

The Development and Implementation of a Pre-International Experience Course:  
A Cultural Intervention in a University Setting

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

Approved April 2014 by the  
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2014

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to assess the impact and influence of a pre-international experience course on Arizona State University (ASU) students before they study or intern abroad. Currently, the study abroad pre-departure orientation for ASU participants consists of online modules and a two-hour face-to-face orientation. In this action research study, the practitioner-researcher re-designed an ASU School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS), one-credit course that focused exclusively on cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity. A needs assessment was distributed to a sample of 800 returning study abroad participants and was used to influence the study, along with an extensive literature review and two cycles of action research. The dissertation research and study was conducted during the ASU fall 2013 semester. Quantitative data and qualitative data were collected using eight different measures.

To better understand the impact of a pre-international experience curriculum for ASU study abroad and international internship participants before they go abroad, this research study investigated the following research questions: (1) What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad? (2) What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course? (3) How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

The following five assertions were identified within the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data to answer the three research questions: (1) Students are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures after successfully completing taking the new course; (2) Students are more aware of other cultures and their own culture after successfully completing taking the new course; (3) Students gained important knowledge about understanding others' worldviews after successfully completing taking the new course; (4) Students gained general openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own after successfully completing the new course; (5) Developing and implementing a pre-international experience course changed me as a leader, instructor and researcher. Implications for future implementation and research are discussed.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation is the result of continuous encouragement and support from my family, friends, faculty and colleagues. First and foremost, I am thankful for the investment of my dissertation faculty committee who helped me throughout this entire process. Specifically, I thank my chair, Dr. Keith Wetzel for his gentle and consistent coaching of my scholarly thinking, writing, and data collection techniques. To my committee co-chair, Dr. Ann Ewbank, I appreciate your encouragement and ability to open my mind to new ways of thinking about writing. Specifically, I appreciate your interest in my research topic and your passion for cultural growth among the participants. And to Dr. Paul LePore, my third committee member, I thank you for your critical eye, your commitment to study abroad, and your analytical mind that challenged me. Thank you also to Dr. Ray Buss for his guidance and expertise with analyzing quantitative data. You helped me in tremendous ways.

Thank you to Ms. Gisela Grant, Internship Coordinator for the Arizona State University (ASU) School of Politics and Global Studies. Ms. Grant, you worked with me for two consecutive years to make the course a reality, and benefit your students before studying or interning going abroad. You were patient, understanding, and encouraging of me—even when everything did not make complete sense. I appreciate you and firmly believe that through our collaborations, more and more ASU students will be sent better prepared to effectively cross cultures.

I also want to acknowledge the students who were part of this study. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to becoming global citizens. I appreciate your

flexibility with the course and being patient with the delivery of it. I am proud of your accomplishments and the cultural development growth that I saw in you from the first day of class to the last day. I now look forward to hearing about how you apply all that we discussed and learned while you are abroad.

Thank you to the ASU Study Abroad Office staff and other ASU colleagues for your sincere encouragement throughout this journey. Many of you took extra time to come alongside me and provide extra support during the busy times. Thank you to ASU faculty who lead our faculty-directed programs as many of you also shared your words of encouragement throughout the four years and remained interested throughout the journey.

To my Leader-Scholar Community (LSC) within my cohort, thank you for helping me to grow as a practitioner-researcher. I appreciate your genuine interest in this study and the results it can have on ASU undergraduate students. My LSC tremendously benefitted me and provided the accountability that was required to stay focused through the dissertation writing process. Thank you for reading all the many drafts of my dissertation and your invaluable input along the way. I also want to acknowledge the amazing editing and formatting support from Drs. Mandy Nydegger and Michele Mosco. Thank you also to cohort members: Sean, April, and Anna-Maria. You provided extra support and laughter along the way.

I also wish to acknowledge the support that I have received from friends and family throughout this journey. To my friends who encouraged me and supported me throughout this journey, I look forward to reconnecting with each and every one of you. To my parents, Don and Carol, thank you for the love, support, guidance, and sacrifices

you made while always encouraging me to pursue my academic, personal, and professional goals. Specifically, thank you to my mom for always telling me that receiving a doctoral degree is attainable. Alison, you are next! I also want to thank my extended family, specifically my in-laws, for encouraging me throughout this entire process. Your dinners with Stephanie and the kids on Thursday evenings were greatly appreciated. I appreciate you Jess and Carol.

My most sincere and heartfelt gratitude goes to my amazing and beautiful wife of 13 years, Stephanie, for her endless support and love. Thank you for all the encouragement, accountability, and management of our family during this time. You have sacrificed so much over the last four years to see this dissertation completed. You have remained strong and committed and this was a continued expression of your unconditional love for me. Now that we are done, we can continue dreaming of our future together. This degree is as much mine as it is yours! I love you with all my heart, Stephanie.

This dissertation is dedicated to future scholars and global citizens who will explore culture in and outside of the classroom. Specifically, it is dedicated to my three children, for whom I hope will discover the world and all it has to offer them: Wyatt, EmmaGrace, and Hudson. You are the future and I love you. I pray to our Heavenly Father that as we learn together about other cultures and places around the world, that we increase our cultural humility so that we are also more effective and appropriate when interacting with cultures different from our own.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

I clearly remember the day when one of my 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers told our class of an opportunity to spend the upcoming summer in Kenya, East Africa. He spoke to us about the organization that facilitated the program, how they focus on service learning for youth, and how it would cost \$3,200 to participate. After a show of hands on who was interested in receiving the organization's brochure, I was the only one with my hand in the air. That evening, I returned home and asked my parents if they would be supportive of me spending the summer in Kenya. They told me they would allow me to apply as long as I worked to raise all of the needed program fees. I succeeded, and as a result, I spent approximately forty-five days living and volunteering in Kenya the summer between my junior and senior year of high school.

The time in Kenya was difficult. One of the most difficult aspects of the summer related to the culture shock I experienced throughout most of the experience. By being so far away from home for the first time and being thrown into a new culture with a group of people that I did not know very well, I had a difficult time adjusting. I experienced depression, often had headaches and at times, could barely eat. I also had a hard time opening up to the Kenyan youth, was intimidated to reach out to them, and at times, could not focus on my daily tasks. I attribute all of these behaviors to the fact that I was experiencing extreme culture shock. Prior to leaving, I was never told that I might experience this and as a result, I had no coping skills, no conceptual references, for cross-cultural adaptation. I was also unaware of my own cultural norms and the clashing of cultures that was taking place on a daily basis while interacting with the Kenyan people.

Although the experience was transformative, I still think about how much more I would have grown had I been prepared to observe and experience a new culture while being able to identify my own. I wonder what would have changed had I been even somewhat oriented on the realities of culture shock, the difficulties of cross-cultural communication, and the cultural differences between the American and Kenyan cultures. Would I have been more effective? Could I have been able to gain more from the experience? Might I have been able to contribute more to the cause?

My time in Kenya had a profound impact on me. After graduating from high school, I entered my undergraduate studies as an International Studies major. As an International Studies major, it was required by my university to study abroad. I decided to enroll in an intensive Spanish summer program in Guatemala during the summer of my junior year. When I reached Guatemala, I was placed in the home of a local Guatemalan family. During the eight weeks, I successfully completed six credits of Spanish, spent the afternoons talking to Guatemalan youth in the town square, and enjoyed my evenings trying to connect with my host family and the other students at my language school, as well as exploring the city of Antigua. This time around, I was aware of the cultural differences I was encountering, and the result was life-changing. I gained insights into my own culture while also learning about the Guatemalan culture. I had an open-mind, was tolerant of their culture, practiced curiosity in my daily explorations, and remained flexible when “my” plans failed. It was a time of discovering more about me and how, as an American, my “Americanisms” impact the way others view me and my culture. It was

a time when I was open to understanding a new culture, and it gave me the opportunity to adopt some of what I observed and bring it into my own definition of culture.

These experiences in Kenya and Guatemala molded and shaped me in tremendous ways, and upon graduation, I applied for and received a position with an international non-governmental organization (NGO). During that time, I developed and implemented a service-learning program along with a pre-departure training curriculum, with the goal of sending thousands of university students and professionals abroad each summer to volunteer in developing countries. We sent teachers, nurses, doctors, students, retired engineers, and public health workers. After seven years in the role, I was offered a Director's position in Chengdu, China with the same organization. By being in a foreign country, my passion was renewed by being exposed to culture and cultural understanding. While in China, I once again was able to cultivate intercultural development skills. I learned about the Chinese people by studying the language. I was also there with a team of young professionals to startup community development work and a study abroad program among the Chinese people. It was a time of learning about myself, and the journey of learning humbled me in a collectivist culture while still trying to function like I was in an individualistic culture. For three years, I was challenged and humbled as I learned a new culture and rediscovered the adaptation required for one to be successful in a new and foreign environment.

After living, studying, and working in China as an expatriate, I returned to my hometown and accepted an Assistant Director position in Arizona State University's (ASU) intensive English language program. Over the next two years, I worked directly

with students from the Middle East and from Asia. During this time, my focus on intercultural communication remained as strong as it had been in China. I had to learn how to effectively communicate with Middle Eastern students and teach them how to be successful in an individualist culture. After two years in the role, I accepted an Assistant Director position within ASU's Study Abroad Office (SAO). I have been in this leadership role since early 2011 and am passionate about intercultural development as it relates to domestic students going abroad and interacting and working in a multicultural world. More specifically, I am amazed at the reality that studying abroad can change, and will change, the worldview and mindsets of those who actively participate. Part of this fascination is rooted in the fact that many students who return from being abroad declare that they have been "transformed" and that their lives are forever changed. What causes this transformation and does it really take place? How does it take place? Why do some students declare it and others do not? These are the questions that I often ponder when listening to returned students relate their experiences.

This narrative sets the stage for the focus of this dissertation on a one-credit hour pre-international experience course designed for ASU students, specifically, a course designed for Global Studies majors within the ASU School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS), to complete before they go abroad, either for a traditional study abroad program or an international internship. The course also included students from ASU's top-ranked W.P. Carey School of Business (WPC), a result of networking with the WPC academic advisors. Recognizing that one of their goals is to graduate globally-minded students, they offered to electronically send the course description out to thousands of their

undergraduate majors. This study focuses on the creation and implementation of the curriculum for the course. It also explores the strategy to see the participants gain a deeper cross-cultural cultural understanding and assist them in the areas of intercultural development, awareness, identity, communication, and adaptation. I explored these topics in hopes that the course might better prepare and develop the students and apply these cultural understandings not only abroad but also in their everyday lives. I share this anecdote to demonstrate my personal interest in the sub-community student group of university students who study abroad, participate in an international internship, or seek to work in a multicultural context. I identify with this population, believe in them as an international educator, and as the Assistant Director of the ASU SAO, I am committed to investing in them and their development as global citizens.

### **Background and Context**

Located in Arizona, ASU is spread out among four campuses located in the cities of Tempe, Phoenix, Glendale, and Mesa. One SAO serves all the campuses, and the office is located on the Tempe Campus. ASU has an estimated total student enrollment of slightly more than 76,000 students (ASU, 2013). Since his arrival in 2002, ASU's president, Dr. Michael Crow, has placed an emphasis on scientific research, science policy, entrepreneurship, sustainability, innovative technology, and global engagement. Over the last twelve years, the university has developed new international relationships and outreach to focus on increasing the overall international student population and to increase the number of ASU's international partners. To be known as the "New American University," ASU created eight Design Aspirations, the eighth of which is "Engage

Globally.” This specific Design Aspiration states: “ASU is scaling local solutions for global impact, fostering local and international student experiences, and building diverse partnerships. ASU is forging a new role for higher education in the world” (ASU, n.d.). To me, this Design Aspiration creates a need to better develop ASU’s undergraduate students in cross-cultural awareness and development. Specifically, one of the most effective ways to engage globally is to spend time in another country with people of different cultures.

ASU students on all campuses can choose to study abroad in fifty-five diverse countries within two hundred and fifty different international programs, and the ASU SAO offers undergraduate and graduate students three different program options. Students can choose to study in Faculty-Directed Programs that run in the summer for two to eight weeks. This option allows students to take courses taught by an ASU faculty member, participate in classes with fellow ASU students, and earn three to nine credits during the program. Because these courses are taught abroad, students study under one of ASU’s outstanding faculty members in his/her discipline, while learning about that discipline in a different cultural context. The second option ASU SAO offers for students is to study at one of ASU’s exchange partners for one semester or the academic year. Participants pay their normal ASU tuition for the term(s) they will be abroad in order to take courses at the foreign institution alongside students from the host country. Exchange programs allow students to take courses that are part of their required major courses as well as electives. A final option for ASU students is to study in one of the partnership programs that ASU offers. Students participating in partnership programs can take

courses with students from the host country or only with other American or international students. Partnership programs often provide students the ability to study abroad in a country without having to be fluent in the host country's language. English-speaking professors are hired to teach the courses and language courses are available. These three options allow students to utilize their ASU financial aid packages with the potential to increase their aid based on the overall cost of the program. All approved programs promoted by the SAO provide students with ASU credit, and coursework is factored into their cumulative GPA.

Global Studies majors may also receive credit from SPGS. These students are required, before the completion of their degree program, to study or intern abroad. They may also choose to participate in non-SAO sponsored programs with international organizations that are approved by SPGS. These include internships with international NGOs and non-profit organizations. WPC students have the opportunity to receive an International Business Certificate and studying abroad is required as part of the certificate. Many of the WPC majors in this study were also working on their International Business Certificate. Other majors also study abroad to enhance their education while studying on one of the ASU campuses.

According to the ASU SAO and reported to the Institute of International Education (IIE) for their Open Doors Report for the Academic Year 2011-2012, ASU sent 1,669 students abroad on ASU-approved study abroad programs. Of the 1,669 students, 1,248 were undergraduate students with a breakdown of 9 freshman, 134 sophomores, 471 juniors, and 634 seniors. Two hundred seventy one graduate students

participated on study abroad programs, most of whom were primarily Master of Business Administration degree seeking students. One hundred fifty students were unclassified. Of the students who went abroad during this time, 604 one were male, 914 were female, and 152 were not identified. Of those who identified their race/ethnicity, 1,063 were Caucasian, 257 Hispanic, 35 Black/African American, 76 Asian/Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 11 American Indian, 34 multiracial, and 193 unclassified (ASU Study Abroad Office, personal communication, January 3, 2014).

The one-credit course that is explored in this study was designed for Global Studies majors and for ASU students who plan to study or intern abroad through the SAO. The hope is that the collected data will be used to influence how SGPS and the SAO prepare students before they go abroad from a cultural standpoint. According to the ASU SPGS website and specific to the Global Studies major, “A Global Studies degree prepares students for professional and graduate training including law, business and public policy. It also provides training to future decision-makers in government, business and policy entities” (SPGS, n.d.). Before the implementation of the newly designed course, a one-credit seminar course existed to assist Global Studies students in all phases of identifying, planning, and selecting the most appropriate international internship. According to one of the main instructors of this original course, there was limited discussion and focus on cultural understanding and adaptation within the course, and the course content focused on the logistics of going abroad (G. Grant, personal communication, December 21, 2012). If one of the goals is to have Global Studies majors graduate to make a global impact within their spheres of influence, then cross-cultural



training and awareness is essential. The new curriculum also assisted students with a basic understanding of intercultural development to effectively and strategically prepare them for their internationally-focused careers.

Currently, students who study abroad through the SAO attend a mandatory pre-departure orientation session. During the face-to-face orientation facilitated by SAO professional staff, students are oriented on a number of topics including culture stress and cultural awareness. Within the 90-minute orientation, approximately 10 to 15 minutes are focused on cross-cultural understanding. SAO staff share a definition about the traditional cycle of culture stress and offer tips on how students can cope with the stress if they do experience it while abroad. The primary focus of the orientation is on the logistics of studying abroad as they relate to course registration, health insurance, establishing course equivalencies while abroad, and health and safety facts.

Of the students the SAO sent abroad during the Academic Year 2011-2012, 412 went abroad for one or more semesters and were required to engage in cultures that were extremely different from their own for a longer period of time compared to the 1,257 students who studied abroad for eight weeks or less. To be effective, all of the ASU-sponsored study abroad experiences require additional training in the area of cross-cultural development with a stronger emphasis for the 412 students engaging in a culture or cultures different from their own for more than one semester.

### **Broader Context**

Study abroad participation and the attainment of global competencies for those who participate are a focus for many U.S. schools and universities. Study abroad has also

become supported by the U.S. government in the promotion of diplomacy (Lincoln Commission, 2005; Reiley & Senders, 2009). Stebleton, Soria, and Cherney (2013) state “Colleges and universities around the United States have made global citizenship a priority in student learning outcomes and mission statements, and study abroad programming is often considered to be a primary means for achieving this goal” (p 1-2). The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005) states that, “What nations don’t know can hurt them. The stakes involved in study abroad are that simple, that straightforward, and that important. For their own future and that of the nation, college graduates today must be internationally competent” (p. front cover). These statements emphasize the need for study abroad in higher education, the participation from students, and the significance of students graduating with skills and abilities that encourage global citizenry. Reiley and Senders (2009) state that “Study abroad has become, at least rhetorically, a core element in U.S. post-secondary education” (p. 241).

Intercultural competence is also an important part of study abroad and for successful graduates prepared for the twenty-first century. Deardorff (2011) states, “Intercultural competence development is playing, and will continue to play, an ever-increasing role in the future, given the growing diversity of American society” (p. 65). Because the world is flat (Friedman, 2005) from a global perspective, students need the knowledge to engage globally. To state the world is flat means that cultures, economies, and opportunities of the world have merged together due to advanced technology. Due to this reality, students are also studying abroad because employers and institutions value

and expect students to graduate with these global competencies (Stebbleton et al., 2013). Recognizing this importance, Braskamp, Braskamp and Merrill (2009) state, “Education abroad has become an increasingly important educational program (experience) in global learning and development, intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students” (p. 101).

Each year, U.S. university students select to study abroad for what they hope to be a rewarding academic experience. A recent survey conducted by the Institute for International Education (IIE) found that “study abroad by U.S. college students was on the rise in 2011/12 for the third year in a row, after leveling off during the economic uncertainty that began in 2007” (2013a). IIE’s Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange, supported by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, “reports that in the 2011/12 academic year, 283,332 American students studied abroad for academic credit, an increase of three percent over the prior year. This includes 9% of all U.S. undergraduates studying abroad before graduating with the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain hosting 32% of U.S. students” (IIE, 2013a).

Study abroad is no longer applicable for just those students who study the humanities. Study abroad is now offered and designed for students of all disciplines with a special focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors (Leggett, 2011). Students have the opportunity to study in diverse locations while having their coursework taught in English. Although foreign language is important, it is no longer the main emphasis of study abroad programming. In this environment, study

abroad is being called upon to prepare future leaders to live and work in a global society. Included in this group of future leaders are members of the university student population. This generation is encouraged to gain global experiences and competencies, and studying abroad is one way to accomplish this goal. Braskamp et al. (2009) state that students “need to think and act in terms of living in a world in which they meet, work, and live with others with very different cultural backgrounds, habits, perspectives, customs, religious beliefs, and aspirations” (p. 101). Even if students do not plan to live or work abroad after they study abroad, the skills and knowledge they gain abroad and through effective cross-cultural training will be advantageous to them as they enter any profession.

Although the opportunities exist for these students, unfortunately, few American students participate in study abroad programs. In fact, only nine percent of the overall undergraduate population actually studies abroad by the time they complete their degree program (IIE, 2013b). Recognizing that students will need to operate in a globalized economy upon graduation, the emphasis on intercultural development and training cannot just be for traditional study abroad participants. This is specifically why I worked closely with academic advisors within the top-ranked ASU WPC to promote the course. As a result, 19 out of 54 participants in this study were WPC majors.

Many students share that one of their main concerns about studying abroad is the cost of the programs (J. Smith, personal communication, December 5, 2012) and lack of funding detracts many students from going abroad (The Lincoln Commission, 2005). More funding options exist today than ever before including well-known scholarships

such as the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, the Boren Scholarship, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Scholarship, Fulbright Fellowships, and Killam Fellowships. However, even though these new scholarships exist, undergraduates who study abroad may still find themselves paying more for their study abroad program than if they selected to study on their campus. Many of the program partners that ASU collaborates with on study abroad programming also offer their own scholarships. More recently, community-based funding has become popular among undergraduate students. Specifically, crowd-source funding websites in which students present their study abroad program and the cost to their friends and family and in return, ask for them to assist in funding the program. Recognizing that funding is such an important aspect to address with interested study abroad students, an entire module of the curriculum focused on funding ideas and options for the participants in this study.

