describe the activities you participated in? [Be specific]
What did you do? (Who was a part of the activity/experience?); How did it make you feel?; What were your actions during the activity? What was the outcome from participating in the activity? (What did you gain, if anything, as a result?)
- b) I have a pretty good idea, but can you remind me, was the experience you've described a part of the program's curriculum, or was it something not a part of the program curriculum?

Transition: Now that we have recalled our conversations and we're thinking about the memorable experiences you have had, I want to find out more details about your time abroad.

Part II: Reflection on Experiences**Topic: What made experiences memorable?**

- 2) The activities/experiences that you've shared, what made these the most vivid in your memory? You talked about _____, what was it that made this more vivid than the other activities you participated in? (*Ask this second question for each activity/experience they have mentioned.*)

Topic: Change.

Transition: We've talked about things you did that were memorable, or that have stuck out in your mind since your experience abroad. I want to know more about the impact or significance your study abroad experience has had in your life. As a reminder, in your responses I want you to give me as many details as you can about the activity or experience being referenced. The more specific details you can provide will help my research to further study abroad programs.

- 3) What one activity or experience abroad had a significant impact on your study abroad experience? (*note: this could be something they previously mentioned.*)
 - a) What were you doing or what did you do? (Who was a part of the activity/experience?)
 - b) What were your actions during the activity?
 - c) What feelings do you remember about what you did?
 - d) What was the outcome from participating in the activity? (What did you gain, if anything, as a result?)
- 4) Tell me about an instance or a time you felt stretched during your study abroad experience.
 - a) What were you doing or what did you do? (Who was a part of the activity/experience?)
 - b) What were your actions during the activity?
 - c) What feelings do you remember about what you did?
 - d) What was the outcome from participating in the activity? (What did you gain, if anything, as a result?)

- 5) Were there things you felt that you learned about yourself while on your study abroad experience?
 - a) If so, what is one thing you learned about yourself?
 - b) What do you believe contributed to this? (*Repeat a & b.*)

Transition: The next question is asking about skills. A way to define what “skills” represent is that a skill is the expertise or talent to do a job or task. Job skills allow you to do a particular job and life skills are what are needed for everyday life. An example of a skill could be as general as “I’m good handling change or transition” or as specific as “I can mow a lawn.”

- 6) Were there skills you felt that you gained while on your study abroad experience?
 - a) If so, what was at least one skill you gained?
 - b) What do you believe contributed to this skill development? (*Repeat a & b*)

Topic: Perception of how the interviewee has been influenced from studying abroad.

- 7) It’s been a year and ½ since your study abroad with ISP. Have any of the activities or experiences from the program had an influence on your life now?
 - a) How? Could you please provide a specific example?
 - b) What do you contribute this to?

Topic: The influence prior experiences may have contributed to the interviewee’s study abroad experience.

- 8) Do you believe experiences prior to studying abroad contributed to the experience you had while abroad? If so, what experiences were beneficial?
 - a) Did prior life experiences create a readiness for change? (i.e. prior adventure experiences lend to personal growth abroad because more apt to take risk?)

Transition: Additionally, I’ve had a chance to review your journal and I have some questions I would like to follow up with you:

[These questions will be specific to each individual participant]

Transition: Based on your scores on the SDTLA, I have some questions I would like to follow up with you:

[These questions will be specific to each individual participant]

- 9) Is there anything else from your experience that you want to share?
 - a) If so, what made you want to share this moment/experience in particular?

Wrap-Up

I want to thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I really appreciate your insights and enjoyed (*unless it was a negative experience, then I won't say that*) hearing how your study abroad experience has impacted you. If I have any follow-up questions to clarify your responses, may I contact you again?

[Sidebar: I'm expecting that they are going to talk about "adventure" week and some of those experiences – I want to follow-up with this question when they do.]

Supplemental Questions:

What types of adventure experiences did you have outside of the adventure week or planned activities through Gavin? (i.e. personal things you did or things you planned.)