### **The Role of the Researcher-Practitioner**

My role as Assistant Director of the ASU SAO impacts this study. Two years ago, the Director of the SAO, along with the SAO Assessment Team, began to express interest in identifying cultural competencies that the SAO desires to see as part of the outcomes for student participants. Additional discussions centered on the importance of providing a pre-departure course, orientation, or series of workshops that will better prepare ASU students to succeed from an intercultural standpoint. In September 2012, the SAO Director approved my teaming up with faculty and staff currently teaching the Global Studies pre-internship seminar, SGS 484. The intent to collaborate with them was to add content on intercultural understanding with the goal to pilot it with ASU students, and

evaluate if, in the future, ASU will offer a similar course for additional study abroad participants. One of the goals of this study is to also provide data to other ASU Colleges and Schools to show the potential impact of intercultural training for students and the cultural growth that the course can have on those who participate.

The topics of intercultural understanding and awareness are familiar to me after studying them in my undergraduate degree and in my professional experiences as an international educator and professional since 1999. Specifically, from 1999-2006, I wrote and presented intercultural awareness trainings for individuals preparing to participate in a service-learning program. I developed training curricula for these individuals to assist them to better understand the power of being able to identify their own culture while recognizing the significance of being open to other cultures. From 2006-2009, I lived and worked in Chengdu, China, and led a group of American professionals to accomplish the organizational goals of a non-governmental organization (NGO). This required me to guide the staff through their own cultural adjustment, as well as my own. From 2009-2011, I worked as the Assistant Director of the ASU Intensive English Language Program. In this leadership role, and on a daily basis, I interacted and advised Chinese and Middle Eastern students who were strengthening their spoken English. It was a time of personal development for me in learning how to best communicate with those from another culture.

My role was also the designer and implementer of the new curriculum. After researching multiple existing curricula, I designed some of the modules and adapted others from the existing curricula that I thought would add value to ASU students before

going abroad. This was primarily based on data that I collected from 153 past participants who studied abroad without receiving the intervention. I was also able to decipher curricula that focused on cultural preparation versus logistical preparation. Because I know that both the SAO and the staff within SPGS adequately prepare their students in the area of logistics, such as visa documentation, international insurance, and how to register for a placeholder course before going abroad, the curriculum was designed for students to gain cultural competencies. As part of this study, in March 2013, a baseline survey was deployed to over 800 former ASU study abroad participants who were abroad during a semester or year-long program in the Academic Year 2011-2012. The primary objective of the survey was to accurately discover from them, based on their recent study abroad experiences, what should be included in the curriculum. These findings and data will be presented more thoroughly in Chapter 2 as part of the data to support the innovation of the study.

I was also fortunate to be a member of a community of practice (CoP, Wenger, 1998) during this study. A CoP is a group of people who are passionate about a particular subject, or domain, and learn how to do it better as they collaborate and interact together in the process (Wenger, 1998). A more thorough description of CoP is defined in Chapter 3. In this case, the SGS 484 instructor, who had been facilitating the course with the former course curriculum since 2007, has been thoroughly involved throughout the development and implementation of this course. She has been instrumental in educating me on all that the course offered Global Studies majors and how it benefited them during their international internship or study abroad experience. This was advantageous to the

development of the new course as it was important to keep some of the original curriculum aspects intact since the majority of the participants were still Global Studies majors. Leading up to the fall 2013 semester, I communicated and periodically met with the former instructor for six months so that everything was ready for implementation by August 2013. We spent focused time together going through each of the course modules as she helped me determine what was a priority for the students based on their other courses required for the major and what could be left out of the curriculum. The CoP also included three undergraduate students who are all Global Studies majors: one senior female student, one junior female student, and one junior male student. All three students had studied abroad and had taken the course before it was re-designed. They enrolled to be Teacher Assistants (TAs) with the purpose to help grade assignments, take attendance, answer student questions, and provide input throughout the course as it relates to their own international experiences.

Our CoP of three TAs and the former instructor met eight times during the study on Thursday afternoons from 2:45-4:00pm on the Tempe Campus. The purpose of each meeting was to debrief the Tuesday and Wednesday classes and to talk about the upcoming class. At times, I knew exactly what I was teaching prior to each week's class, and at other times, I was still undecided which activity should be shared with the students. This group of TAs allowed me to brainstorm with them and share my ideas for each week. I then asked them for their input from a student perspective. They also would quickly debrief with me on Tuesday night to determine what I would change for Wednesday night's class. I listened to them based on what they thought was successfully



implemented during the Tuesday class. One of the female students studied in one of our partnership programs during the summer term. The other female student studied in one of our faculty-directed programs during our summer term, and the male student studied in one of our exchange programs for an academic year. The selection of these TAs and their varied experiences was purposeful. As a result, their experiences widely represented all of program options we offer ASU students. Their testimonials of their time abroad were often shared in our classroom and the participants appreciated their real-life accounts. Just as their experiences represented some of the opportunities specifically available to ASU students, other international opportunities exist for U.S. students across the nation as the field of international education is growing due to the reality that higher education recognizes the importance of a diverse and globalized education.

### **The Problem**

“Research supports the proposition that intercultural preparation prior to a student’s international experience facilitates significant gains in intercultural competence” (Hammer, 2012, p. 132). Currently, ASU students participating on study abroad or international internships lack a focused pre-departure training on cultural understanding and cultural awareness. The current ASU SAO student assessment asks returning participants if they have gained cross-cultural competencies while abroad, despite there not being an extensive training or intervention to help them develop such competencies. The result is that on average, returning students express that they gained some cross-cultural competencies, but they are not being gained from the orientation they received. Rather, they are from their international experiences themselves. There is a

need at ASU to address intercultural adaptation and awareness through pre-departure orientation. Study abroad pre-departure training should help prepare students for a successful international experience through assisting them to develop cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity so that they can better understand the world they live in.

The ASU SAO has the ability and capacity to have a stronger impact on ASU students and on their cultural understanding and awareness through a prescribed pre-international course. ASU students are lacking intercultural development within the orientation process. As a practitioner-researcher, I changed this by developing, in partnership with staff and faculty from the ASU SPGS and the Study Abroad Office, a one-credit course that focuses on the training of students to study or intern abroad from an intercultural understanding and awareness standpoint. As part of the curriculum, the need presented itself to define the intercultural competencies that the course would explain and teach the students. Intercultural researchers and experts are beginning to question the effectiveness of study abroad participation as it relates to the cultural development among undergraduate students (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). A common viewpoint regarding studying abroad and participation is that when students travel to a country different, they learn useful things all on their own, and do so by just being in this new environment.

### **Defining Intercultural Development and Understanding**

It is important to define and clarify intercultural development and understanding as it relates to the re-designed course. The objectives for students who successfully completed the one-credit course were to understand the value of intercultural competence

and to explore self-awareness through one's own cultural identity while practicing self-reflective learning methodologies that are influenced by Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978). Transformative Learning Theory is described in Chapter 2 and is an adult learning theory "that helps explain how adults change the way they interpret and understand their world" (Taylor, 2008, p. 5). Mezirow's theory provides a framework for the intercultural learning that takes place within individuals who experience a disorienting dilemma and are able to bring new ideas, values, and beliefs into their new frame of reference. The theory was selected for this study after my own summer high school experiences in Kenya. Mezirow states that transformation can only take place when a disorientating dilemma occurs within an individual. In Kenya, I experienced many disorientating dilemmas that primarily related to me not knowing how to appropriately or effectively function with the host culture. At the end of the international experience and for many years after, I was able to self-reflect on the experience. By having the disorientating dilemma, I was more open to hearing and discussing ideas, values, and beliefs that were different from my own. Through appropriate discourse and reflection, I was able to incorporate some of these new ideas, values, and beliefs into my own worldview and foster them while applying them in my every day.

The new course explored cross-cultural communication styles, cultural adaptation skills, and the cultural adjustment process. The course content was culture-general and culture-specific information was completed as part of the student's homework. As the students explored the topic of cultural competencies, the content focused specifically on

three core competencies, based on the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric (Rhodes, 2010). The rubric was developed through a process that examined existing rubrics for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty across the U.S. (Rhodes, 2010). The rubric is intended to use for evaluation and coaching rather than using it to grade students (Rhodes, 2010).

According to Rhodes (2010), “the levels of the rubric are informed in part by Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS, Bennett, 1993) and the criteria informed by Deardorff's (2006) intercultural framework.” The rubric identifies three of the key components of intercultural knowledge and competence and includes a total of six competencies within the three main components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rhodes, 2010). A description of how the competencies were shared with the students is described in Chapter 3. Within the rubric, the components and competencies are:

- *Knowledge*: cultural self-awareness and knowledge of culture worldview frameworks;
- *Skills*: empathy and the use of cross-cultural communication knowledge during interaction with others by listening and observing;
- *Attitudes*: curiosity and openness (Rhodes, 2010).

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to further discover how the SAO and the faculty of the ASU SPGS can assist students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of intercultural development and awareness through a pre-international experience course

before they go abroad. One main objective of the study is to discover if ASU might begin offering a pre-international experience course for outbound study abroad participants, and part of the reason for the needs assessment survey was to determine if ASU students would actually enroll in the course. Universities including Wake Forest, the University of Minnesota, and the University of the Pacific offer pre-departure courses, and one of their primary obstacles is a lack of student participation. As a result, universities are reviewing their courses and re-designing them to become optional workshops. The ASU SAO is also developing and defining cultural competencies that will be emphasized for student participants. These competencies could essentially be the desired outcome for students who go abroad through the SAO. The data collected in this study will be analyzed as part of the process for the SAO leadership in identifying the competencies and how the students might gain them through training and orientation.

Another critical purpose of this study is to have the data and results provide influence and impact on ASU administrators with decision-making authority over the declared outcomes of international engagement for undergraduate students. The current landscape at ASU for study abroad participation is encouraging. It is receiving attention from high level administrators as it pertains to the effectiveness of our current marketing efforts, along with an increase in faculty who are interested in engaging in new program development. What I identify that needs additional attention and emphasis are the overall outcomes of study abroad at ASU.

Within international education, an on-going discussion about the outcomes of study abroad student learning is receiving more attention. More specifically, the

discussion revolves around what students are really learning, and not learning, while they are abroad. There are different facets of this discussion and the current research revolves around the preparation of students within their pre-departure, on-site, and re-entry phases. Each phase is referred by an intervention. Researchers indicate that students who study abroad without an intervention develop culturally at a lower level than those students who participate in an intervention (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). The current literature also indicates that much of the cultural learning that occurs on short-term programs (two to eight weeks in length) is directly connected to the faculty member(s) who is leading the program and their facilitation of cultural engagement (Vande Berg et al., 2009). If the faculty member does not teach the students about culture or provide an environment to allow students to reflect on all the cultural aspects they are learning, studies show that the cultural development and learning is less. With an increase in faculty-directed programming, international educators are concerned that these programs are becoming “island programs,” in which American students tend to stay in their “American bubbles.” These programs keep students together with their faculty and offer limited engagement or interaction with individuals from the host culture. As a result, intercultural competencies are less likely to be developed and learned, and this is causing concern among certain international educators.

There is also a discussion occurring among cross-cultural experts declaring that the past twenty years of study abroad has had three different phases related to student learning and development (M. Vande Berg, personal communication, February 6, 2014). Vande Berg, at a conference for intercultural development in North Carolina (2014),

stated that with the 2011-2012 Open Doors Report of 283,332 students going abroad (IIE, 2013a), that it is easy for post-secondary administrators to see the increasing enrollments and be encouraged. In his presentation, he expressed that the enrollments are being interpreted by many that study abroad is being done right. At the same time, this particular piece of evidence now has a new meaning to educators in 2014. It is different from 10 to 20 years ago. He stated that professionals in the field of international education wore different lenses during this period of time. Each lens, or phase, has profoundly changed and impacted the way international educators think of themselves, their students, culture, and what cultural engagement means.

The first phase, according to Vande Berg (personal communication, February 6, 2014) and my interpretation of his presentation, is about students crossing cultural boundaries through modeling and imitation. In this phase, students learn when they are exposed to unfamiliar culture and it is thought that if students physically go to another country, they will be better at relating to other cultures that are different from their own. The second phase of study abroad focused on immersion and cultural relativism is undermining the assumption of cultural hierarchy (M. Vande Berg, personal communication, February 6, 2014). Educators encouraged engagement through immersing students into new and different situations. In this phase, an emphasis was placed on duration of program, the enrolling in host institutions, the improvement of second language acquisitions, homestay participation, and experiential learning like internships and service-learning. The evidence supporting Phase 1 and Phase 2 were in the enrollment numbers. By more students going abroad and more stating that they had a

transformative experience, international educators believed that something good was happening within the industry (M. Vande Berg, personal communication, February 6, 2014).

Throughout these two phases, researchers and cross-cultural experts asked themselves what the outcomes were for students participating on study abroad. To determine study abroad outcomes among its participants, a group of researchers created the Georgetown Consortium Project. The study examined the impact of study abroad on the development of intercultural competence for U.S. students enrolled in 61 different study abroad programs (Vande Berg et al., 2009). The focus of the study was to discover if studying abroad increased cultural development among the study's participants by performing a pre- and post-test of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The final results showed the researchers that there were minimal gains on the IDI after students who studied abroad on these programs and did not receive a cultural intervention in the form of intercultural training and instruction (M. Vande Berg, personal communication, February 6, 2014). This study is further explained in Chapter 2.

The Georgetown Consortium Project is mentioned in this chapter because the results are changing the emphasis on the outcomes of study abroad and the outcomes for the student participants. This leads to the third and current phase of study abroad, and its emphasis is on cultural preparation for the student participants. After the results of the Georgetown Consortium Project, Phase 3 highlights that study abroad participants need to know how to frame their experiences and what the experience means for each individual. The focus is on the experience but also on the preparation students receive for



learning how to reflect on their experiences and then apply them in their context upon arriving back to their home country. As a result of the research being conducted during this phase, Vande Berg (personal communication, February 6, 2014) shared that facilitating intercultural development through study abroad should have four possible approaches to an intercultural intervention:

1. “Faculty or staff train students through required or elective courses once abroad”
2. “Home campus faculty accompanying students to train them at sites abroad”
3. “Faculty and staff train students before and after study abroad through training courses”
4. “Faculty or Teaching Assistants at home campuses train students, online, while students are abroad.”

A final purpose of this study is to further explore the cited intervention approach at ASU: “faculty and staff train students before and after study abroad through training courses” (M. Vande Berg, personal communication, February 6, 2014). Recognizing that there is more for ASU to explore in these intervention approaches at many different levels, this study provides data on the pre-international experience course. As a result, three research questions were defined and will be used for further discussion as it relates to how ASU can increase the number of global citizens that are sent abroad who are appropriately trained to engage in culture and have the skills and abilities to effectively become more culturally aware. The data in this study will be used at ASU to discuss what the overall outcomes are of study abroad from beginning to end. Specifically, what are

the desired cultural outcomes for student participants? The discussion about sending more students abroad should not be discontinued, but the goals for study abroad and how to reach them should be re-defined before an influx of students are sent abroad.

To better understand the impact of a pre-international experience curriculum for ASU study abroad and international internship participants before they go abroad, this research study investigates the following research questions:

1. Research Question 1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?
2. Research Question 2: What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?
3. Research Question 3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

### **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are provided to clarify the underlying assumptions made through the use of specific terms in this study:

- **Community of Practice:** in his book, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Etienne Wenger (1998) uses social learning theory to re-define learning theory, by calling it “communities of practice.” Wenger’s research suggests that a community of practice (CoP) refers to a group of

people who share an interest in an activity and interact regularly together as they learn how to conduct that activity better (1998).

- **Cross-cultural competency:** “the skills, abilities, and knowledge a person has in order to perform effectively and appropriately within a certain context” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Cultural adaptation:** “the process of changing behaviors that aids in the ability to be more effective in other cultures” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Cultural adjustment:** “the process that individuals go through when learning about a new culture and then re-adjusting their behaviors to be more effective in their host culture” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Cultural empathy:** the ability to relate more effectively to others after learning about them or their culture.
- **Cultural identity:** “The sense of belonging and the shared characteristics with a culture that individuals feel because of being part of that culture” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Culture:** “the set of spiritual, intellectual, and emotional features of a society or a social group” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Culture shock:** “the anxiety and feelings one feels when coming into contact with an entirely different social environment, such as a different country” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).

- **Global citizens:** individuals who have been exposed to global issues and are working to overcome global problems.
- **Global Studies major:** students studying the degree, Global Studies; in the context of this study, Global Studies majors at ASU are required to study abroad or conduct an international internship as part of their curriculum.
- **Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric:** the VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome. This specific rubric measures intercultural competency in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rhodes, 2010).
- **Intercultural communication:** “the field of study that attempts to understand how people from different cultures communicate with each other” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Intercultural learning:** “the area of research, study, and application of knowledge about different cultures, their differences, and their similarities” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Open Doors Report:** “Open Doors, supported by a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a comprehensive data resource on international students and scholars studying or teaching at higher education institutions in the U.S., and U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit at their home colleges or universities” (IIE, 2014).

- **Study abroad:** “activity that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student’s home institution. This meaning, which has become standard among international educators in the U.S., excludes the pursuit of a full academic degree at a foreign institution” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).
- **Study abroad pre-departure orientation:** training intended to prepare students for their time abroad and related to country-specific information, cultural development, adjustment, and awareness.
- **Transformative Learning Theory:** Transformative Learning Theory provides a basis for explaining the learning that can occur when individuals explore their pre-conceptions, and as a result, change the way they develop the meaning of a particular experience (Mezirow, 1991).

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to effectively design and teach a pre-international experience course for students preparing to study or intern abroad, in this literature review, I explore the following topics: Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978) as the theoretical framework for this study, the history of study abroad to provide a context for the reader, study abroad within higher education, and the current trends of study abroad in the U.S. Also included are the effective aspects of pre-departure orientation for study abroad participants and general cross-cultural training, along with expatriate training. An overview of cultural understanding, cross-cultural communication, and adaptation preparation are described. A review of current pre-international experience interventions are explained along with the impact of the previous cycles of action research that influenced the overall implementation of the course.

#### **Transformative Learning Theory**

The theoretical framework used in this study, Transformative Learning Theory (1978), is an adult learning theory “that helps explain how adults change the way they interpret and understand their world” (Taylor, 2008, p. 5). Dr. Jack Mezirow is an American sociologist and Emeritus Professor of higher education at Columbia University’s Teachers College and defines transformative learning as a process of exploring and working to change one’s frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000). According to Taylor (2008), “Frames of reference are structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and

actions” (p. 5). Transformative Learning Theory provides a basis for explaining the learning that can occur when individuals explore their pre-conceptions, and as a result, change the way they develop the meaning of a particular experience (Mezirow, 1991). The learning involves and requires individuals to reflect on their own personal beliefs, attitudes, and opinions that constitute their meaning schemes (specific attitudes, beliefs, and feelings) or transforming their meaning perspectives (philosophical worldviews) that result in to the implementation or practice of new ways of defining their worlds (Mezirow, 1991).

The process begins with a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991). To experience transformation, an individual needs to be open to new ideas, values, and beliefs. The individual should be open to bring these new ideas, values, and beliefs into his or her own individual context or worldview (Mezirow, 1991). When individuals allow themselves to practice critical reflection and examine their ideas, values, and beliefs, they become more open to change (Choy, 2010). Due to the disorienting dilemmas (ex., the realization that a student cannot effectively communicate in the host country’s language) that a study abroad participant may experience, Mezirow’s theory provides a framework for the learning that may occur within individuals who experience such a dilemma.

As part of the transformative learning process, critical reflection is a critical step for those that are willing to explore the information and experiences they are being presented throughout the disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1990). Mezirow (1991) states that “we resort to reflection only when we require guidance in negotiating a step in a series of actions or run into difficulty in understanding a new experience” (p. 107).

Before an individual can making meaning of an experience, they must first interpret it (Mezirow, 1990). The goal of reflection, for study abroad participants, is to have them become increasingly more self-aware and to process their experiences. Mezirow (1991) states that there are different types of reflection and not all lead to this level of awareness. The three identified types of reflection are: content, process, and premise (1991).

Mezirow (1991) defines the following:

1. Content reflection “is reflection on what we perceive, think, feel, or act upon” (p. 107);
2. Process reflection “is an examination of how we perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting and an assessment of our efficacy in performing them” (p. 108);
3. Premise reflection “involves our becoming aware of why we perceive, think, feel, or act as we do and of the reasons for and consequences of our possible habits of hasty judgment, conceptual inadequacy, or error in the process of judging” (p. 108).

If transformation is going to occur for study abroad students, premise reflection must be practiced. It is the type of reflection that encourages individuals to open their minds and think at a deeper level. If successfully practiced, it can lead to the ability to take in and adopt new ideas, values, and beliefs. Through having a disorienting dilemma, a student can make meaning of the experience through premise reflection and integrate it into their worldview. This type of reflection was discussed in the new course to allow students to be aware of the process.



As a result of going to a foreign country, studying abroad can be an opportunity that increases the chances of students experiencing disorienting dilemmas. When students have new experiences that may not or cannot be integrated into his or her meaning perspective, the experience is either rejected or their perspective changes to favor the new experience (Mezirow, 1991). A disorienting dilemma ending in transformation can “be the result from an eye-opening discussion, book, poem, or painting or from efforts to understand a different culture with customs that contradict our own previously accepted presuppositions” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 168). This change is explained by the theory of perspective transformation. According to Mezirow (1991), a perspective transformation is:

The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (p. 167)

Mezirow (1991) outlines ten stages in perspective transformation, beginning with a disorienting dilemma and proceeding to the final stages where competence and self-confidence is built and a reintegration occurs with a new perspective (p. 168-169). The ten stages are outlined in Figure 1. The figure shows how the principles of culture stress, a common symptom of being overwhelmed or homesick while abroad, align with Mezirow’s stages, and is an example of how Transformative Learning Theory (1978) can be applied to study abroad participants. The “possible culture stress stages” column in Figure 1 is from my own knowledge, experiences, and interpretations of culture stress. The stages also agree with Adler’s (1975) definition of culture shock: “a set of emotional

reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (p. 13).

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Mezirow's Stages</b>	<b>Possible Culture Stress Stages</b>
Stage 1	A disorienting dilemma	Culture stress caused by not knowing how to function within a new culture
Stage 2	Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame	Overwhelmed feelings/shame
Stage 3	A critical assessment of assumptions	Internal processing
Stage 4	Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change	Recognition of why culture stress is being experienced
Stage 5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	Potentially identifying and understanding a new way of decision-making or a new value
Stage 6	Planning a course of action	Recognizing the power of the new value and desiring to bring it into an individual's ideas, values and beliefs
Stage 7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans	Learning more about the new value from individuals in the host culture
Stage 8	Provisionally trying out new roles	The implementation of the new value
Stage 9	Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	Continued learning of the new value
Stage 10	A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.	Fully bringing the value into the individual's own worldview

*Figure 1. Mezirow's Ten Stages of Transformation Learning Theory compared to culture stress stages (Mezirow, 1991, p. 168-169).*

Mezirow's (1991) ten stages can also be applied to many other aspects of an individual's experience while engaging in a different culture through a study abroad program. Specifically, when an individual enters their host country, the individual may experience many new aspects of life. To explain this idea further, a hypothetical student studies abroad in India and is interested in learning more about why Indians practice vegetarianism. She has never been a vegetarian herself. She grew up in the U.S. and was told by her parents that meat, within a diet, is necessary and a meal is only a meal when meat is included. She chooses to live with Indian students and quickly learns that many of them practice vegetarianism. As she eats with her new friends, they talk to her more about why they are vegetarians. She learns it is primarily for religious purposes. She respects their philosophy but two weeks into eating a meatless diet with them, she begins to eat meat outside of their dormitory. In this case, the hypothetical student has resolved the problem. After learning about the meaning of a vegetarian diet in India, she has had a disruption by a new experience, but her overall ideas, values, and beliefs have not changed. She has found a way to get around the differences and a change of mind did not occur. However, when transformative learning occurs, the results look different. Resolving the problem could appear the same way but the manner in which the student goes about the change would be drastically different. The learning about vegetarianism in that specific context would provoke reflection in the student. The question "What is the meaning of vegetarianism?" would be considered and the ways she would think through how some people eat meat and others do not in the world would be called to question. Instead of working to integrate these new experiences by just going around them, she

would be asking her friends' questions, asking herself questions, exploring it with her faculty, and considering the benefits to both philosophies. The result of this effort could be a deeper understanding of the Indian people, their beliefs, and values. Her attitudes, beliefs, and feelings would be reorganized in a way that requires a change in her overall philosophical worldview. She may return home from the experience with a more discerning set of assumptions and expectations, when faced with a similar challenge in the future. With her ability to be open to a new way of thinking with the help of facilitators, she may be open to new beliefs and practices (adapted from a Transformative Learning Theory illustration, Hunter, 2008, p. 96-97).

To experience a possible disorienting dilemma in the pre-international course, student participants were assigned to engage in an approved cultural plunge activity to see if they could identify a disorienting dilemma and begin identifying the process of transformative learning. A cultural plunge is a term used by educational researcher Nieto (2006) after he developed the tool for pre-service teachers preparing to enter diverse classrooms. The assignment is an exercise in which students are asked to put themselves in a situation that is out of their "norm." The location of the cultural plunge could be a place of worship, a student club made up of individuals who are ethnically different from the participant, or a cultural festival. The goal was for students to use the assignment as an opportunity to challenge themselves and their misconceptions of another culture. Related to the assignment, I warned students that they might experience some of the same feelings in the cultural plunge that they could also encounter when they go abroad or engage with another culture at a deeper level. After the plunge, there was a debrief

session in class and a two-three page writing assignment that asked students to answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about culture, values, or practices through your experience?
2. What insights did you gain that you would not have if you had not done this?
3. Did the experience confirm prior knowledge/ideas, or did it challenge prior ideas/assumptions?
4. How did this experience make you feel?
5. Was this something completely new for you—a challenge, new opportunity, a stretch—or was it comfortable and familiar?
6. What are some things you learned about yourself and your cultural background based upon your plunge?

Mezirow's (1991) research states that the transformative learning process begins with an experience that serves as a disorienting dilemma and because of this, study abroad participants are more likely to have the opportunity to learn and discover the observed differences. Due to this, additional orientation and training is needed before the student goes abroad and engages in cultures different from their own. The orientation or training should be designed to make them aware of the adult learning process, but also to expose them to differences in culture, communication, and behaviors. The goal of training is to have them become more aware and sensitive to the differences they may experience while abroad. Once students become aware that a disorienting dilemma has challenged

their existing ideas, values, and beliefs, the goal is to have them more open to change (Mezirow, 1991).

When students return back to ASU after their study abroad or international internship, the SAO facilitates re-entry events to assist them in discovering all they may have learned about themselves and other cultures. It is commonplace that when staff from the SAO ask students about their experiences, they often reply with a statement of, “It was great! It was so transformative.” If thoroughly explained to students before going abroad, Transformational Learning Theory (1978) can assist them to experience true transformation. As they experience a disorienting dilemma, critically self-reflect, and change their frames of reference, they can become open to new feelings, beliefs, ideas and practices and adopt them into their lives. This type of explanation can occur in pre-departure orientation and through program design.

### **History of Study Abroad**

Study abroad opportunities have been available to students in the U.S. within higher education for over ninety years and international education has long played a role in the U.S (Edwards, Hoffa, & Kanach, 2005). Edwards et al. (2005) stated that

the pioneering group to study abroad in the 1920s was a small group of Junior Year Abroad programs sending students to Europe. These credit-bearing ventures joined the already established faculty-led programs, which had been developed as non-credit options for students. (p. 6)

According to Edwards et al., the next study abroad program was from the University of Delaware. In 1923, faculty from the university traveled to Europe with a group of students to promote cross-cultural understanding. These programs took place during a student’s junior year of college or university and were established to provide exposure to

different parts of the world. Edwards et al. state that around the same time, another type of study abroad program model was launched in the U.S. that attracted many students. In 1926, the first ship sailed with over 500 students from different U.S. colleges and universities. The ship was equipped with faculty members who primarily focused and taught on global issues.

From the late 1920s, study abroad participation came to halt due to the Great Depression of the 1930s, along with the start of World War II (Edwards et al., 2005). After the war, student mobility increased with more U.S. students traveling and studying overseas. The end of the war also created a need for young Americans to become more globally aware. As a result, the Fulbright Program was founded in 1946. This program provided U.S. involvement in world affairs (Edwards et al., 2005). In the 1950s, the framework for study abroad was developed and U.S. institutions began developing branch campuses overseas along with directly enrolling students into foreign institutions (Edwards et al., 2005). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the number of students studying abroad increased, and institutions began running their own programs. Since the 1980s, study abroad programming and participation have grown tremendously, with an emphasis on sending more of a diverse student population (Edwards et al., 2005).

Since the 2000s, international educators and higher education administration have been researching the lack of diversity among study abroad participants and are concerned (Stroud, 2010). Through a variety of scholarships focused on diversity initiatives, an effort is being made to increase diverse populations enrolling in study abroad. Study abroad professionals have also paid close attention to the limited geographic locations



that are available for students (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In 2014, there are now over 205 countries available for U.S. undergraduate students to choose from when making the decision on where to study abroad (IIE, 2014). Just as equally emphasized in recent years is the emphasis on study abroad learning outcomes for those who participate (Engle & Engle, 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Researchers and interculturalists are interested in the true benefits of study abroad for those who participate, along with the learning and cultural outcomes.

### **Study Abroad and Higher Education**

Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) state that, “As national boundaries have lost their traditional significance over the past thirty years through increased travel, global telecommunications, and international trade and investment, it has become important for individuals to possess firsthand experience with other cultures” (p. 165). Within higher education, “study abroad is a powerful educational tool. Research shows that students who study abroad still use a language other than English on a regular basis years after they return to the United States” (Lincoln Commission, 2005, p. vi). Institutions of higher education desire to graduate students who can be successful global citizens (Schattle, 2007). “Traditionally, American undergraduates accomplish this by studying abroad” (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004, p. 165). Unfortunately, few American students participate in study abroad programs (IIE, 2014). In the 2011-2012 academic year, the number of students studying abroad represented about 1% of all U.S. students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the U.S. (IIE, 2014). The reasons for the lack of participation are many and include cost of programs and limited scholarships, concerns about how

financial aid will or will not be applied, and a lack of curriculum integration initiatives for undergraduate students.

For those that study abroad, they can expect to gain self-confidence, maturity, autonomy, and cultural competencies through the experience (Dwyer, 2004). Researchers who surveyed study abroad participants within the University System of Georgia have stated that potential study abroad outcomes include, “self-efficacy, world-mindedness, and the like--are certainly among the most desirable attainments that a student may acquire during a college education” (Sutton & Rubin, 2004, p.68). These experiences can lead to an attitude adjustment that nurtures intercultural development (Sell, 1983). Ingraham and Peterson (2004) conducted a study at Michigan State University that included over 1,000 students and their findings showed that study abroad impacted the students in the following ways: “personal growth, intercultural awareness, and professional development” (p. 88).

To work successfully in a globalized economy, students must be culturally competent within all disciplines and universities need to create more opportunities for international mobility (Falk & Kanach, 2000). In a study conducted by McLeod and Wainwright (2009), it was discovered that if students go abroad to study, they can “experience stressful situations that severely violated expectancies; successful experiences led to feelings of increased self-confidence; successful experiences led to changes in self-perception; and successful experiences led to changes in students’ perceptions of the world” (p. 68). Higher institutions desire this type of personal growth within their students if they want to produce globally-ready graduates.

## **Current Study Abroad Participation and Trends**

The Open Doors survey for academic year 2011-2012 revealed that the overall number of U.S. students studying abroad continues to increase (IIE, 2014). The following data was produced by IIE and released on November 11, 2013. The current trends are highlighted to better understand the study abroad framework in the U.S.:

- 283,332 U.S. students received academic credit for study abroad in 2011/2012, a 3.4% increase over the previous year;
- U.S. students are increasingly studying in non-traditional destinations: 15 of the 25 top destinations are outside Europe;
- Social science is the most popular field of study among U.S students abroad;
- 86% of study abroad participants are undergraduate students; 13% graduate students, and 1% doctoral students;
- United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain host 32% of U.S. students;
- A total of 23.6% of U.S. study abroad participants were minority students;
- Short-term programs (summer or eight weeks or less) lead in duration of study with 58.9%, mid-length (one or two quarters or one semester) with 37.9% participation and long-term (academic or calendar year) with 3.2 participation. The only growth, compared to the previous year, was in short-term duration (IIE, 2014).

Other trends within study abroad and those that ASU identifies include: increasing participation rates in first generation students, focused learning outcomes, programming for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines,

faculty-directed programming and short-term programming, and various curriculum integration initiatives. Studying abroad provides students with different skillsets and these skills and competencies are being increasingly valued by employers (Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007). Trooboff et al. also stated that employers now recognize the advantages in hiring globally competent graduates who understand the global economy.

The research shows that study abroad can do many positive things for students. It can make them become more globally aware and competent. It can increase the participant's ability to connect with people from cultures different from their own and deepen the understanding that students can set themselves apart from their peers after participation. It is important to explore the literature on the training that is required for these students to participate in if they want to accomplish all the stated benefits.

### **Pre-Departure Orientation for Study Abroad Participants**

The literature reviewed above emphasizes the significance of gaining a global education and experiences. An important aspect of this global education is the preparation of students in intercultural learning. Deardorff (2011) states that:

A fundamental aspect of study abroad programs is adequate preparation of students in intercultural learning so that they are better able to articulate the learning that occurs, beyond declaring that it 'changed my life.' This adequate preparation means helping students with an understanding of intercultural competence frameworks, vocabulary, and concepts so that they can apply them to the learning that occurs before, during, and after the experience. (p. 71)

The type of learning that occurs throughout the international experience should focus on the type of intervention they receive, or do not receive, throughout each phase of

the process including before, during and after the international experience (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

Study abroad professionals, administrators, and faculty have developed best practices for cross-cultural preparation for the study abroad participant. These best practices have provided standardization of orientation for the industry. Specifically, the Forum on Education Abroad and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) have led the way in providing this level of quality assurance. These organizations are committed to international education and study abroad by providing professional and research-based resources to professionals working in the field. The Forum on Education Abroad has created a *Standards of Good Practice for Short-term Education Abroad Programs* (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2009) that highlights the importance of pre-departure orientation for students. Specifically, the standard related to orientation is the “Preparation for the Learning Environment Abroad” (p. 5). They state that the host of the program needs to advise students and provide orientation to the students. The orientation is to include a “discussion of the academic program, health and safety issues, adjustment to the host culture, and information about the host location and society” (p. 5). Within *NAFSA’s Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* (2005), Thebodo and Marx indicate that pre-departure orientation for study abroad students should include goals and objectives, content that meets the goals for the programming, a reasonable format, logistics, health and safety, and academic information. They also place emphasis on addressing cross-cultural issues. The emphasis

should be on cross-cultural adjustment, personal and cultural identity, and country-specific issues (Thebodo & Marx, 2005).

NAFSA also recommends that orientation for study abroad participants should be a “balance between the practical and the philosophical and between culture-general and culture-specific issues” (Thebodo & Marx, 2005, p. 293). The authors also suggest that the orientation or training should be experiential. They state that a portion of the orientation should focus on experiential learning and include activities such as icebreakers, videos, simulations, and role-playing (Thebodo & Marx, 2005). To continue the learning after the orientation, they recommend that regardless of the format of the orientation, the resources should be made available to the students so they can reference it in the future (Thebodo & Marx, 2005). Thus, in the study intervention, a pre-international experience course, I reminded students that all the information and readings shared in class would be available in their Blackboard accounts while they were abroad. Blackboard is the platform that ASU selected for students to access all course materials each semester. After each semester, the information remains within their accounts. This way, they can review any of the materials while experiencing culture stress, for example, or a conflict in cross-cultural communication.

There are many different ways to conduct orientation and training for cultural adjustment and development for study abroad participants. Thebodo and Marx (2005), in *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators*, highlight that pre-departure orientation that is focused on cross-cultural issues should include the following components and activities:

- Discussion on helping students become aware of individualism versus collectivism and low-context versus high-context cultures;
- Explain the iceberg analogy: an iceberg has a small part above water and a larger part below the water. The analogy allows the trainer to compare culture as it has visible and invisible aspects;
- Introduce to the phases of cultural adjustment by talking in depth about culture stress and culture shock. Share information about the common symptoms of culture shock: depression, anger, irritability, sadness, and health problems;
- Ask students to think of ways to cope with culture stress and shock. The trainer should also provide practical ideas and examples;
- Provide a summary of cross-cultural adaptability skills and competencies. Common competencies are “personal autonomy, flexibility, perceptual acuity, and emotional confidence, as well as developing intercultural understanding and ideally, ethnorelativism” (p. 303);
- Facilitate discussion on personal and cultural identity. It can be helpful to students to self-reflect on or discuss their own culture and cultural identity. It is recommended to discuss commonly held American values and how the values of the host culture may be different and conflict with their own.

When covering country-specific and more general information in orientation, the main goals for pre-departure preparation, as stated by Grove (1989) should including the following goals: 1) to help students focus and understand their own cultural identity; 2) to

help with realistic expectations when students are abroad; 3) to address and ease anxiety by providing the participants with new knowledge; 4) to explain and describe the program and expected behaviors for participants; 5) to provide practical information including logistics, details on in-country transportation, housing, and program excursions. As a result of this information, the new course designed and implemented in this study highlighted pre-departure anxiety and tips on how to reduce it, along with incorporating Grove's (1989) other goals for effective orientation.

In the context of study abroad, this preparation is a sequence of pre-departure orientation, in-country facilitation, and re-entry orientation upon a student's return home. Dr. Bruce La Brack, cultural anthropologist and Director of the University of the Pacific's Institute for Cross-Cultural Training, has been studying the cultural preparation of students for over thirty-five years (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). He is the author of the "*What's Up with Culture?*" website containing study abroad pre-departure resources and activities, and in Bennett (2008) suggests the following:

While it is possible for individuals to cross cultural boundaries without adequate preparation, the question is why would they want to? More importantly, why would sponsoring institutions choose not to offer the tools we know could contribute to making the sojourns successful? Everything we know about culture learning and intercultural sojourns suggests that the most effective and appropriate way to accomplish this is with an integrated approach that combines pre-departure orientation with in-country support and instruction and includes opportunities for post-return discussion and analysis. (p. 23)

### **Cross-Cultural Training and Expatriate Training**

Cross-cultural training is not only beneficial to study abroad participants, but also to professionals being assigned to an overseas assignment. Cross-cultural training has the ability to aid in the individual's cultural adjustment as they encounter other cultures



(Black & Mendenhall, 1990). The skills needed to be successful in a new culture can be defined in three dimensions: skills related to the maintenance of self, skills related to the fostering of relationships with host nationals, and cognitive skills that promote a correct perception of the host environment and its social systems (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Black and Mendenhall (1990) stated, “the main argument for using cross-cultural training is that it allows individuals to more rapidly adjust to the new culture, and therefore, to be more effective in their new role” (p. 118).

One key issue among expatriates and their cultural adaptation, or lack thereof, is the success rates at which they stay abroad for their assignment (Tung, 1981). The best known study to look at their return rates was conducted by Tung. She surveyed 500 expatriates from a number of host countries including employees from the U.S., Japan, and Europe who work for multi-national companies. She discovered that the largest percentage of expatriates returning to their home country before the end of their contracts were Americans. She discovered that 30% of Americans returned early from their international posts, while Japanese and Europeans experienced failure rates of less than 10%. These results correlate directly with the amount and type of training the employees received before they moved abroad. Approximately 70% of the Japanese and European companies provided pre-departure training for their employees, while only 30% of American companies offered training for their employees. In 1987, Tung conducted a follow-up survey and discovered that the more rigorous the training was, the lower the failure rate. Tung (1982, p. 65) has also classified cross-cultural training into six different categories for expatriates, including the following:

1. Environmental briefing (information about the geography, climate, housing, schools);
2. Cultural orientation (information about the cultural institutions, value systems of host country);
3. Culture assimilator (brief episodes describing intercultural encounters);
4. Language training;
5. Sensitivity training to develop attitudinal flexibility;
6. Field experience, where trainees are actually sent to the country of assignment or a “microculture” nearby where they could undergo some of the emotional stress of living and working with people from a different subculture (p. 65).

A number of large studies have been conducted to determine if expatriates are more successful when they are provided cross-cultural training before their overseas assignment (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). This type of training occurs in many different forms from a one-shot workshop that lasts a few days or a week to a series of trainings that occur over the length of a month. Most of the training, similar to study abroad training or orientation, is practical and culture general in nature. While there is still some debate about the most appropriate timing of the training, along with how much information to provide in the trainings, researchers have found substantial proof of the success of expatriates who receive effective cross-cultural training before their overseas assignment (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996).

According to Forster (2000), “Research over the last 20 years has indicated that many companies have failed to pay sufficient attention to both the screening, selection

and training of potential expatriate staff and the non-technical skills that they should possess” (p. 63). In his study that documented the impact of cross-cultural training among expatriates, he states that for the expatriate, understanding culture and other cultures is essential for their success. He states:

What we think and how we choose to act is a result of what we have been taught in our culture. Hence, a business executive who has been highly successful in one culture may find it difficult, if not impossible, to function in another culture, unless s/he is aware of the significance of cultural differences. (p. 64)

Forster (2000) highlights that for the expatriate, the willingness and ability to adapt to a new culture is one of the most important aspects of a successful assignment. Per cross-cultural training, he states, “the main purpose of these training programs is to introduce staff to the importance of culture and to sensitize them to cultural differences” (p. 64). As with all trainings and orientations, the actual teachings are never the end all. Instead, their success heavily relies heavily on the trainee to learn the new skills (Forster, 2000).