How did adventure play out in the course?

How did the spirit of adventure play out in your free-time?

Why was adventure not a part of your experiences?

APPENDIX C

JOURNAL ENTRY QUESTIONS ANALYZED

Note: Journals were completed while students were abroad.

Pg. 35: History & Culture

Q. 1: Prompt to be given which was: Why did you come here? What did you expect SA to be like?

Q. 3: What are the three most important things you learned today that helped you understand your role as a tourist AND as a service-learner in SA?

Pg. 75: Meta-Reflection Week 1

Q.1: What were the top 5 highlights this week? Why were they highlights?

Q.2: What were the 3 most challenging moments of this week? Why were they challenging?

Pg. 122: Outside your comfort Zone (Note: optional entry, so may not have been completed).

Q.3: What have you learned about yourself through this experience?

Pg. 273: The Journey Home

Q.1: How are you a different person than when you left the U.S.?

Q.2: Why are you a different person? (Discuss moments that have facilitated transformation and self-awareness.)

Q.3: Slimbach speaks of being an “integrative returnee” (p.211). Another way of thinking about this is being a “mindful traveler home.” With whom are you most eager to share your experiences while being a mindful traveler home? What will you tell that person?

APPENDIX D

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT TASK AND LIFESTYLES ASSESSMENT (SDTLA): TASK, SUBTASK, AND SCALE DESCRIPTIONS

The SDTLA is made up of three developmental tasks (Establishing and Clarifying Purpose, Developing Autonomy, and Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, each of which is further delineated by subtasks) and two scales (Salubrious Lifestyle and Response Bias). Definitions of the tasks, subtasks, and scales follow.

Establishing and Clarifying Purpose Task (PUR). The Establishing and Clarifying Purpose Task is composed of four subtasks: Educational Involvement, Career Planning, Lifestyle Planning, and Cultural Participation. Students who have high achievement on this task (a) have well-defined and thoroughly explored educational goals and plans and are active, self-directed learners, (b) have synthesized knowledge about themselves and the world of work into appropriate career plans, both making emotional commitment and taking steps now to allow realization of career goals; (c) have established a personal direction in their lives and made plans for their futures that take into account personal, ethical, and religious values, future family plans, and vocational and educational objectives; and (d) exhibit a wide range of cultural interests and active participation in both traditional and non-traditional cultural events.

Educational Involvement Subtask (EI). Students who have accomplished this subtask have well-defined educational goals and plans, are knowledgeable about available resources, and are actively involved in the academic life of the college/university. After careful investigation and self-analysis, they have selected areas of academic concentration for which they are intellectually compatible and academically qualified, and with which they are temperamentally suited. They are not passive learners; they take initiatives to insure that they are obtaining relevant and appropriate educational experiences through activity such as initiating personal study projects, attending non-required lectures and programs, and making regular contact with academic advisors, faculty, and staff members.

Career Planning Subtask (CP). An awareness of the world of work, an accurate understanding of one's abilities and limitations, a knowledge of requirements for various occupations, and an understanding of the emotional and educational demands of different kinds of jobs are evidence of accomplishment of this subtask. Students who have achieved this subtask have synthesized knowledge about themselves and the world of work into a rational order which enables them to make a commitment to a chosen career field and formulate specific vocational plans. They have taken the initial steps necessary to prepare themselves through both educational and practical experiences for eventual employment, and have taken steps necessary for beginning a job search or enrollment in graduate school.

Lifestyle Planning Subtask (LP). Achievement of this subtask includes establishing a personal direction and orientation in one's life that takes into account personal, ethical, and religious values, future relationship/family plans, and vocational and educational objectives. Plans need not be highly specific, but must have sufficient clarity to permit identification of present steps that can lead to plans' realization; that is, they can specify how current activities relate to the realization of the kind of future they envision for themselves.