Study abroad participants and expatriates have similar cross-cultural training needs before they leave for “their assignment.” Research leads to the fact that both are more successful when they have cross-cultural training before their departure. For both groups, it is also recommended that training continues throughout the overseas assignment or program. Although an expatriate may be assigned to work in one overseas location longer than a study abroad student will be in his or her selected country, the expatriate literature helped to inform and shape the development of the new course. The literature was brought into the class to stress the importance of training, as well as the different types of training that have proven to be successful for expatriates.

## **Cultural Understanding and Adaptation Preparation**

### **Cultural Competencies**

Researchers have developed lists and descriptions of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that define intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Other dimensions to develop cultural competency include motivations. The competency of “understanding others’ worldviews” was 100% agreed upon by intercultural experts as an agreed upon competency (Deardorff, 2008). Cultural competencies also include “first and foremost, curiosity, as well as initiative, risk taking, suspension of judgment, cognitive flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, cultural humility and resourcefulness” (Bennett, 2008, p. 20). Bennett also states that curiosity is highlighted by many researchers as a top cultural competency. Cultural humility is another valuable competency identified by researchers (Bennett, 2008). Cultural humility is practiced when individuals “are flexible and humble enough to say that they do not know when they truly do not know” (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 119). During the course, a student panel was conducted consisting of past study abroad participants to talk about the importance of cultural curiosity and humility. Examples were also shared of how cultural curiosity and humility assisted me to relate more closely to the Chinese I worked with while working in China for three years.

### **Intercultural Communication**

Recognizing that individuals from different cultural backgrounds have different cultural norms, practices, and expectations is vital to understand for the success of study abroad participants. Intercultural communication experts have identified numerous

differences in communication styles among different cultures (Martin, 1989). One of the more important and most studied distinctions is the difference between indirect and direct, and high and low communication (Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange, 1997). The main differences between indirect and direct are often discussed in the context of collectivism and individualism. In a collectivist culture, it is often more acceptable to practice indirect communication that encourages the individual to, for example, ask a question through a passive statement. With direct communication, an individual practicing the style of it would ask a question point blank. For high and low context, a high context culture uses nonverbal communication to express themselves and a low context culture uses minimal nonverbal to communicate a point. The course focused on the importance of students to better understand how indirect and direct communication may impact their time abroad, along with high and low contexts. We also discussed the importance of non-verbal communication within intercultural communication such as personal space, touching, eye contact, nodding of the head, and facial expressions (Peace Corps, 1997; Paige et al., 2002).

One specific way that intercultural communication was discussed through the course was by facilitating *Rocket: A Simulation on Intercultural Teamwork* (Hirshorn, 2010). Rocket is an interactive simulation designed to help participants experience intercultural differences including communication, power, cultural norms and beliefs. A desired outcome of the simulation is that students become more sensitive to the complexity of cross-cultural communication and the intricacies of it. The simulation is a helpful resource because students are divided into four different cultures representing the

following: Japanese, American, Russian, and European (Hirshorn, 2010). They read a sheet of cultural norms for their assigned culture and then they have to follow those norms throughout the simulation. For example, the individuals in the Japanese group are not allowed to make decisions on their own and all decisions must first go through the “boss.” This is a common, hierarchical pattern of decision-making in Japan and in other traditional collectivist cultures. After the exercise, as a group, we discussed the cultural misunderstandings that occurred during the simulation due to the differences in communication style per each group. We also took time to recognize the compromises that are needed to work together in a new, cross-cultural context. The participants were debriefed with a series of questions provided by the author of *Rocket* (Hirshorn, 2010) and focused on intercultural communications.

### **Culture Stress and Culture Shock**

Researchers indicate that when individuals enter into a new culture, they often experience difficulties while adapting to a new way of doing things on a daily basis (Searle & Ward, 1990). This is also a reality for many of the students who study abroad. Culture stress is “a mild response to stimulus overload” (University of the Pacific, 2014). Some of the symptoms of culture stress are tiredness, becoming withdrawn from others, and becoming easily annoyed and frustrated (University of the Pacific, 2014). It is important for students to be aware that culture stress is different from culture shock. As previously mentioned, Adler (1975) defines culture shock as reactions to when an individual cannot make sense of their experiences in a new environment. Culture shock is the overwhelming anxiety and feelings one experiences when they enter a new culture

and the norms of that culture are completely different (Forum on Education, n.d.). It normally relates directly to not adapting to the new culture and not knowing how to assimilate to the differences (Forum on Education, 2014). Another term, related to culture stress and shock, is the term “cultural bump.” This term was shared by an intercultural expert at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, summer 2013. The term expresses that when there is a small cultural hurdle, an individual can easily get over it with a little, outside assistance. Since culture shock is more severe than culture stress, researchers have worked to develop a model for the process to help individuals better understand what they are experiencing.

Although culture shock is often seen as a negative effect of being in a foreign culture, it can suggest that the individual experiencing it is working to comprehend and understand the new culture so that he or she can grow through the experience (Adler, 1975). It can also be an important aspect of cultural learning, development, and awareness, and may serve as a disorienting dilemma for students. Adler states that the problems and frustrations experienced during culture stress can lead to a higher personality development. This was emphasized in the new course by highlighting that culture shock is inevitable for many study abroad participants and can lead to cultural growth. To overcome it, Winkleman (1994) states, “The resolution of cultural shock requires an individual plan that selects among maintenance behaviors, adjustments, and adaptations, depending on personal circumstances, resources, and goals. Resolution of cultural shock is best achieved by a proactive cognitive orientation” (p. 125).

## **Cultural Adaptation**

Researchers have identified that when students and other individuals enter a new culture, they are at first excited, and then once they do not know how to relate to those in their host culture, they experience frustration and feelings of isolation (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). They stated that if these students are able to get through this confusing time and successfully adapt, then they will be more successful in relating positively to those in the host culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). As a result of this finding, researchers have discovered a variety of models that assist individuals in the cultural adaptation process. In 1955, Lysgaard (1955) developed the well-known U-curve which works to predict the phases of adjustment for individuals in a new culture.

Zapf (1991) describes that the curve starts with the initial excitement of being abroad in a new location. The phase then moves to individuals increasing their participation, which can be more challenging. As individuals hit the crisis phase, they struggle to understand and make sense of the cultural differences they observe or experience on a daily basis. Eventually most individuals move to the gradual adjustment phase where they either learn to adjust to the differences or they at least compartmentalize what is occurring around them. Lastly, the individual returns to his or her home country and culture and this can re-start the curve. This often results in re-entry shock. According to some researchers, “Some have extended the U-curve to a ‘W-Curve hypothesis’ to include the post-return adjustment period when the person returns to the home culture” (Zapf, 1991, p. 111). Due to the common length of study abroad programs, most participants will only enter the honeymoon, cultural shock, and adjustment phases.



The reported strengths of the U-Curve model “are that it is easy to understand and provides a clear visual that is easy to remember for those being trained. It also offers those who use it a vocabulary to help them make sense of their experience” (Bernardo & La Brack, 2007). However, some experts claim that the U-curve lacks supporting research and “prevents researchers from simply accepting the U-curve as a supporting phenomenon” (Black & Mendenhall, 1991, p. 231).

Other transition models can be used to process culture shock and other changes that will occur for the study abroad participant including the transition phase that can occur. William Bridges is best known for his seminal work in change management and transition management and authored *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* (2009). A transition is the psychological process that people go through as they experience change (Bridges, 1980). He describes three distinct phases that an individual must undergo when making a serious transition. They are: 1) saying goodbye; 2) shifting into neutral; and 3) moving forward (Bridges, 2009). Bridges’ transitional model was explained to the student participants as part of an awareness of some of the change they will most likely experience while abroad. The teaching of Bridge’s transition process was conducted during the “Intercultural Development Theories” module. Within that module, students learned about five different models or theories that can be applied during their international experience. Bridges’ (2009) transition model is one that can also work for study abroad participants and one that was used within the course curriculum.

## **Review of Existing Programs and Studies Related to Pre-Departure Interventions**

To increase intercultural learning and understanding, many U.S. colleges and universities now offer credit-bearing pre-departure orientation courses for their students before they go abroad. They also offer cultural development courses on-site and upon return. Some of these colleges and universities require pre-departure orientations for their students as part of the overall program design. I have selected four that assisted with the design of the innovation: The University of the Pacific, Wake Forest University, and the University of Minnesota's Maximizing Study Abroad (MAXSA) project. I have also selected the Georgetown Consortium Project and "The Global Scholar Online Courses" which are a product of the Project for Learning Abroad, Training, and Outreach (PLATO), a national project developed by the Center for Global Education at Loyola Marymount University.

### **The University of the Pacific**

The University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, leads the international education field in collecting research on the outcomes of intercultural interventions with study abroad participants. They have provided cross-cultural training to study abroad students for over 35 years (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). After this period of time, the primary researchers believe that their data "indicates that the intervention prior to and after study abroad is just as critical to students' intercultural learning as the study abroad experience itself" (p. 262). The researchers indicate that in the past, students were primarily held responsible for the intercultural learning that took place during a study abroad program. Today, they state, "Our present view is that a carefully guided

interventionist approach facilitates significant intercultural learning prior to, during, and after the study abroad experience (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 261). La Brack's development of intercultural resources and methods for cultural interventions has impacted the field of study abroad (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). As a result of the research conducted at the University of the Pacific, three different interventions have developed for their students: a pre-departure course, an on-site course, and a re-entry course (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012).

Faculty members at the University of the Pacific are prepared to teach these courses through participation in the training courses offered at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication (SIIC), along with auditing the course before they teach it and meeting with other faculty who have previously taught it for additional mentoring (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). This particular recommendation cannot be followed due to the timing of the intervention in this study, but it will be pertinent if ASU leaders decide to offer more sections of the course. A plan will also need to be created on how to adequately prepare future facilitators of the ASU course if there is a need to increase the number of instructors teaching it.

All students who study abroad at the University of the Pacific are required to enroll in the university's Cross Cultural Training I course at least one semester prior to their departure (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). Before studying abroad, it is required for students to receive a grade of "C" or better in the course. The university also has a strict course attendance policy for this course and those students who miss even one class without prior approval may fail the course. It is their experience "that with cross-cultural

training students do not ‘know what they do not know,’ or often, even know what they are learning” (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 265).

The content of the University of the Pacific courses have evolved over its history and are informed by research from the field of intercultural communication, as well as their own experiences (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). They have reported that a challenge for the course organizers is the lack of time to cover all they would like throughout the course. As a result, they have minimized discussion on specific cultures recognizing that students go to different locations. In several class sessions they also include panels of students who have returned from studying abroad to share with those who are preparing to go. They have discovered that outbound study abroad students are impacted by their peers, and it is helpful when the instructor has identified students with powerful stories to share as part of the panel (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012).

The two-credit pre-departure course meets once a week for 3 hours for half of the semester (8 sessions) and is titled “Cross Cultural Training I.” The course focuses on how to prepare students to live and study in cultures other than their own. The following topics are included in the course: “U.S. values and assumptions, cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural adjustment and problems, and research on the host country” (The University of the Pacific, 2014). The course syllabus includes the following topics as outlined in Figure 2.

Week 1	Introduction and What is Culture?
Week 2	Hopes and Fears (Expectations)
Week 3	What is Culture in the US?
Week 4	How do you Learn Another Culture?
Week 5	Intercultural Communication
Week 6	Adjusting to a New Culture
Week 7	Cross-Cultural Simulation
Week 8	Pre-Departure Orientation/Preparing to Return Home

*Figure 2. University of the Pacific Weekly course syllabus.*

The University of the Pacific has measured cultural growth of the course participants for several years now (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). They utilize the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess all first-year students soon after their arrival to campus, and a second time in a senior's last semester just prior to graduation. They also administer the assessment after the re-entry course and more recently, after the pre-departure course. By doing this, they can track growth for the study abroad participant before and after study abroad. "The mean IDI score of students in their first semester is 92.13. In the semester after studying abroad, the average score is 17.46 points higher. This change is highly significant ( $t = 8.954$ ;  $p = .000$ ). There is no question that students' attitudes are changing considerably throughout this period of their education" (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 274).

Although the growth in students who take the courses and study abroad is substantial, it is also important to measure their growth compared to students who do not take the courses or participate on study abroad programs (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). The researchers compared the scores with a smaller control group of study abroad returnees who did not take the re-entry course and with the scores of a random sample of University of the Pacific seniors who did not take the courses or study abroad. They discovered the following:

Those who studied abroad but who did not experience any sort of intervention abroad had a mean IDI score of 95.90 after returning, significantly lower than the scores of the students who took the courses and studied abroad ( $t = 2.92$ ;  $p = .004$ ), and not significantly higher than the scores of other Pacific seniors ( $t = .99$ ;  $p = .33$ ). (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 274)

The University of the Pacific is the premiere model of pre-departure, onsite, and re-entry interventions for the study abroad participant. Their conducted research is well documented and long-standing. Their usage of the IDI shows that their students are growing and developing from an intercultural aspect. Their qualitative data also reveals that the pre-departure course assists students in their success while abroad and upon their return back to the U.S.

### **Wake Forest University**

Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, has designed three courses to help their students prepare for the cultural aspects of studying abroad (S. Duke, personal communication, February 7, 2014). These cross-cultural courses (1 credit each) are taken in succession and help students develop skills necessary to study, live, and work effectively in cultures other than their own (Wake Forest University, 2014). Specifically,

their pre-departure course introduces students to cultural basics and skills needed for understanding and interacting with people in other cultures. Assignments are designed to make students aware of their host-country and prepare them for a successful study abroad experience (Wake Forest University, 2014). The course is a half-semester course, taken the semester before students study abroad (Wake Forest University, 2014). The goals of the course are to:

1. learn basic facts and principles of host country and culture;
2. develop awareness of the value of culture learning and development of intercultural competence;
3. learn how to learn experientially;
4. explore self-awareness and cultural identity;
5. understand culture on different levels;
6. gain knowledge of the cultural adjustment/transition processes;
7. prepare to interact and engage with individuals in the host country. (Wake Forest University, 2014)

The required text for their course is *Maximizing Study Abroad* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Laasegard, 2002). Wake Forest desires their students, through the course, “to understand the value of intercultural competence, explore one’s cultural identity, become aware of the differences in communication between cultures, gain insights into the overall cultural adjustment process, learn information about their host country culture, and participate in experiential learning focused activities” (S. Duke, personal communication, February 7, 2014).

At Wake Forest, “around 60-65% of undergraduates study abroad for credit before graduation and approximately two-third of students who study abroad do so for a semester or year” (S. Duke, personal communication, February 7, 2014). Completion of the IDI is also required to achieve a passing grade. The current topics discussed in the class are (Wake Forest University, 2014):

1. Expectations for study abroad and why study abroad
2. What’s Up Abroad? Sourcing information and important Issues
3. My culture/American values; contrasting perceptions of the US
4. International careers, info session/panel discussion
5. Transportation and infrastructure
6. Food and clothing
7. Art, music and artistic expressions
8. Language, direct and indirect communication, nonverbal communication
9. Going beneath the surface: the iceberg analogy of culture
10. Religion
11. Managing culture change and transitions
12. Research historical development
13. Values in contrast
14. Students report to class on host culture basics and cultural fun facts; Goals for study abroad



## University of Minnesota's Maximizing Study Abroad (MAXSA) Project

A research study looked at the effectiveness of the *Maximizing Study Abroad* guides (Paige et al., 2002) on improving students' strategies for language and culture learning before, during, and after their study abroad experience. The study was conducted on students, program professionals, and language instructors. Pertaining to this study, I was most interested in the student learning handbook that the researchers created for students to increase their intercultural understanding before going abroad. The student study utilized an experimental design with an  $n = 86$  of undergraduate university students who were randomly assigned to the treatment/experimental group or the control group (Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff, 2005). Specifically, the researchers administered to one of the groups a two-hour orientation to the curriculum and a copy of the *Maximizing Study Abroad Students' Guide*. They were also assigned bi-weekly electronic journal assignments in which students reported on their use of the *Guide*, and on their language and culture strategy use. The students in the control group also participated in a semester-long study abroad program, but were not given the orientation or the *Guide* and did not complete any of the assignments (Cohen et al., 2005). The findings suggested that the full intervention did have a positive impact on the assigned group's language and culture learning, but the quantitative evidence was not strong enough to warrant making persuasive claims about the impact of the *Guide*. However, the qualitative results indicate that the *Guide* did had a positive effect on students' study abroad experience, both language- and culture-wise. Students indicated that their cultural learning was enhanced by completing the *Guide* throughout their international experience (Cohen et al., 2005).

The *Guide* (Paige et al., 2002) was a resource in the creation of the new ASU course because it was extremely practical. I assigned many of the exercises in the *Guide* for homework. I used the Culture Mapping assignment (p. 67) to encourage students to research their host cultures and some of the content in part 3, strategies for social relations (p. 77-91). I also utilized the information presented in parts 8 and 9: strategies for intercultural communication (p. 125-142). Because the research of the *Guide* indicated that the qualitative results showed a perceived growth for those who used it (Cohen et al., 2005), I was confident to use the material and will continue to use it within the newly designed course curriculum. The pre-departure unit of the curriculum includes the following topics as outlined in Figure 3.

Part 1	What is Culture, Anyway?
Part 2	Understanding the Ways Cultures Can Differ in Values
Part 3	In-country Unit: Strategies for Social Relations
Part 4	Adjusting
Part 5	Strategies for Development Intercultural Competence
Part 6	Strategies for Making Cultural Inferences
Part 7	Strategies for Keeping a Journal
Part 8	Strategies for Intercultural Communication
Part 9	Nonverbal Communication

Figure 3. Maximizing Study Abroad Students' Guide content.

### **The Georgetown Consortium Project**

Due to the significant findings on intercultural interventions for the study abroad participant, the Georgetown Consortium Project (GCP) is essential to review and

understand for this study. The GCP provides evidence that many students benefit through intentionally designed international programs that promote cross-cultural learning. The GCP was a four-year study of more than 1,300 U.S. undergraduate students enrolled in 61 different study abroad programs (Vande Berg et al., 2009). The GCP sought out whether students learn effectively about culture when left to their own, or whether they perform better when an intervention enhances their learning (Vande Berg, et al., 2009). The GCP began in fall 2002 and completed in spring 2008 (Vande Berg et al., 2009). The researchers aimed to measure which study abroad programmatic variables would function as potential interventions in the learning of U.S. students abroad (Vande Berg et al., 2009). To do this, the researchers conducted oral proficiency tests using the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI), a valid and reliable instrument of twenty years. To identify cultural growth, they used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI; Hammer, 2012).

The findings of the GCP indicate that many of the students who studied abroad, compared to the control group, made gains on the IDI, from pre- to post-test results (Vande Berg et al., 2009). However, within the study, the researchers also discovered that a sizable number of students abroad did not learn significantly more than the control group. For example, male students learned less while abroad in oral proficiency and intercultural development (Vande Berg et al., 2009). “Many students, when left to their own devices, failed to learn well even when ‘immersed’ in another culture” (Vande Berg et al., 2009, p. 25). Researchers were encouraged, however, that several of the findings provided strong support for one of the main hypotheses of the study: that students need

an intervention to improve upon their cultural learning (Vande Berg et al., 2009). The study also suggests including intercultural learning in pre-departure orientation to increase student intercultural learning abroad (Vande Berg et al., 2009).

### **The Project for Learning Abroad, Training, and Outreach (PLATO)**

PLATO is an online study abroad training that provides resources for U.S. study abroad students with specific support for underrepresented students (<http://www.globaled.us/plato/index.html>). PLATO responded to the challenge of increasing the number of underrepresented students who participate in study abroad. The study abroad training is designed for students who come from higher education institutions with limited support to assist them with the overall study abroad process. The PLATO curriculum is located at The Center for Global Education at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), with support from FIPSE: U.S. Department of Education.

The courses includes information from students who have studied abroad, the staff who work with them in the U.S. and abroad, faculty who teach students abroad, and researchers in the field who have developed materials to help students through the process. (Plato Project, 2014)

Although data on the outcomes of students who use the PLATO resources are unknown, the materials were helpful in the creation of the new course. Specifically, the online videos and student testimonials included in the training were informative. As a result, after reviewing all of the content in the PLATO curriculum, I implemented videos and student testimonials in the new course. Throughout the learning modules, there are videos that explain the presented concepts in each module. Recognizing that professional cross-cultural trainers also utilize videos to prepare expatriates in their cultural learning, I

identified strategic videos to use within the curriculum for the new course that encouraged discussion with the student participants and provided them with practical examples.

### **Data Collection from Previous Action Research Cycles**

To influence the curriculum within the innovation and to appropriately contextualize it, a needs assessment was utilized to plan accordingly, identify student needs, and make decisions for the course curriculum. The information collected through this measure (Appendix C) influenced the design of the course. In March 2013, the assessment was administered to 800 participants who studied for a semester or academic year. The primary purpose of collecting this data was to make sure that the new course content included information, including themes and topics, directly from past study abroad participants and not only influenced by my own interpretations of what should be included in the course. One hundred and fifty three students responded and completed the assessment. Its utilization affected every aspect of the development of the curriculum: planning, designing, delivering, and evaluating. The aim was that the assessment would measure what past students desired in such a course, if offered, as well as recommendations for the future of the course content (before implementation phase). Sample items included: “What type of preparation and training would you have liked more of before going abroad if it would have been available to you as an ASU student?” and “If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what topics do you think should be covered in detail, based on your experiences abroad?”

The survey was sent to fall 2011, spring 2012, fall 2012, and academic year 2011-2012 participants. The electronic assessment was sent via Survey Monkey. It contained seventeen questions organized by factors, and the majority of questions were multiple-choice. The survey asked the respondent to identify cultural competencies they gained while abroad, as well as competencies they wanted to gain. The list of cultural competencies included in the survey were identified by Deardorff (2006) in a study conducted among interculturalists to seek out the top agreed upon intercultural competencies. The measure was designed with feedback from ASU SAO staff members, SPGS faculty, and ASU students not majoring in Global Studies. It was sent using an introductory message (Appendix E). The assessment was ASU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved on March 13, 2013, (Appendix F) and then electronically deployed a week later to the past participants. The data were collected and analyzed in May-July 2013 before the implementation of the course. It was also shared with the students in this study, and it was encouraged for them to review it as a way to learn from their peers. A summary of some of the results with the highest percentage of responses are shown below in Figure 4.

<b>Question:</b> If a pre-departure course at ASU, focused primarily on cross-cultural development, would have been offered to you before studying abroad, would you have enrolled in it?	<b>Response:</b> 53.6% responded: yes.
<b>Question:</b> If you would have enrolled in the course, how many credits would you have preferred?	<b>Response:</b> 42.2% indicated 1 credit.
<b>Question:</b> If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what topics do you think should be covered in detail, based on your experiences abroad?	<b>Response:</b> 74.6% indicated: Adaptability. 60.5% indicated: Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment and 60.5% indicated: Respect for other cultures. 58.8% indicated: Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of host culture's traditions.
<b>Question:</b> What type of preparation and training would you have liked more of before going abroad if it would have been available to you as an ASU student?	<b>Response:</b> 64% responded: Immediate Concerns (e.g. currency, school system, transportation, housing, etc.); 44.9% responded: Host Culture-Specific Knowledge
<b>Question:</b> What other cross-cultural training, knowledge or orientation do you wish you would have had, prior to going abroad, that would have made you more successful while you were overseas (from a cultural standpoint)?	<b>Response:</b> 54 responses were submitted with a theme of the following topics: 1) intercultural communication 2) flexibility and tolerance 3) talk to students who have gone abroad 4) practical knowledge about cultural norms
<b>Question:</b> Now that your study abroad program is over, what type of training would have helped you during the time you were abroad?	<b>Response:</b> 60.2% responded: Immediate Concerns (e.g. currency, school system, transportation, housing, etc.)
<b>Question:</b> Now that your study abroad program is over, what do you wish you would have known about your study abroad experience prior to going?	<b>Response:</b> 45% of the respondents indicated: More about (in general) how to be successful while abroad (from a cultural standpoint)

*Figure 4.* Summary of the responses to the Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment.

Three smaller cycles of action research leading to the implementation of the innovation were also conducted between the Spring 2011 and Spring 2013 semesters and included:

1. Spring 2011: a cycle focused on peer influence on study abroad that included a small study including data collection and the write-up of research findings
2. Spring 2013: interviewed study abroad professionals on the current ASU pre-departure orientation and observed the current SGS 484 course, twice, using an observation protocol
3. Spring 2013: deployed a needs assessment survey to over 800 past ASU study abroad participants to gain insight into what they may have lacked during the orientation phase, along with what aspects of orientation and training they recommend for future participants based on their experiences
4. Spring 2013: piloted three modules of the curriculum to approximately 40 Global Studies majors enrolled in SGS 484 before the course was re-designed.

The literature review and the previous cycles of action research impacted the study in substantial and meaningful ways and as a result, the innovation was influenced in the following ways:

- The course topics focused heavily on cultural adaptability, adjustment, and self-awareness, and how to respect other cultures.
- There were numerous cultural competencies identified in the literature and the three that were focused on the course were knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Specifically, the knowledge focuses on cultural self-awareness and knowledge



of cultural worldview frameworks. For skills, the emphasis is on empathy and intercultural communication. For attitudes, the focus is on curiosity and openness (Rhodes, 2010).

- Immediate concerns (e.g. currency, school system, transportation, housing, etc.) were addressed through homework assignments, and it was emphasized that they need to research these topics on their own.
- Throughout the course, a strong emphasis was made to the students that the knowledge they gaining in the course now will be helpful to them in the future as well as when they return.
- The course had the objective to give the student a conceptual framework, Transformative Learning Theory, for better understanding the experiences they may encounter while abroad.
- The course provided information on critical self-reflection while emphasizing the importance of doing so while abroad to maximize cultural understanding and learning.
- By reviewing the existing pre-international experience interventions and literature on expatriate training, the delivery of the course was focused more on experiential learning activities and discussion, rather than a lecture format.
- Attendance was highly recommended and no late assignments were accepted.
- Due to the short length of the class, additional readings were assigned as homework on a variety of topics: intercultural communication, collectivism/individualism, and cultural competency.

- The usage of videos and critical incidents were incorporated throughout the ten-week course.

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?
- Research Question 2: What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?
- Research Question 3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

## Chapter 3

### METHODS

The methods that were used for this action research study are described in the following chapter. Within this chapter, information about the setting and participants, additional information about the role of the researcher, a description of the instruments and innovation, the implementation of the study, and procedures for data collection and analysis are all described in detail. In this study, a mixed-methods approach was used to address the three research questions. Creswell (2003) proposes numerous reasons to use a mixed-method research design. A mixed-methods study collects both quantitative and qualitative data while developing a rationale for mixing the two (Creswell, 2003). As a methodology, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Specifically, the data for this study were collected using a sequential data collection method. Sequential data collection involves collecting the data in phases as one data collection is followed by a second data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In Phase 1 of the data collection, students who completed an ASU-approved study abroad program were surveyed to better understand their experiences with pre-departure orientation. The measure, Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment, assisted to define the curriculum that was taught in the fall 2013 semester, and a brief summary of the results are shared in Chapter 2. The common themes in the course were well defined through the literature, but the themes that were taught and discussed were determined by what ASU students believed they needed to be successful while abroad from a cross-

cultural standpoint. The Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS) also helped define the curriculum for the course and assisted in the teaching of the course to the group of participants after knowing more about their past cross-cultural experiences. Lastly, the previous action research cycles were conducted to assist in what measures to use during Phase 2. Specifically, four of the course modules were piloted during the spring 2013 semester and the feedback from the students and the current instructor of record shaped what type of experiential learning activities were implemented within the course. Feedback from the students revealed there was too much material to present in a few of the modules. This information allowed me to lessen the content and focus more on the desired output.

Phase 2 consisted of the design and implementation of the pre-international experience course and the accompanying data collection strategies. The data collection strategies were informed by Phase 1 of the data collection. Phase 2 of the data collection included the majority of the qualitative data as the student participants were identified at the start of Phase 2 (August 2013). Phase 2 included direct contact with the participants and occurred throughout the innovation, August-October, 2013.

This study sought to discover how a particular pre-international experience course might prepare students for their time abroad from a cross-cultural standpoint. In this study, the quantitative instruments of the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI), and the Weekly Class Evaluation were used to test the Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978) and the prediction that a pre-international experience course would positively influence the course participants at

ASU. The data from the selected measures addressed aspects of Transformative Learning Theory based on the specific measures. Specifically, the self-reflection journal writings addressed components of Transformative Learning Theory as well as the questions that were asked in the student focus groups. In addition to the quantitative data collection, the qualitative data collection included three self-reflective journal writings, student focus groups, a weekly course evaluation, a focus group with the CoP who assisted in the facilitation of the course, and a researcher's journal. To validate both the collected quantitative and qualitative data, student focus group data and the self-reflection journal writings helped to explain the qualitative data collected from the inventories throughout the course.

To better understand the outcomes of a pre-international course on cultural understanding, awareness, and adaptation for students before they go abroad, the following research questions were examined:

- Research Question 1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?
- Research Question 2: What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?
- Research Question 3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

## **The Setting of the Study**

The innovation was implemented in a university classroom setting at ASU. ASU is located in a large, metropolitan area of Phoenix, Arizona. ASU is a research intensive university with a diverse student body of more than 76,000 undergraduate and graduate students. ASU ranks among the top 100 universities in the world, and in 2013, ASU was ranked 79, according to the Center for World-Class Universities in Shanghai Jiao Tong University (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, 2013). ASU also has a diverse population. During the fall 2013 semester, 64.5% of the students were residents and the division of men and women, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, were at 50%. Of the 62,089 undergraduate students, 3,269, or 5.3% are international students and 22,564, or 36.3%, are minorities (ASU, 2013).

ASU was selected for the study's location because of my role at the institution within the Study Abroad Office (SAO) and because I sought to better understand the cross-cultural development needs of our students before they study or intern abroad. The specific participants were enrolled in the SGS 484 course entitled "Pre-Internship Seminar" during the fall 2013 semester. The School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS) sponsor the course. Prior to fall 2013, the course, before being re-designed by me, was implemented to assist students in identifying and selecting a study abroad or internship program, facilitating the application process, communicating the academic requirements, and providing guidance on utilizing the overall experience for maximum benefit. The majority of the content was based on the logistical aspects of studying abroad (i.e. preparing a resume, reviewing health and safety measures, steps to receive a

passport, etc.). Students are strongly encouraged by SPGS staff and faculty to enroll in the course one year prior to going abroad. Part of the purpose for this study is to show the effects of what occurs when a new curriculum is implemented, in collaboration with SPGS and based on data and the existing literature. The new curriculum focuses primarily on cultural understanding and awareness and less about the logistics of studying abroad. To accomplish this, I actively collaborated with the former SGS 484 instructor to maximize certain aspects of the old curriculum content and to make sure it was still covered within the course, but in a more limited way, while the new curriculum encompassed the majority of the course content. Based on all the course content, 10 course sessions were decided upon by the two of us.

### **Participants**

Participants for this study consisted of the undergraduate students who enrolled in the two sections of SGS 484 in the fall semester 2013. This included 26 students enrolled in the Tuesday section and 28 students enrolled in the Wednesday section. Out of the total 54 participants, 38 were resident students and out of the 16 non-resident students, two were international students; 16 of the participants were freshmen, 19 sophomores, 14 juniors, and 5 seniors. The declared majors of the participants varied with the following majors: 1 English, 28 Global Studies, 1 Spanish, 1 Political Science, 3 non-degree seeking students, 2 Business Communications, 3 Business Global Politics, 1 Business Global leadership, 2 Business Legal Studies, 2 Business Sustainability, 2 Business Finance, 1 Business Entrepreneurship, 1 Business BA, 2 Business Management, 1 Business Marketing, and 2 Business Supply Chain Management. The participants

included 36 females and 18 males. Nine of the 54 participants indicated that they have never left the U.S. The other 46 have traveled outside of their home country and a small percentage has lived outside of the United States for more than 12 months.

Participants indicated that seven of them are double majors with the following majors as their second majors: Spanish, Political Science, Global Studies, Economics, Anthropology, and French. Nineteen of the participants also indicated that they are receiving a certificate as part of their course of study. Of the 19, 14 student participants indicated that they were pursuing the International Business Certificate. One indicated Informatics, one indicated International Relations, one indicated Arabic Studies, and two were unknown. Of the 54 participants, 12 were enrolled in Barrett, the Honors College. Three students indicated that they were veterans.

In the past, enrollments for SGS 484 were low in size because prior to this study, the course was only offered to Global Studies majors. On average, 14 to 20 students enrolled in the course each semester. For this study, a promotional e-mail was sent to potential participants within SPGS and the W.P Carey School of Business (WPC) students to encourage additional participants. ASU has approximately 263 declared Global Studies majors and another 30 to 40 who have double or triple majors (G. Grant, personal interview, March 15, 2013). Students who major in Global Studies are students who are interested in working globally with a focus on global affairs, international relations, the state department, or non-profit; others choose the major because they already have extensive global experiences (veterans), or because they have traveled, experienced other cultures by living abroad, and are multi-lingual. Still others selected



the major as it provides a solid undergraduate foundation as a spring board for graduate school (G. Grant, personal interview, March 15, 2013). Out of the declared majors, on average, 70 to 80 of them are enrolled in Barrett, the ASU Honors College.

Other stakeholders who aided in this study were the SPGS staff and faculty, past ASU study abroad participants, the current ASU Study Abroad Office (SAO) staff, staff within ASU's WPC, as well as study abroad professionals from other U.S. universities. These stakeholders assisted in securing meetings with students, as well as additional data collection for the study. Specifically, the connection between the study and WPC is related to the fact that WPC offers an International Business Certificate, and it is encouraged for certificate students to study abroad. During this study, two of the WPC staff that work with study abroad participants within WPC were former SAO staff members. Due to this strong relationship, WPC offered to send out the course promotional paragraph to their majors.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in this action research study is that of a curriculum designer, observer, data collector, collaborator, and instructor/implementer. In this role, I developed the curriculum, taught, and observed the student participants in the study. The participants were fully aware of my role as a participant (Creswell, 2008) throughout the course of the study. Since the summer 2010 term, I have actively researched the topic of intercultural competency and the importance of preparing undergraduate students for cross-cultural experiences. Specifically, during cycle 2 of the action research cycle, interviews were conducted with intercultural experts who work directly with

undergraduate students prior to their study abroad experience and have read the literature that exists on cross-cultural adjustment and cross-cultural development. As a practitioner, my own professional experiences were relied upon as a seasoned international educator after working for an international non-governmental organization both in the U.S. and in China, the ASU English as a Second Language Program, and the ASU Study Abroad Office. Specifically, my own experiences of being abroad were brought into the classroom as examples. I also researched and located the theoretical framework of Transformative Learning Theory. The experience of being in Kenya, as introduced in Chapter 1, was transformative in many ways. I returned to the U.S. with a new worldview and different ideas on the meaning and purpose of life.

### **Community of Practice**

A feature of the Doctor of Education in Innovation and Leadership Program at ASU, the program in which I am enrolled, is the understanding and application of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) in our work setting. Wenger's research suggests that a community of practice (CoP) refers to a group of people who share an interest in an activity and interact regularly together as they learn how to conduct that activity better. A CoP is a group of people who share a concern, or a passion, for the things they do with the end goal to learn how to do it better as they engage together on the domain, or identity (Wenger, 1998). Community of practice has become more common within education and other sectors, and the term is grounded in theories based on the idea of learning as social participation (Wenger, 1998).

A CoP was developed at the start of the innovation, August 2013, and included me, the former instructor of SGS 484, and three Teaching Assistants (TAs). The three TAs were current ASU students who have studied and interned abroad and were all Global Studies majors. We met every week throughout the innovation, for 1 to 2 hours on Thursday afternoons on the ASU Tempe Campus. The purpose of our meetings was to discuss the previous week's classes and weekly evaluations. We prepared for the upcoming week and discussed the content. Each member of the CoP learned about all of the innovation and at times, decisions were made in our meetings about what would and would not be included in the upcoming classes. Because this group worked so closely with me throughout the innovation, they also participated in a CoP 60-minute focus group at the end of the innovation in which I collected data to assist in answering Research Question #3.

### **Innovation**

The innovation consisted of the development and implementation of the course that was developed for Global Studies majors at ASU and for students of all majors who plan to study or intern abroad. If the results of the study are a success, the aim is that the curriculum can be available to ASU students who study and intern abroad. The curriculum was developed after careful review of already existing curricula and literature. As highlighted in Chapter 2, there is a general agreement regarding the potential benefits of study abroad within higher education, and there is evidence to suggest that students may not achieve them due to the lack of appropriate orientation and training (Sell, 1983). Researchers and practitioners identify that cross-cultural training is useful for preparing

people who plan to live in a culture different from their own (Tung, 1981). Unfortunately, the majority of U.S. higher education institutions have yet to develop extensive cross-cultural training and, on average, do not offer pre-departure courses or cultural interventions. As a result, the pre-departure curricula are more limited. The following institutions currently offer a credit-bearing pre-departure course, or series of workshops, for study abroad participants: University of Kentucky, University Minnesota-Twin Cities, University of Pacific, Wake Forest University, and Central College.

The course focused on the practice of functioning in a new culture by developing cultural competency, awareness, and understanding. It was designed to help students better understand the overall cross-cultural experience, to explore coping and adaptation strategies, and to gain knowledge and understanding of their own culture so that they can understand others as well. The emphasis was on culture-general skills, and not culture-specific ones. The following intercultural competencies were the focus throughout the course: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rhodes, 2010). Specifically, the knowledge focused on cultural self-awareness and knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks. For skills, the emphasis was on empathy and intercultural communication. For attitudes, the focus was on curiosity and openness. These three competencies were taught throughout the course and specifically highlighted during week 9. After consulting the instructor of the original SPGS course, the innovation took place during the first 10 weeks of the fall 2013 semester at ASU. An organized logic model is included in Appendix A that indicates the desired inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the innovation.

Upon reading the best practices of effective training within the cross-cultural literature, a variety of different pedagogical teaching styles were used throughout the innovation. This included short presentation lectures, past student participant presentations, group discussions with past participants, experiential activities, and role-playing activities. The modules were organized topically to encourage everyone to stay on topic and many topics were sensitive in nature. Specifically the module focused on cultural self-identity. Some technique was used to make it easy for students to ask questions without embarrassment or shame. In this study, students were instructed to contact me either by e-mail or face-to-face if they had any questions or concerns about the topic and encouraged them to set up an appointment with me if they wanted to further explore a specific theme. This was also a way for me to engage students outside of the classroom and learn more about their study abroad or international internship goals.

Figure 5 describes the course content that was taught each week, along with the measures that were used. The figure is specific to Phase 2 of the data collection. Each module or session within the course was 50 minutes in length. Following the figure is a descriptive paragraph highlighting the objectives and a summary of the additional course content per module. The course syllabus is located in Appendix D.

<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Course Content</b>	<b>Data Collection/Assignments</b>
Week 1	Introduction, What is Culture and Cultural Competency	<b>Prior to Week 1:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)</li> <li>2. Complete the “In-Take Form”</li> <li>3. Read the “Informed Consent Letter,” sign, date, print and give to Instructor on first day of class</li> </ol>
Week 2	Financing your International Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read brief article on individualism and collectivism</li> <li>2. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)</li> <li>3. Weekly Class Evaluation from Week 1</li> </ol>
Week 3	Preparing for Your International Experience: Purpose Statement, Resume, Selection of Tentative Experiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Reflection #1</li> <li>2. Cultural Plunge proposal paragraph</li> </ol>
Week 4	In-Class Cross-Cultural Simulation: <i>Rocket: A Simulation on Intercultural Teamwork</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purpose Statement</li> <li>2. Resume/CV</li> <li>3. Selection of 3 Tentative Experiences</li> </ol>
Week 5	Self-Identity, Cultural Awareness and Cultural Plunge Debrief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete the Cultural Plunge and Paper</li> </ol>
Week 6	Intercultural Development Theories	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culture Mapping Assignment</li> </ol>
Week 7	Intercultural Development Student Panel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Reflection #2</li> </ol>
Week 8	Strategies for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read two articles on cross-cultural communication</li> </ol>
Week 9	Attitudes (Curiosity, Openness and Cultural Humility) and Cultural Tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Reflection #3</li> </ol>
Week 10	Debriefing and What’s Next for You?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)</li> </ol>

Figure 5. Weekly course content and data collection.

## **Module 1: Introduction, What is Culture, and Cultural Competency**

At the beginning of this module, I welcomed the students to the course and provided them a brief introduction to the course syllabus (Appendix D), the course instructors, and the three TAs. This information was also posted on the Blackboard site that I created for the course, in collaboration with ASU's University Technology Office. I also shared with the students the data to support the course design, along with the assignments.

This module also focused on the topic of culture, how it relates to every student, and how it will change once they go abroad. The in-class discussion focused primarily on culture while highlighting the Cultural Iceberg illustration that explains what aspects of culture can be seen and not seen. We discussed which core competencies are to be gained through the course: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Each competency was defined and a brief discussion on how to potentially attain them during the course occurred. I briefly introduced the students to individualism versus collectivism. These cultural understandings are important because the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) requires participants to have a grasp of these two aspects of culture.

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory was emphasized and shared, particularly that individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their own assumptions and beliefs. Then they must consciously make and implement plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. I shared the phases of Transformative Learning that includes disorientating dilemma, critical reflection, reflective discourse, plan of action, and reintegration. The class ended with me showing a video clip that shows an American student not taking advantage of her time abroad and in

return, did not grow much during her experience. After watching it, I challenged the students that we have to move beyond the lack of learning that took place in the video and that the goal of the course is to develop an awareness of intercultural learning and enabling them to better understand their own culture so they can comprehend other cultures at a deeper level.