Cultural Participation Subtask (CUP). Students who have accomplished this subtask are actively involved in a wide variety of activities, including traditional cultural events such as attending plays, ballets, museums, art exhibits, and classical music concerts, as well as new forms of expression and ethnic celebrations and performances. Their leisure time is spent productively in such activities as reading, pursuit of hobbies, and voluntary participation in student organizations. They exhibit a wide array of cultural interests and a developed sense of aesthetic appreciation.

Developing Autonomy Task (AUT). The Developing Autonomy Task is defined by four subtasks: Emotional Autonomy, Interdependence, Academic Autonomy, and Instrumental Autonomy. Students who have high achievement on this task: (a) are able to meet their needs and action on their own ideas without the need for continuous reassurance from others; (b) can structure their lives and manipulate their environment in ways that allow them to satisfy daily needs and meet responsibilities without extensive direction or support from others; (c) structure their time and devise and execute effective study strategies to meet academic expectations without the need for direction from others; and (d) recognize the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the individual and his/her community and acts as a responsible, contributing member.

Emotional Autonomy Subtask (EA). Students who have accomplished this subtask are free from the need for continuous reassurance and approval from others. Trusting their own ideas and feelings, they have the self-assurance to be confident decision-makers and to voice dissenting opinions in groups. They have confidence in their abilities and are prudent risk-takers. The reliance on parents for direction is minimal. Relationships with authority figures are constructive and non-defensive.

Interdependence Subtask (IND). Students who have high scores on this subtask recognize the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the individual and his/her community. They fulfill their citizenship responsibilities and are actively involved in activities that promote improvement of the institution and the larger community. Concern for others is reflected in their awareness of how their behavior affects the community.

Academic Autonomy Subtask (AA). Students who have accomplished this task have the capacity to deal well with ambiguity and to monitor and control their behavior in ways that allow them to attain personal goals and fulfill responsibilities. High scorers devise and execute effective study plans and schedules; perform academically at levels with which they are satisfied and are consistent with their abilities; are self-disciplined; and require minimal amounts of direction from others. While they are independent learners, they are also willing to seek academic help when needed.

Instrumental Autonomy Subtask (IA). Students who have completed this subtask demonstrate an ability to structure their lives and to manipulate their environment in ways that allow them to satisfy daily needs and meet responsibilities without extensive direction or support from others. They are able to manage their time and other aspects of their lives in ways that allow them to meet daily demands, satisfy personal needs, and fulfill community and family responsibilities; to establish and follow through on realistic plans; and to solve most problems as they arise. They are independent, goal-directed, resourceful, and self-sufficient persons.

Mature Interpersonal Relationships Task (MIR). The Mature Interpersonal Relationships Task is defined by two subtasks: Peer Relationships and Tolerance. Higher achievers on this task: (a) have relationships with peer that are open, honest, and trusting; their relationships reflect a balance between dependence and self-assured independence; and (b) show respect for and acceptance of those of different backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, races, lifestyles, and appearances.

Peer Relationships Subtask (PR). Having accomplished this subtask, students describe their relationships with peers as shifting toward greater trust, independence, frankness, and individuality and as feeling less need to conform to the standards of friends or to conceal shortcomings or disagreements. Students can distinguish between friends and acquaintances and have both kinds of relationships. Friendships survive the development of differences in activities, beliefs, and values, and reflect an appreciation for individual differences. Relationships with peers are open and honest; disagreements are resolved or simply accepted.

Tolerance Subtask (TOL). Respect for and acceptance of those of different backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, races, lifestyles, and appearances describe students who have high achievement on this subtask. They respond to people as individuals; do not employ racial, sexual, or cultural stereotypes; have an openness to new or unconventional ideas and beliefs; and are appreciative of individual differences. Tolerance involves an openness to and acceptance of differences and does not mean the development of screening devices to shield one from the values and ideas of those with different backgrounds, lifestyles, or belief systems. Students high in tolerance do not shy from or reject contact with those with different ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage or with different religious beliefs, political views, or lifestyles.