## **Module 2: Financing Your International Experience**

A study abroad professional from the ASU Study Abroad Office presented during week 2 on how best to finance a study abroad program. Primarily, this was because the individual has researched the topic and is the primary point person in our office for students with financial aid and scholarship questions. Recognizing that financing is a barrier for students to study abroad at most universities in the U.S., including ASU, students learned that many resources exist and the presentation provided information helpful to all ASU students on financing their study abroad program. The module specifically focused on the topic of financial aid, scholarships, and creative funding sources. One example that was discussed was community-based funding. The interactive 50-minute module answered the following statements: how to find scholarship opportunities specifically for study abroad, what to know about program fees and deadlines, how to overcome "funding myths," how to utilize community based funding (with specific and successful examples), and how ASU financial aid can apply to study abroad. My colleague shared about crowd-source funding opportunities that exist through websites such as [Indiegogo.com](http://Indiegogo.com), [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com), [gogetfunding.com](http://gogetfunding.com), [projecttravel.com](http://projecttravel.com), and [fundmytravel.com](http://fundmytravel.com). As a result, one of the students in the course set up an account through one of the suggested websites and for her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, she asked all friends and



family to donate to it instead of giving her gifts. Due to these efforts, she raised a total of \$1,500 for her study abroad program to the United Arab Emirates for the spring 2014 semester.

### **Module 3: Preparing for Your International Experience: Purpose Statement, Resume, Selection of Tentative Experiences**

The purpose of this module was to instruct students on how to develop a resume and purpose statement that focuses on their international experiences with the goal to receive an international internship or scholarship. Specifically, the former instructor discussed the power of networking, how to investigate global internship or volunteer opportunities, the general components of a personal statement, introduced the “global experience” section in a resume, and provided a thorough overview of all that ASU Career Services offers undergraduate students. Because many of these students do not have professional experiences already, we focused on C.A.R.B. stories. Through this process, we challenged them to describe a challenge they face, the action they took, the result of that action, and what the benefit was to them or the organization.

### **Module 4: In-Class Cross-Cultural Simulation: *Rocket: A Simulation on Intercultural Teamwork***

The purpose of the Intercultural Teamwork Simulation (Hirshorn, 2010) was for students to recognize some of the key differences in intercultural communication styles among the four simulation teams (Europe, U.S., Japan, and Russia). After conducting the simulation, I ended the class with a group discussion that focused on the cultural misunderstandings that occurred during the simulation and recognized the compromises

that are needed to work together as a multinational team. We also discussed the importance of better understanding intercultural group dynamics. All of these aspects of cross-cultural communication are important for study abroad participants. The debrief discussion after the simulation encouraged the participants to continue thinking through the preparation process of studying abroad. The questions were written by Hirshorn (2010) and included:

1. During the simulation, what differences in intercultural communication styles were you able to recognize among the other agency teams? Anything related to collectivism and individualism?
2. What cultural misunderstandings occurred (or “cultural bumps”) when you worked with the other agencies or among your own agency?
3. What did you learn in general from this simulation that you can use when you work with diverse groups of people?
4. During the simulation, what difficulty did you experience in using a different set of cultural norms?
5. Based on this simulation and what you learned, what types of things can you do be a more culturally sensitive student, employee, intern, or friend?
6. What will you remember most about having participating in this simulation that you can use while studying, interning, or working abroad?

### **Module 5: Self-Identity, Cultural Awareness, and Cultural Plunge Debrief**

In this class, we debriefed the assigned Cultural Plunge with the purpose to have the students continue the self-reflection process. I also worked to have students identify

aspects of their own culture and equipped them with resources to see them thrive and not just survive while engaging in other cultures. In the Cultural Plunge, the following questions were asked of the students in small groups of four students: 1) What/where did you observe? 2) What was the most comfortable or uncomfortable aspect of the experience? and 3) What were some of things you learned about yourself or your cultural background based upon the plunge?

With regards to having students explore the potential to discover their own cultural diversity, I used some practical exercises contained within the *Maximizing Study Abroad* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Laasegard, 2009) handbook for students. We discussed the consideration that the foundation for being successful lies first in having students understand themselves. To do this, I asked the following questions: “How does being a particular gender, for example, influence your own values and beliefs? How did your family influence you? How did your schooling influence you? How did your religious views influence you?” To have them better understand the concept of self, I asked them to explore their own first and last name. Specifically, I asked them to identify their name’s ethnic, cultural, religious, or traditional values. Then, I assigned them to list out the top eight identifiers that define them (ex, honesty, hard worker, male) and then once self-identified, they had to choose the top two. I then discussed how, when going abroad, the list may look different. I communicated that the reality of being abroad may mean that they are seen as just another American. I ended the module by challenging them to think through the many cultures they belong to, and how others they meet will not automatically appreciate their complexities. One challenge for students when crossing

a culture different from their own is recognizing that their host country may only view them as “just another American” (Paige et al., 2009). Similarly, as the students do not want to be identified as one of these descriptions, they also should not stereotype their host culture and think, “That is just another Brazilian student.”

### **Module 6: Intercultural Development Theories**

In this module, we spent the 50-minutes discussing intercultural theories. Specifically, I selected five of them that the literature identified as helpful to students crossing cultures. Before breaking the class into small groups to read through the theories and explain them to one another, I taught on the importance of theory. I shared that theory goes hand in hand with practice, that theory helps you think of how and why something occurs, and that theories are a way of predicting behavior and providing solutions to potential obstacles. I also explained that theories are generalized across cultural groups versus one homogenous population.

After attending the SIIC 2013 conference, I learned from Dr. Darla Deardorff an in-class exercise that encouraged participation from the class. It is an exercise that she termed as “jigsaw,” and I implemented it by breaking the class into groups of five. Each student in the group received a piece of paper with a specific intercultural theory or model. Students were told that they should take ten minutes to read through and understand their assigned theory. Once they understood it, they were given five minutes each to teach the remaining members in their group the assigned theory or model. Within the explanation, they were also to share the applications of the theory for studying or interning abroad. The specific theories or models that were presented included:

1. Howell's Phases of Cultural Awareness
2. Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory
3. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
4. Bennet and Bennett's Description-Interpretation-Evaluation (D-I-E) Model of Debriefing
5. Bridges' Transition Model

### **Module 7: Intercultural Development Student Panel**

The University of the Pacific has recommended with interested universities that a pre-international and post-international course should include the sharing from past study abroad participants as peers listen to their peers (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). A panel of former study abroad students (Global Studies majors) participated in a class discussion that I facilitated. These students briefly shared a short presentation about what they wished someone had told them before they went abroad from a cultural standpoint. I then facilitated a discussion in which the students gave suggestions for effective cross-cultural preparedness and general strategies for a successful intercultural experience. I also shared that cultural adaptation is a natural process and that when experiencing it, their worth as a person, their strength, or their flexibility are not in question. Finally, the panel addressed additional questions the students had about their overall experiences. Some students exchanged phone numbers and e-mail addresses to continue the discussion. As confirmed in Chapter 4, the panel served its purpose and student participants shared that they listened the most to their peers. The following questions were addressed within the panel:

1. What cultural aspect(s) do you wish you would have been told about regarding the host culture you entered for your educational experience?
2. What was the most surprising aspect of your host culture?
3. What was the most frustrating aspect of your host culture?
4. What was the best thing you did before entering your host culture that you feel made you more successful?
5. What were the top two to three things you did to cope with the differences you experienced while studying or interning abroad?
6. What advice would you give to students regarding the importance of cultural adaptability and awareness as they go abroad?

### **Module 8: Strategies for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication**

The concentration of this module was on the strategies and tips for effective cross-cultural communication. As part of the discussion in the classroom, I spoke with students about the cross-cultural communication concepts within the context of them being used while abroad and with people from other cultures in the U.S. Activities were conducted to emphasize the importance of effective cross-cultural communication skills and behaviors in high- and low-context cultures. Students had reading assignments that were focused on testimonials from past study abroad participants and their experiences communicating across cultures. They also read about non-verbal communication, three important forms of non-verbal communication (eye contact, sense of personal distance/space and touching), and how to function in a culture that uses pauses and silence to communicate.

## **Module 9: Attitudes (Curiosity, Openness, and Cultural Humility) and Cultural Tips**

This module was a lecture format that included information on the topic of cultural competencies and the development of them. Specifically, the competencies of curiosity, openness, and cultural humility were discussed, along with examples so the participants understood the terms and how to practice them while abroad. A refresher discussion on the topics of individualism versus collectivism also occurred. A discussion on culture stress and culture shock occurred and a description of the process of cultural adjustment was highlighted. A handout about “strategies for dealing with cultural stress” was discussed, along with a resource to better understand the host culture and individuals from the host culture. This was an assignment since students are traveling to many different countries in the course, and it would not have been a good use of time to talk about specific countries.

Cultural tips were also shared, and I spoke about the following topics: overcoming obstacles for making connections, sexual harassment, how to develop friendships, making the most of homestays, and how to be a visitor (Paige, et al., 2009). All of these topics were discussed with the recognition that they are going to be different than they are in their home country. For example, sexual harassment may look very different in a host country than it does in a student’s home country. I expressed to students that as they work to understand their host country, they cannot forget to listen to their inner voice. Safety is an essential part of their experience, and I highlighted that if their internal alarm goes off, it is not a time to be polite. It is time to take action.

## **Module 10: Debriefing and What's Next for You?**

This module ended up starting off with some of Module 9 since the discussion continued too long and we could not finish it. After a brief discussion on cultural competencies and appropriate attitudes while abroad, I broke the students into four different groups. This time period became part of the collected data set as each group represented a focus group. The three TAs of the class and the former instructor facilitated them with questions I designed as part of the study. The questions for the student focus groups are located in Appendix H.

### **Preparation and Confidentiality**

To insure that students answered the research questions, it was important to maintain confidentiality for all participants and be able to link each data set collected to a specific participant. At the beginning of the fall 2013 semester, I received the most updated class roster from SPGS through the Blackboard site. Afterwards, each student was assigned with a participant ID that was distributed to them during week 1. The ID included a number and a letter. An example is "A2" and this identification was placed on each of the data collection tools by the students. The codes were used on data documents instead of recording their identifying information and a separate document was kept that connected the study code to subjects' identifying information. This document was locked in my office at ASU with restricted access to the document since I am the only one with a key. One year after of the completion of the study, all data and documents will properly be disposed, destroyed, or deleted. All documentation was also located on a password protected hard drive and not accessible to others.



The students were contacted by electronic mail once the final roster for the class was received by the SPGS. During the first class, I introduced myself and the study in an effort to solicit voluntary participants (Appendix B). The voluntary nature of their participation and confidentiality was emphasized in this communication. The potential participants were informed that they may withdraw at any point during the study, but cannot withdraw from the class without penalty (according to University withdrawal policies). All participants were provided with the researcher's contact information should they wish to participate in the study. All of the data collection was part of the course and required content, but the participants were able to choose to not have their collected information shared in the study. As a result, 52 of 54 students accepted to have their collected data as part of the study. For participants who did not participate in the study, their data is not included in the analysis or discussion.

Once participants self-identified, an informed consent letter was provided to each participant (Appendix B). A link to an electronic assessment was also sent to participants for me to better understand what cultural experiences and training they have had prior to the course. The purpose of the assessment was to better understand their cross-cultural experiences to appropriately evaluate the significance of their knowledge and growth throughout the 10 weeks as it related specifically to cultural development. Regardless if a participant agreed to have their information shared in the study, all students were asked to complete the electronic assessment on previous cultural experiences and training.

### **Phases of Data Collection**

Figure 6 shows how the two phases are sequenced from one another, and which measures (both quantitative and qualitative) answer which research questions. Phase 1 occurred in the spring 2013 semester and before the first day of the course in August 2013. Phase 2 occurred during the first 10 weeks of the fall 2013 semester at ASU from August 27/28 to October 29/30.

*Phase 1 of Data Collection*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Quantitative Measures</b>	<b>Qualitative Measures</b>
RQ #1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?	The Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment	The Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)
RQ #3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?		Cycle 2 of the action research cycle, research Journal

*Phase 2 of Data Collection*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Quantitative Measures</b>	<b>Qualitative Measures</b>
RQ #1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?	Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) – pre- and post-test	Student focus groups, self-reflective journal entries, weekly class evaluation
RQ #2: What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?	Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) – pre- and post-test	Student focus groups, self-reflective journal entries
RQ #3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?	Weekly class evaluation	Weekly class evaluation, student focus groups, Community of Practice (CoP) focus group, research journal

*Figure 6.* Data collection phases.

## **Complementarity of Data**

Each measure was purposefully selected to provide understanding into how cultural awareness and understanding are potentially gained by completing a pre-international experience course. Specifically, to answer Research Question 1, I used results from the quantitative measures--the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI, pre- and post-test results)--and the qualitative measures--student focus groups, self-reflective journal responses, and the weekly class evaluation. Participant responses to the ICCS were used to better understand the participants and their cross-cultural knowledge and to check their cross-cultural sensitivity in cultural integration, behavioral response, intellectual interaction, attitudes towards others, and empathy. The scores were calculated for each scale, as well as summed for a total score where higher scores indicate greater cross-cultural sensitivity. Further complementation is demonstrated when ICCS questions were probed in focus groups. During Module 2, or the second course session, the results were shared with the participants. During the student focus group sessions, questions were asked of the participants to determine if they believed their answers changed compared to when they first took the inventory. The structured exercise using the ICCS proved useful in helping participants discover and critically examine their own views and encourage them that cross-cultural growth can occur before going abroad. The ICSI, pre- and post-test results, provided insight as to the growth that occurred from beginning to the end of the course and provided a quantitative indicator related to how strongly participants feel about their communication, and values and beliefs while interacting with another culture. The

student focus groups allowed me to hear the narrative of any changes that took place from a cultural learning standpoint based on the information and experiences that occurred by completing the course. This data collection tool also allowed participants to comment on and provide a voice to issues and factors related to their cultural learning. By using these data sources, I have a deeper understanding of the participant's cultural learning.

In order to answer Research Question 2, I sought complementarity from the self-reflective journal entries and the student focus groups. Throughout the course, participants were asked to respond to prompts related to cultural learning and cultural competencies. This qualitative data was analyzed, along with the data from the student focus groups, and determined what specific cultural competencies were gained through participating in the pre-international experience course.

Finally, to answer Research Question 3, I explored the results of quantitative information collected from the Weekly Class Evaluation and the qualitative information collected from the student focus groups, Community of Practice (CoP) focus group, and research journal. The Weekly Class Evaluation specifically informed me on how the weekly modules helped the students grow in their cultural knowledge. The closed-ended questions on the evaluation helped inform me on which modules impacted the participants. The construct of "Rate the Instructor" answered how the innovation influenced and informed my practice. The additional open-ended questions assisted in collecting pertinent information in knowing what changes need to be made for future instruction and delivery of the course content. The weekly research journal writing

answered how I have changed and grown throughout the development and implementation of the innovation. Lastly, the student focus group questions included two questions specifically related to Research Question 3. These two questions were more targeted than the Weekly Class Evaluation and asked the participants to discuss questions only about me, my teaching, and my leadership abilities. By using these three different sources of information, I am able to discuss how the development, teaching, and implementation of the innovation influenced my practice as an international educator and Assistant Director of the SAO. This discussion occurs in Chapter 5.

### **Measures**

This study used a number of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools including a Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment, the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI), eight student focus groups, weekly 60-minute meetings with the Community of Practice incorporated into my research journal, a focus group with the CoP, weekly course assessments, and three self-reflective journal entries. A research journal was also kept and captured my own observations of the growth that occurred as a result of this study as an international education professional and facilitator.

#### **Phase 1 Quantitative and Qualitative Measures**

**Study abroad pre-departure course assessment.** In Phase 1, a needs assessment was utilized to plan effectively, identify priorities, make decisions, and solve problems. Its utilization affected every aspect of the development of the curriculum including planning, designing, delivering, and evaluating. The aim was that the assessment would

measure what past students desired in such a course, if offered, as well as recommendations for the future of the course content. This was before the implementation phase. An example of a question in the assessment was “If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what topics do you think should be covered in details, based on your own experiences abroad?” Another open-ended response question was “If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what other aspects of orientation do you think should be included in the course curriculum (ex: hosting a panel of current international students and asking them to speak about their cultural adjustments to the U.S. and how they have worked to overcome any difficulties)?”

**The Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS).** In Phase 1, this inventory was deployed to all participants and assigned to complete before the participants came to class on the first day of the fall 2013 semester (August 27/28). This information was needed and was used for me to better understand the past experiences of each student as it related to their cultural background and their cultural understanding. The inventory was specifically handed back to the participants, and students were invited to set up a 20-minute meeting with me for future discussion. The overall goal was to let students know how they could specifically increase their cultural competency score and what they needed to do to be ready to study abroad. The ICCS also determined how to organize the eight focus groups at the end of week 10. Specifically, within each focus group, a representation of differing ICCS scores was included. The assessment was sent electronically to all the students. The ICCS (Cushner, 1986) is a field tested, 32-item self-

report inventory that uses a seven-point Likert scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree” to discover five major aspects of cross-cultural sensitivity in the participants. Loo and Shiomi’s study (1999) on the ICCS (n = 484), indicated that full scale reliabilities were accepted for one of the groups at .85 but only moderate for the other group at .77. The measure also contains supplemental questions that were added to the beginning of the ICCS to solicit complementary information that provided additional data. An example of a question from the ICCS is “I avoid people who are different from me.” One example of the supplemental questions is “How often do you socialize with international students (students studying at ASU who are not from the U.S.) at ASU?”

## **Phase 2 Quantitative and Qualitative Measures**

In Phase 2, I collected data using the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI), pre- and post-test, the weekly class evaluations, student focus groups, self-reflective journal entries, the CoP focus group, and the research journal. In Phase 2, I answered research questions 1, 2, and 3. All of the research questions were addressed through both quantitative and qualitative measures. In this section, I describe them and indicate how the collected data, per measure, was analyzed.

**Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) (pre and posttest).** Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) created the ICSI using the worldviews of individualism and collectivism as the focus of their inventory. The inventory was field tested with 46 undergraduate and 93 graduate students (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). The ICSI, a self-reported instrument, utilized responses to assess how individuals act, respond and modify their behavior in new and foreign situations (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). The inventory was used to



compare how individuals behave in an individualistic culture (U.S.) and a collectivistic culture (Japan; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). The ICSI is comprised of 46 total questions and uses a 7-point Likert scale with the following descriptors: 1 = very strongly agree, 2 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 4 = not decided, 5 = disagree, 6 = strongly disagree, and 7 = very strongly disagree. In assessing cultural sensitivity in the individualistic culture, or the U.S. context, students were asked “I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people” and “I enjoy feeling that I am looked upon as equal in worth to my superiors.” Sample items for the collectivist culture, or International, are “I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact” and “I am very modest when talking about my own accomplishments.” The instrument is divided into two parts. In the first part, participants were asked to respond 16 questions as if they were living and working in the United States and Japan, or International. In the second part, participants are asked 14 questions on the themes of flexibility and open-mindedness (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) based the ICSI on the acknowledgement that “to be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures” (p. 416). One way to measure sensitivity is to determine how individuals make the necessary changes and adapt behaviors when interacting with multiple cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). All of the items used in the ICSI were based on research (Brislin, Cushner, Cherie, & Yong, 1986).

Bhawuk and Brislin’s study (1992) used a Cronbach alpha to test the reliability of the ICSI. The alpha for the 46-item instrument was 0.82 and 0.84. In another study on

expatriate culture shock in China for those in the hotel industry, researchers Kaye and Taylor (1997) found that the “ICSI yielded a measure which discriminated well among the sample (n = 89) of expatriate managers. The scale reliability was only modest, with Cronbach’s alpha = 0.60” (p. 502). Within this study, and to analyze the data, I ran the Cronbach alpha and compared the results to these two studies.

**Weekly class evaluation.** Phase 2 data collection also included a weekly class evaluation (Appendix G) that was distributed at the end of each class session. This assessment assisted me in answering Research Question 3 and the collected information aided to inform the future of the course, how it will be taught, and the included content. Research Question 3 reads, “How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?” Part of the intent was to capture exactly what successfully occurred during each class session to then be able to re-do it in future class sections. The evaluation included 11 questions using a Likert-type scale with the options of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *a*, *strongly disagree*, and *not applicable*. For example, one question reads “I feel I will be able to be more successful while abroad as a result of completing today’s unit.” There were also four open-ended questions to receive additional qualitative information. For example, “What do you feel were the most valuable aspects of today’s unit as they relate to your preparation to study abroad?” The measure helped to: 1) understand the difference between student preparation and my expectations, 2) plan and prepare for upcoming topics or units to be covered in the course, 3) point out for students the

important areas in which they may lack basic knowledge and identify resources that they can access to improve their level of understanding (Stassen, Doherty, & Poe, 2001). The evaluation was also reviewed by 10 study abroad professionals and education doctorate students to check for understanding and clarity.

**Student focus groups.** As part of the post data collection for Phase 2, there were eight student focus groups conducted with the participants. Participants were selected based on their scores of the ICCS so that student participants who scored high, medium, and low cultural sensitivity on the measure would be represented. The goal was to have the focus group discussion represent all of the students in the study. The focus groups were an additional way in which the participants shared qualitative information to specifically answer all three research questions. For example, one focus group question is “What cultural competencies do you feel you gained through the course?” Another question is, “Based on what you learned through this course, do you believe that you are now experiencing views that are different than you used to? If so, in what ways?” A full list of the questions is located in Appendix H. The focus group sessions were digitally recorded, with the permission of the participants, and transcribed to ensure accuracy of all the collected data. Each participant identified themselves by their identity number so that their comments remain confidential. The recordings are stored off-campus of ASU, Tempe Campus, in a locked drawer.

**Community of practice focus group.** The focus group was an additional way in which the CoP members shared qualitative information to specifically answer Research Question 3, “How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and

implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?” For example, one focus group question is, “How have you seen the instructor, Adam Henry, grow professionally during this course?” Another question is “What do you consider Adam’s areas of growth with the development of this course and implementation of it?” A full list of the questions is located in Appendix H. The focus group session was audio-recorded, with the permission of the participants, and transcribed to ensure accuracy of all the collected data. The audio tapes are stored off-campus of ASU, Tempe Campus, in a locked drawer.

**Self-reflective journal entries.** Students completed three, self-reflective journal entries (Appendix I) to assist in answering Research Question 1 and 2 and provided qualitative insight on the effectiveness of the course in the lives of the participants. For example, “What you have learned about applying cultural sensitivity and awareness in this course?” Another question asked is “What ideologies are you taking with you on your study abroad program? Identifying these beliefs and their source may help you when you are challenged abroad by those with a different point of view” (Western Oregon University, 2014). A main objective of the journal entries is to encourage students to practice self-reflective thinking and processing.

**Research journal.** To assist in answering Research Question #3, I kept a detailed journal on the research activities that occurred through the research process and how it has influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and Assistant Director of the ASU Study Abroad Office. The journal entry prompts (Appendix J)

occurred between the dates of May 2013 through the completion of the study (Spring 2013). Specifically, journal entries were made during the eight weeks of the innovation to capture the learning and growth during the implementation phase. Two sample questions that were addressed in each research journal entry are “How are your leadership skills being developed through this process?” and “How are your skills being developed through this process?” Other data collection to answer Research Question 3 included performance evaluations (conducted by my supervisor) and informal but important conversations with the current SGS 484 instructor. The purpose for self-reflection, according to Scanlon, Care, and Udod (2002), suggests that “reflection enables practitioners to tap into knowledge gained through experiences” (p. 137).

### **Data Collection Plan**

Phase 1 data collection occurred during the spring 2013 semester and again at the beginning of the fall 2013 semester. Phase 2 data collection occurred the first ten weeks of the fall 2013 semester academic year (August 26, 2013-October 14, 2013). Within Appendix K, I provide a detailed description of how data was collected each week throughout the innovation timeframe.

### **Data Analysis**

The quantitative measures—the Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment, the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI, pre- and post-test), and Weekly Course Evaluations--were analyzed using descriptive statistics and statistical analyses. Once the quantitative data was collected, data was also entered into Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and

saved with no identifying information except the ID code that participants entered on all of the documents. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. A detailed description of how the measures were specifically analyzed is described below in detail.

The five qualitative data sources--weekly course evaluation, student focus groups, the CoP focus group, self-reflective journal entries, and the research journal--were all analyzed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through this approach, I examined and reexamined the data while comparing one source with another to identify similarities as well as differences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this process, open coding was utilized to identify key terms, develop categories, and form themes. The coding led to the development of categories. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), "categories are higher-level concepts under which analysts group lower-level concepts according to shared properties. Categories are sometimes referred to as themes. They represent relevant phenomena and enable the analyst to reduce and combine data" (p. 159). Through this process, patterns emerged and themes were identified. After themes were identified, preliminary assertions were made. Saldaña (2011) states that assertions are "declarative statements of summative, supported by confirming evidence of the data, and revised when disconfirming evidence or discrepant cases require modification of the assertions" (p. 119).

### **Phase 1 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis**

**Study abroad pre-departure course assessment.** I used descriptive statistics to further analyze the quantitative data and to describe each mean for each factor. For the open-ended questions, the analysis relied on the major trends identified in the responses,

and on the recognition of key words or phrases. Also, for the open-ended questions, analysis included sorting and grouping responses first, followed by the ranking of the responses (McCawley, 2009). This data helped me plan the intervention.

**Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS).** Scores for the ICCS were calculated for each scale, as well as summed for a total score where higher scores indicate greater cross-cultural sensitivity. Cushner (1986), the designer of the inventory, provides a guide to indicate low, average, and high cross-cultural sensitivity. The ICCS was scored in Excel through a formula so that students received their own scored inventory.

## **Phase 2 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis**

**Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) (pre and posttest).** A Cronbach alpha for each factor was calculated to see if a respectable alpha could be obtained for the factors. The scores were factor analyzed to determine if the dimensions of individualism and collectivism emerged. The pre-experimental design of a one-group pretest-posttest design includes a pretest measure followed by a treatment and a posttest for a single group.

Group A      ICSI pretest-----Innovation (experimental variable)-----ICSI posttest

A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether efficacy scores changed from pre-to post-intervention assessments. An ANOVA was conducted to determine whether scores had changed from pre- to post-test for the following: pre-vs. post-intervention scores; context, U.S. vs. international scores; cultural framework, individualism vs. collectivism. Lastly, an ANOVA was conducted to

determine whether attitudes, confidence, flexibility, and open-mindedness, changed across time from pre-to post-intervention.

**Weekly class evaluation.** The statistics from this measure indicated whether or not the course sessions were effective for the student participants. The mean score of each indicator was calculated to discover what factors worked well and what needed to be improved for the future. The open-ended questions in the weekly evaluation were designed to collect subjective qualitative data. I used a frequency count of major categories that was identified.

**Student and community of practice focus groups.** A week after the focus groups, a report of the individual focus groups was prepared and then I digitally shared the reports for verification with the TAs who were present at the focus groups. After the focus groups, I compared and contrasted the data and looked for emerging themes. I personally transcribed both sets of focus groups and asked random members to verify that the transcriptions were accurate.

**Self-reflective journal entries.** To analyze the journal entries, I used grounded theory by identifying key terms, developing categories, and creating themes. The codes that I discovered led to developing categories. Through this process of analysis, themes were identified. After themes were identified, summative statements were made to support the data (Saldaña, 2011).

**Research journal.** My research journal provided an account of each week I taught the course including decisions I made and focused heavily on my own development. It also focused primarily on the CoP meetings that were conducted each



week after the course was taught. The research journal provided insights into the actual data collection processes, as well as any issues that arose throughout the implementation of the course. The data was analyzed using grounded theory.

### **Reliability/Credibility/Dependability/Validity/Trust**

The internal validity of research should be considered by researchers if they want to strengthen the internal validity of their studies (Johnson, 1997). Creswell and Miller (2000) state that for credibility purposes, qualitative researchers should “routinely employ member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audits” (p. 124). To assist with validity, I field tested the selected measures between March 2013 and July 2013 with groups of ASU students (not actual study participants), study abroad professionals, and ASU faculty. Specifically, I field tested them to make sure they were clear to participants and that they were to collect the data needed to answer the research questions in this study.

To enhance internal validity, a researcher could return interviews and focus group transcriptions to the participants and ask them to check their accuracy. I performed random member checks with the students at the end of my innovation and once the class had concluded. I also conducted member checking with the CoP focus group and asked them to read through all of the transcription. Upon completion, they confirmed, through e-mail, that what was recorded in the focus group was correctly transcribed. The purpose of the member checking was also to determine if the analysis of the data was accurate.

The CoP also greatly enhanced the reliability and dependability of this study. Each member attended the course sessions each week and then the weekly meeting to

discuss what occurred. This provided me a group of peers with whom to discuss the data, and they were sent the findings and discussion sections of this dissertation to confirm the accuracy of the claims and assertions developed in the study. To increase reliability and dependability, I re-read and re-analyzed the data multiple times. All data has also been kept to assist in the audit trail. An audit trail is the researcher's attempt to keep clear documentation of the decisions made in the study through fields notes (Creswell & Miller (2000)).

## Chapter 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Chapter 3 included a description of each data instrument and a detailed account of how I collected, utilized, and validated them. In this chapter, I provide a description of the data analysis and results used to indicate the impact of a pre-international experience course for students who complete the course before going abroad. The data are organized into two sections: qualitative and quantitative. A brief description of the analysis conducted is also presented along with an interpretation of the results that were found from each measure. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the complementarity of methods and findings used to answer the three research questions.

To better understand the results of a pre-international experience course for students before going abroad, this study investigates the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?
- Research Question 2: What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?
- Research Question 3: How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

As described in Chapter 3, I used a mixed methods approach to collect my data and specifically used a sequential data collection method. Sequential data collection includes collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources at two separate times (Creswell, 2003, p. 215). Supporting sequential data collection procedures, the data findings and the analysis of the Pre-Departure Study Abroad Participant Survey were shared in Chapter 2 as the intent of the survey and the collected data was to inform the curriculum and study. Within this chapter, the Quantitative Data, I include the analysis and results of the Weekly Class Evaluation, the Inventory for Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), and the pre-and post-test results of the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI). The Qualitative Data section includes the analysis and findings of the Weekly Class Evaluation, student focus group transcriptions, the Community of Practice (CoP) focus group transcriptions, participant self-reflective journal entries, and the research journal.

### **Quantitative Data**

To effectively analyze the data collected from the Weekly Class Evaluation and the ICCS, I used descriptive statistics. To analyze the pre- and post-test of the ICSI, the data were loaded into a statistical analysis software package, SPSS 20. The ICSI is a self-report instrument in which the student participants responded to a set of items on a Likert-type 7-point scale: very strongly agree, strongly agree, agree, not decided, disagree, strongly disagree, and very strongly disagree (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). When a participant did not respond to a question within the ICSI or did not submit both the pre-

and post-tests, I entirely removed their responses from the data set. As a result, out of the 52 student participants, 46 were included in the data analysis for the ICSI.

### **Weekly Class Evaluation**

To address Research Question 1 [*What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?*] and Research Question 2 [*What specific cultural competencies are gained by participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?*], I utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the weekly class evaluations. It is important to note that the Weekly Class Evaluations were not collected for weeks 8 and 10. Week 8 was during the student's fall break week and consisted of assignments to complete outside of the classroom. Week 10 consisted of students participating in focus groups during the entire class time.

Students completed the Weekly Class Evaluation at the end of each class session. The results indicated that students, on average, either indicated *strongly agree* or *agree*. Very few students indicated *disagree* or *strongly disagree* as a response to the questions. The quantitative results were reviewed each Tuesday night after the first class. Due to there being limited variation in responses, the results did not assist in being able to know what students did not learn with the course material and discussions. The qualitative information, on the other hand, was useful and used each week. Specifically, the results were used to evaluate the course material and the conducted activities each week. From Tuesday to Wednesday night, the TAs and I reviewed them and made the appropriate

changes for Wednesday night based on the feedback from Tuesday's class. The results of the qualitative are shared in the qualitative section.

### **Inventory for Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)**

The ICCS was electronically administered to all students prior to the first day of class, with  $n = 48$ , including the student participants who did not permit their data in this study, under untimed and neutral conditions. The purpose of using the measure was three-fold: provide a baseline of student cultural sensitivity levels, create random sample groups for the Week 10 focus groups, and utilize the inventory as a coaching and development tool for the student participants. Table 1 is a guide for determining the levels of cross-cultural sensitivity when using the ICCS (Loo, 1999). As shown in Table 2, the results indicate that students do not report in the *Low* sensitivity category on any of the scales except in the *Attitudes towards others* and *Cultural integration* constructs, while the majority of students fell in the *Average* category. The largest distribution of students reporting *High* was for *Intellectual integration*. Intellectual integration, as defined in the ICCS, assesses the level of how individuals seek out information of other cultural orientations (Loo, 1999; Cushner, 1986).

Table 1

*Guide for Determining Levels of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity on the ICCS (Loo, 1999)*

ICCS Scales	Low Sensitivity	Average Sensitivity	High Sensitivity
Cultural Integration	10-30	31-50	51-70
Behavioral Response	6-15	16-30	31-42
Intellectual Integration	6-15	16-30	31-42
Attitudes Toward Others	5-14	15-24	25-35
Empathy	5-14	15-24	25-35
Total Score	32-95	96-160	161-224

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics and Distribution on the ICCS for the Student Participants (n=48)*

ICCS Scales	Mean	Percentage Distribution by Sensitivity Level		
		Low	Average	High
Cultural Integration	49	2	60.4	37.5
Behavioral Response	33	0	25	75
Intellectual Integration	34	0	8.3	91.7
Attitudes Toward Others	11	82.3	18.6	0
Empathy	27	0	20.8	80.2
Total Score	153	0	62.5	37.5

### **Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)**

Prior to conducting analyses of the quantitative results, reliability analyses of the pre-test scores on the various instruments were conducted to obtain Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the internal consistency of the items

on a particular scale or subscale. The reliabilities for confidence, flexibility, and openness were .78, .75, and .38, respectively. For the other measure that assessed national context – U.S. versus international perspective and cultural framework - individualism as compared to collectivism, the following reliabilities were obtained: for US - individualism, .51; for US - collectivism, .58; for international - individualism, .60, and for international -collectivism, .65. It should be noted that these reliability values are below .70, the level indicating the measure is reliable. The .70 value is an accepted minimal benchmark for reliability.

A multivariate repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether confidence, flexibility, and openness changed over the course of the intervention. Results from the multivariate repeated measures ANOVA indicated the multivariate test was significant,  $F(3, 41) = 11.61, p < .001$ , with  $\eta^2 = .46$ , which is a very large within-subject effect according to Cohen (1988; Olejnik & Algina, 2000) who suggested  $\eta^2$  values equal to or exceeding .01, .06, and .14 are considered to be small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively, when proportion of variance accounted for is used as a measure of effect size for a within-subject effect.

As follow-up, univariate ANOVAs were conducted for each of the individual variables. Results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the effect of time showed the effect was significant for confidence scores,  $F(1, 43) = 34.51, p < .001, \eta^2 = .45$ , which is a very large effect size (Olejnik & Algina, 2000). Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3. By comparison, results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the effect of time showed the effect was not significant for flexibility scores,  $F(1, 43) = 1.91,$



$p < .18$ . Similarly, results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the effect of time indicated the effect was not significant for openness scores,  $F(1, 43) = 0.004, p < .95$ .

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations by Variable and Time*

Variable	Pre-Intervention Score		Post-Intervention Score	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Confidence	5.57	1.00	6.20	0.73
Flexibility	3.15	0.99	2.98	0.83
Openness	4.52	0.74	4.52	0.62

A 2 time (pre- vs. post-intervention) x 2 national context (U.S. vs. international) x 2 cultural framework (individualism vs. collectivism perspective) repeated measures ANOVA was used to analyze the ICSI scores. Results from the repeated measures ANOVA showed the effect for time was not significant,  $F(1, 37) = 0.19, p < .67$ . The mean pre-intervention score of 4.74 was almost identical to the mean post-intervention score of 4.75. See Table 4 for the means and standard deviations for all scores related to this analysis. The result for the effect of national context was significant,  $F(1, 37) = 8.88, p < .005, \eta^2 = .19$ , which is a large within-subject effect. Thus, the mean score of 4.82 for the U.S. context was significantly different than the mean of 4.66 for the international context. Similarly, the effect of cultural framework was significant,  $F(1, 37) = 66.03, p < .001, \eta^2 = .64$ , which is a very large within-subject effect. Specifically, the mean score of 5.22 for collectivism was significantly different than the mean of 4.26 for the individualism score within the cultural framework effect. National context refers to

answering the questions in two different contexts – the U.S. and international. As previously mentioned, “international” refers to Japan. Questions that were asked for the U.S. and international contexts are included in Chapter 3.

With respect to the interactions of these variables, results indicated there were interaction effects. Results from the repeated measures ANOVA showed the interaction for *time x national context* was not significant,  $F(1, 37) = 3.49, p < .07$ . By comparison, the results for the interaction of *time x cultural framework* was significant,  $F(1, 37) = 13.56, p < .001, \eta^2 = .27$ , which is a large within-subject effect. The difference between the collectivism and individualism scores at time 2 was significantly different than the difference between those two scores at time 1. Similarly, the interaction of *national context x cultural framework* was significant,  $F(1, 37) = 31.12, p < .001, \eta^2 = .46$ , which is a very large within-subject effect. The difference between the collectivism and individualism scores for the international context was significantly different than the difference between those two scores for the US context. Finally, the interaction of *time x national context x cultural framework* was significant,  $F(1, 37) = 11.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .24$ , which is a large within-subject effect. A substantial difference of differences of differences occurs over time, national context, and cultural framework.

Table 4

*Means and SDs for ICSI Scores by Time, National Context, and Cultural Framework*

	Pre-Intervention Score		Post-Intervention Score		Individual vs. Collective
	United States	International	United States	International	
Individual	4.79 (0.80)	4.01 (1.12)	4.87 (0.81)	3.38 (1.23)	4.26
Collective	4.74 (0.79)	5.40 (0.83)	4.88 (0.95)	5.85 (0.63)	5.22
Pre-Intervention vs. Post-Intervention	4.74		4.75		
United States vs. International	4.82		4.66		

*Note:* Standard deviations are in parentheses.

### Qualitative Data

Six different sources of qualitative data were collected to answer the research questions as they relate to how the student participants were impacted by the course, which cultural competencies were gained from the course materials and resources, and how my practice was influenced and informed by the implementation of the study. Data collection included eight Weekly Class Evaluations, five student focus group transcriptions, one Community of Practice (CoP) focus group transcriptions, three student self-reflection journal entries, and my research journal. To analyze each of the qualitative sources, I applied grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is a methodology for the purpose of building theory from a set of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is used to indicate theoretical constructs from qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Creswell (2003) defines it as “a theory in which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of

participants in a study” (p. 14). Further detail regarding the number of pages for the qualitative data sources can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

<i>Description of Qualitative Sources</i>	
Data Source	Pages
Weekly Class Evaluation	64, double spaced
Student Focus Group Transcriptions	40, double spaced, five of eight groups
CoP Focus Group Transcriptions	23, double spaced
Student Self-Reflection Journal Entries	180, single/double spaced, 3 reflections
Research Notes	15, double spaced
Total Page Count	322

For each qualitative data source, I analyzed the data by reviewing the focus group transcriptions and the student self-reflective journal entries. I then utilized a software program, HyperRESEARCH Qualitative Analysis Tool v. 3.5.2, to assist in the coding process. I reviewed each data source to identify initial codes during the open coding stage. For each data source, this process was repeated multiple times. Open coding allowed me to indicate separate instances from the data and assign applicable codes and then to revise as part of the refining process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Corbin and Strauss (2008) state that “open coding is breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data. At the same time, one is qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions” (p. 195). Codes were combined to identify categories “that typify or summarize the experiences and perspectives of the participants” (Stringer, 2007, p. 98). Memoing and note-taking regarding the categories helped to create themes that addressed the research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Stringer (2007) states,

“Researchers may use these techniques of data analysis as they seek to acquire clarity and understanding by distilling and organizing the information they gathered” (p. 98).

### **Themes**

After revision of the analysis process, the identified codes were merged into six major themes. To answer the three Research Questions, the six themes that emerged from the data included:

1. student participants indicated that they are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own;
2. student participants gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills;
3. student participants reported that they received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor’s knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources;
4. student participants identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities;
5. student participants expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own.
6. student participants and the Community of Practice (CoP) members identified growth in the researcher-practitioner’s teaching style and abilities and diverse aspects of leadership skills.

In the following paragraphs, I present the themes that emerged throughout the data. Table 6 presents the themes and codes as they relate to the data sources and research questions in the study.

Table 6

*Themes with Associated Qualitative Codes, Data Sources, and Relation to Research Questions*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Data Source*</b>	<b>Research Question</b>
1. Student participants indicated that they are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own.	Realization – “it’s not about me”; cultural understanding; cultural engagement	1; 3; 4	1; 2
2. Student participants gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills.	Flexibility – competency; cultural humility – competency; verbal and non-verbal communication – competency; Adaptability – competency; new understanding – cross-cultural communications;	1; 3; 4	1; 2
3. Student participants reported that they received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor’s knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources.	Student panel – highlight; course tools and resources; instructor examples	1; 2; 3; 4	1
4. Student participants identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities.	Cultural self-awareness; understand my own culture; new cultural understandings; new cultural realizations	1; 3; 4	1; 2
5. Student participants expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own.	Individualism and collectivism; new cultural framework; worldview difference	1; 3; 4	1; 2
6. Student participants and the Community of Practice (CoP) members identified growth in the researcher-practitioner’s teaching style and abilities, and leadership skills.	Instructor – vulnerable; instructor – flexible; instructor – passionate; instructor – organizational skills; contextualized learning/teaching; instructor – teaching style; instructor – growth	1; 2; 4; 5	3

**Theme 1: Student participants indicated that they are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own.** Throughout the Weekly Assessment Evaluation, the theme of exhibiting an open-mind about understanding other cultures and remaining open-minded while abroad was the second most indicated code throughout all of the weekly feedback. Specifically, when responding to question number three each week within the Weekly Assessment Evaluation, “*What theme, concept, or idea will you take from today’s class and use or practice during your international experience or potential global workforce environment? Why?*” students emphasized in their responses the desire to be more open-minded about cultures different from their own. An example that was stated by numerous students is reflected in this student’s statement, “I am going to take the concept of open-mindedness and the courage to jump into a new culture when I study abroad” (Weekly Assessment Evaluation, October 29, 2013).

Being open-minded was a theme throughout the eight student focus groups as well. Mike indicated that the class content had him think differently about his ability to be more culturally open-minded:

Before this class, I would think I was culturally sensitive – like I am just going to go there, and meet great people, and study, but the [class] assignments made me realize that sometimes there is going to be conflict with the other culture, and then you have to be aware of that, and when I should be respectful, and when I feel threatened, and how I should act. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Multiple students expressed that they thought they were more open-minded themselves before taking the course and then as they continued with the prescribed assignments, they realized that they were not as culturally aware as they once thought. Jose shared this implication in the student focus groups:



I thought I was more culturally open than I actually was. I do a lot of traveling but thought I was culturally aware about other cultures and I learned that there are concepts that I was not familiar with so there is always room for improvement. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Jose's comments reflects that as an experienced traveler, before the course, he thought he was open-minded about other cultures, but it was not until he engaged with the overall course assignments, exercises, and lectures that he realized there is so much more to learn as it relates to being culturally open-minded and aware. Michael expressed a similar discovery after the completion of the course:

This course has definitely made me more aware of how ethnocentric we can be at times, you know, and how we can judge other people in a negative way just because they don't do or approach things the way we would normally. So, I am definitely more aware of that now and will help me be more open-minded. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

The previous student statements indicate that they not only entered the course thinking they were culturally open-minded, but they concluded the course recognizing on their own that they have more to learn and they now have more of an open-mind than they did before the course. Students identified they were ethnocentric and now recognize the need to see or do things in a new or different way.

The continued theme of students gaining a more open-mind about other cultures was expressed throughout the data. Angelica shared that she was surprised by what she learned in the class as it relates specifically to being more open-minded because she goes to school with students from other cultures and was surprised to identify that there is still so much more to learn as she continues to prepare for her international experience:

The biggest surprise that I gained from this course was that you come into the course thinking that you go to school with all kinds of people from different cultures, so this course really opens your eyes to how little you know and how many concepts there are out there and how even more open you can actually

become about learning about other cultures. So that was the biggest shock for me. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Students recognizing that they have a lot more to learn about other cultures encouraged them to become more culturally aware and open-minded. Stephen shared that he has become more open-minded after the course, but more specifically, he now points to the fact that he is more open to learning about other people and identified that he thinks about them differently:

I think I am definitely surprised that I have become so much more open-minded by what I learned in this class. I used to think that, "Yes, we [Americans] have the prominent way of thinking - the Americanized way of thinking" - but after talking so much about other cultures and how they can co-exist and mingle, and how different they are and how each one has its own beauty, I have definitely come to see and accept other cultures - not just cultures but other people as well. Because you just think how other people are raised - what's their story - and what has made them the way they are today? I have become a lot more open-minded with the course and I think a lot of it is the examples and stories that were shared as anecdotes that helped me do that. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

It is important for students to recognize their need to learn more about other cultures, and to be open-minded, but it is also essential for students to be able to understand the ideas, beliefs, and values of other cultures. Students also connected with this notion, and Tim shares his discovery of being able to accept them and potentially remove his pre-conceived notions about other cultures:

I am open to different ideas, beliefs, and value systems than I was before. Now that I am sensitive towards those, I am able to consider and able to take those in and remove those pre-conceived notions about the different cultures that I will experience moving forward. (Self-reflection assignment, October 23, 2013)

Becoming more culturally open-minded placed some students more at ease with the idea of traveling abroad and provided them with an increase of confidence. Carlos shares that

the confidence will also help him be more successful in his international internship—an overall objective for the course:

My cultural learning and awareness in this course has increased greatly. This course has taught me to think from a more open and worldly perspective. Having been given so many resources, my awareness has not only increased but I now feel more confident in my awareness of other cultures and traveling abroad. Having gained more confidence in knowledge and awareness, I feel less uneasy about traveling abroad. Also, the knowledge and tools I have obtained through this class will undoubtedly make more successful in not only finding an internship, but will help me to be more successful while completing my internship because of my new cultural perspective. (Self-reflection Assignment, October 23, 2013)

The data points to students gaining a more open-mind about learning about cultures different from their own. Those who responded also mentioned that they, before this course, thought that other cultures must conform to their culture which indicates a closed-minded mentality. This specific student identified that he needs to be more open-minded and respectful of others and their cultures:

In this course, learning that culture is shared has definitely changed my viewpoints on certain things. I used to believe that people should adapt to my culture if they were coming to me. However, the world these days is definitely becoming a more global environment, and with this comes the infusion of more and more differentiated cultures everywhere. One thing I have learned in this class is that I need to be respectful of all the new cultures that I come across and know that while some people's behaviors will be predictable, others might not be based on where they are from and what their sense of normal is. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Lastly, to support Theme 1, Alissa shares her realization that other cultures are different from her own and as a result, she has become more open-minded:

Culture is integrated, because in the end, we are all people and we all share the same needs and desires. I need to open my eyes and realize that the world is a melting pot, and the bubble I live in needs to be popped. This class has opened my eyes on how completely different cultures are compared to the one I grew up knowing. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013).

The selected examples indicate that students gained a stronger cultural awareness through the course assignments, activities, and lectures so that they are more open-minded and able to accept cultures different from their own. Some students expressed that they now respect other cultures, and others shared that they want to be open to the ideas, values, and beliefs of other cultures during their international experience.

**Theme 2: Student participants gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills.** The focus of the 10-week intervention included specific cultural competencies. Many examples of cultural competencies were explored: knowledge (cultural self-awareness and knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks), skills (empathy, and verbal/nonverbal communication), and lastly, attitudes (curiosity and openness). These cultural competencies were directly taken from the Association of American Colleges and Universities rubric entitled “Intercultural Knowledge and Competency Value Rubric” (Rhodes, 2010). The data collected from the Weekly Class Evaluations, the student focus groups, and the self-reflective journal entries indicated that students primarily gained the cultural competencies of openness, as already described in Theme 1, along with patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills. These self-identified cultural competencies, or skills, that the participants identified relate to the competencies within the Intercultural Knowledge and Competency Value Rubric (Rhodes, 2010). Specifically, patience and flexibility are attitudes, cultural humility is knowledge, and cross-cultural communication is a gained skill.

***Patience - attitude.*** Patience is an attitude that can help a student abroad to be more effective and successful in understanding a culture different from their own

(Hannigan, 1990). Jose shared how learning about patience will help him during her international experience:

While taking this course, I have learned that implementing yourself into a new culture can be daunting. You have to be very careful to present yourself as open and respectful to everyone's views if you want to blend into the culture and be accepted. By learning and listening in this course, I am now more patient to hold back my opinions in interpersonal scenarios; others respect me more for letting them express themselves in conversations. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 23, 2013)

Another student, Kyle, shared his reflection that highlights the competency of patience when it comes to not judging others because of their cultural differences:

I know personally I was one of the people who would pass judgments on people based on their cultural background or other factors, and now I realize that people just do things differently and I'm now interested in learning more about those cultures that I once had such prejudice towards. I know I need to be more patient with people, which is one of the things I really struggled with before. I used to get really frustrated when people from different cultures didn't know how to do things here in America, and I wouldn't be very tolerant of their behavior. I thought they were just ignorant when really they were just trying to live in our culture and assimilate to the way we do things. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Another student, Dan, shared that since taking the course, he has been able to apply what he has learned and a recent result was facilitating a small group of international students and having more patience with them:

This course has helped my patience level. I recently was in a Spanish group where we had to make an oral exam and I was with a student who spoke Russian and Chinese. It is really hard and difficult speaking different languages in that way - this is their third language - it was extremely hard to communicate just even in English with them. I really used a lot of the tools I learned in class and pulled back by being more patient and acknowledging different ways that I can communicate with them. So that was helpful for me just recently. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

***Flexibility - attitude.*** Data analysis revealed the competency of flexibility. Within the course, flexibility was defined as being able to accept ideas, values, and beliefs that

are different from your own (Deardorff, 2006). Sherri reported that flexibility is something that she is working on and simply recognized that things will be different during her international experience has encouraged to her to practice flexibility:

I think that flexibility was something that I improved on in this course - just having the knowledge that things are going to be different and things that are really important to you - that already makes me feel more flexible...now that I am expecting for those differences to occur. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

When student participants were asked to respond to a question, each week, on the Weekly Assessment Form, “*What theme, concept, or idea will you take from today’s class and use or practice during your international experience or potential global workforce environment?*” many responded with the word, “flexibility.” The responses to the Weekly Assessment Form were answered anonymously. A few of their statements were, “The theme that stuck with me today from our class is that I need to be curious! It is the most important thing to be curious and flexible so you will do well in another culture.” Another student expressed, “Be prepared and flexible to enhance your study abroad experience.”

***Cultural humility - knowledge.*** Cultural humility is a concept that was mentioned in almost every class session. The term is not heavily used in literature related to international training for students or expatriates, but it is within medical education training. Specifically, Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) state that “cultural humility requires a commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique by the individual practicing it” (p. 118). I explained the concept to the students as a competency that I personally needed to learn to be more culturally competent while living abroad. It is a concept that is often not practiced in an individualistic society because it requires oneself to continually think

of others. In the Weekly Assessment, six participants shared that they learned about cultural humility. Some of the common responses when asked their main “take away” from one of the weekly lessons were, “the idea of cultural humility and being self-aware of implicit beliefs that I might have a difficult time reconciling with my experience of other cultures” and “self-reflection, becoming aware and humility when abroad.” Abby shared the following about cultural humility when asked about the cultural competencies that she felt like she gained in the course:

Cultural humility was something that I am glad I learned in this course because that is not something that I would recognize - that I am the type of person - if someone laughs at me, I either shut down or get really mad. I will not talk to them again. So knowing that if I can prepare myself, and know that this is going to happen, because obviously it will, then I can prepare for it and not act in a way that is offensive to somebody because I know it is coming. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Another student, Daniel, shared that he learned about cultural humility and identifies that it is an underlying concept to understand when going abroad or engaging with a new or different culture:

One of the things that struck me the most was that the key to really being successful while abroad was humility. That really, if you are humble, pretty much everything else is going to work itself out. If you are not the ‘ugly American’ - the loud obnoxious American, that is going to put you miles ahead in their eyes and they are going to be a lot more gracious to you and way more impressed with you and want to work with you. My chosen host culture, I’m more likely to be the quiet American, but it was still a really neat thing to realize that no matter what culture you are going into, humility is the universal, recognized cultural trait that people tend to like. And that it is really cross-cultural in a lot of ways. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

***Cross-cultural communication - skill.*** Understand and practicing cross-cultural communication skills and concepts were emphasized in the course throughout the 10-weeks. Specifically, during week 8, students had multiple reading assignments on cross-

cultural communication. The concentration of that week was specifically on the strategies and tips for effective cross-cultural communication. Similarly to a pre-departure orientation designed specifically to increase intercultural communication (Martin, 1989), students read and discussed strategies for intercultural communication such as indirect and direct communication styles, along with high- and low-context communication environments. One student in particular, Alysse, shared that this was very helpful to her:

The whole how to communicate - they use a lot of context or they don't have a lot of context or they speak directly to you or you have to figure out what they are saying with nonverbal communication - that was really interesting and that is something I would not have thought about before going abroad. I needed to hear it. I would have just assumed that what they are saying to me is what they mean and not try to think about some other meaning that they are trying to give me. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

As part of the Weekly Course Assessment, 22 different students identified that cross-cultural communication was the theme or concept that they will take with them when they go abroad. Students said, "Intercultural communications and ways to be an effective communicator abroad. This is important because without communication, our experience abroad will not be successful." Another shared, "Realizing different countries have different priorities and communication styles were significant to me during this week's lesson." In addition, Dallas shared that he learned about many different cultural competencies throughout the course and that effective cross-cultural communication was one that he will focus in on while abroad:

I feel like we have learned a little about each cultural competency as if I went to different countries...for example, we discussed Hispanic and Asian cultures. But what I feel like, over lining all of it is that we have learned guidelines on how to build our own competencies on all of this because we have been shown a lot of resources that we can use and how we can go about preparing to go to our host country and how we can deal with what we find, and how we can respond to things, like he (instructor) said, 'You are going to fail sometimes in regards to



your communication and you just have to take that in accord and keep rolling with it.' That is a big thing to me because when I fail from a communications standpoint, I am prone to just shut down for a day. But Mr. Henry made it sound like it happens to everyone and that it is perfectly okay and so more so giving us just specific cultural competencies, we've gotten a broad based basis that is going to allow us to go and do what we want to do. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

**Theme 3: Student participants reported that they received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor's knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources.** During the focus groups, student participants expressed the value of having an instructor with so many personal, international experiences teach the course. They also shared that the other examples provided by their peers also impacted them. Specifically, they referred to their peers who have traveled and experienced different cultures in a variety of contexts.

Barbara shared that the other students in the class who had travelled before were insightful to her:

I found two things in particular that were extremely helpful to me. The testimonials from the people who have been abroad before was helpful. I think that touched on a lot of things that maybe we cannot have in a full Power Point presentation, but are important to acknowledge and be aware of before going abroad. They had really good advice. Also, the class when we provided all the resources to help us fund our international experience - what kind of programs we can be involved in and what to think about beforehand. That was extremely helpful for me and I did not have to go out and find that information on my own. It was all right there for me. So those two things were extremely helpful. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Another student, Melissa, shared about the anxiety she experiences when meeting new people and how the provided resources in the course can help her in the future:

I feel like sometimes when I meet new people, I am really anxious and just like in any situation - wherever I am. I am hesitant to get to know them and let them know who I am as well. And I think that the class really gave me the tools to open up to new people and let people in and explain to them what my culture is all

about while also learning about their new culture. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Throughout the course, I shared many personal examples throughout each class as it related to the content and objectives for that specific week. In the student focus groups, Molly expressed that many of the examples that were given were helpful and allowed her to think in new ways:

I think that a lot of the examples with what we read and the examples he [the instructor] gave us were pretty eye-opening to me about some of the specific cultures because I never would have thought about individualistic vs. collectivist societies before now. I would have never thought that they would think a different way or you have to go to 'the leader' before making a decision, or that they do everything different. I never would have expected that so it was really nice to learn about that. (October 30, 2013)

Students expressed that the examples presented in the class were helpful. A student anonymously shared in the weekly course evaluation, "For almost every single lesson, you had something to relate it back which made it more real. You can go over theory or a specific cultural humility, but every single time you had something different in your international experiences."

The self-reflection writing assignments also encouraged students to think through their cultural learnings. Bryce shared specifically that the course materials were helpful in his cultural understanding:

My cultural learning and awareness has increased greatly after taking this course. For instance, I learned more about other students' experiences who have traveled to other countries that I've never been to before and it was fascinating and interesting to hear their stories (October 23, 2013).

As a course resource, many students identified the Cultural Plunge (Nieto, 2006) exercise as one that helped them adjust to a new culture in a short amount of time. The Cultural Plunge was an assignment in which students were asked to place themselves in a situation

or experience that was out of their “norm,” and placed them in contact with individuals who are different from them for at least two hours. Luis shared, in the student focus groups, specifically how it assisted him in her cultural development:

My awareness and learning in this course has increased mostly from real life interactions in the Cultural Plunge, but also from the student panel and the videos that shared knowledge first hand. There is nothing quite like hearing it from someone with a similar viewpoint who was thrown into the deep end like many of us will be. I think it will be an enormous challenge to jump into that culture feet first, but it’s a challenge I feel slightly more confident about and one that I am looking forward to. (October 29, 2013)

As it relates to gaining cultural competencies such as an appropriate attitude, one student, Zach, shared in the student focus groups that the Cultural Plunge was the exercise that made him think the most about being appropriate when engaging with other cultures:

The Cultural Plunge to me was the most effective way to experience how culture is shared. There is no essay or book on earth that could have relayed the culture I experienced during my assigned Cultural Plunge. This revelation has changed my overall attitude towards studying abroad by helping me realize that there will always be something to learn on my travels. (October 29, 2013)

During week 7 of the 10-week innovation, a student panel of past study abroad participants who recently studied or interned abroad was facilitated. Throughout the class session, a total of 6 students spoke about their cultural discoveries during their international experience. The responses from the student participants showed that they found the peer-to-peer input as invaluable. After the panel, Kathy shared that she had never realized how Americans are thought of from individuals abroad, and the impact the panel made on her by recognizing that when she is abroad, she may experience others not liking her because of her citizenship:

For me, it was realizing that not everybody likes America or Americans. When we did the student panel and Q&A with those who had studied abroad, that was a common theme they shared. I have never had to experience that because I've been

[abroad] with a close group or with my family. When you are actually studying abroad though, and you are going to be at a school and you will tell them where you are from so this is one thing to always keep in mind. And I want to now help change their perspective of Americans when they interact with me. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Some students specifically identified the instructor's examples and specific resources as those that impacted them the most. Mandy identified that the provided course resources were helpful, too:

My level of cultural awareness has drastically increased since my first day of this class. A lot of what I didn't know about the culture in Asia, I'm getting a small taste just from the experience our professor shared with us in class, and what I have been learning from the lectures. In this course, we've talked a lot about being open-minded and culturally sensitive in order to step into a foreign culture and really make the most out of our experience abroad. In this course, we've researched about our host country and tried to find out what the culture is and how the people think. This has been really helpful because I've 'Googled' my host country, but have never really found a credible source to get my information. The resources provided in this class have really been so helpful. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

Although many of statements from Theme 3 are related to cultural growth or awareness that the student participants experienced, they point directly to the aiding of the course instructor, their peers in the class, and the course resources that provided the needed knowledge to realize new aspects of other cultures or their own culture.

**Theme 4: Student participants identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities.** During the first class of the intervention, I shared with the students that when I was 16 years old, I went to East Africa for two months. During the time, I experienced culture stress and culture shock for multiple reasons. As I reflected back to that period of my life within my research journal, one of the main variables that impacted my culture shock was the fact that I was not aware of my own culture. Specifically, I was not yet mature enough to

express my own cultural norms, values, beliefs, and ideas. Because of this experience and the feedback by past study abroad participants through the Pre-Departure Study Abroad Participant Survey, I emphasized the importance of students better understanding their own culture by completing five assignments that focused specifically on cultural self-identity. One student, Tina, shared how the class encouraged her to explore her own cultural identity and that in her case, her identity is still forming:

The course content made me feel that my cultural identity, as of right now, is not set in stone. This course taught me that it's okay to change my beliefs and values because when I am studying abroad, I might find different aspects of a another culture that I believe in even more than the aspects that I originally valued more. It made me more open to change throughout the course. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Another student shared about her experience in better understanding her own cultural identity. Stephanie shared:

For me, I would definitely say that the assignments were reflective and that helped me really determine where my position in the world is and how other people see me. I think a lot of the times people don't really fully acknowledge their own personal culture and relation maybe, their home culture or their host culture. I think that being able to define who I am to myself and to others, was a huge, huge benefit that I was able to get through the course. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

In another assignment, Culture Mapping (Paige et al., 2009), students had to compare their own culture, to traditional U.S. culture to their host country's culture. After this exercise, students expressed their own cultural findings and Matthew shared that it made him more self-aware of his culture:

It helped me realize things about my own culture that I didn't realize that was actually culture. I just thought that is how things were done. So it made me realize that if I were in another country, I may think they are doing things different or weird, but they probably think it's weird that I am doing things and how I'm talking...so I think it made me more self-aware of culture. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

In the student focus groups, Tiffany expressed that she did not realize she was going to learn about her own culture in the course, and she was pleasantly surprised to discover that she learned more about her own even more than other cultures:

In this course, I have learned more about my own culture than I did about how to deal with other cultures. A lot of the information we learned in class about cultural sensitivity is common sense for me, and you just go into a situation and you are polite and aware that people do things differently. But there were things about my own culture that I did not realize. (October 30, 2013)

Some students identified that they have a better vocabulary, or terminology, for what they may experience when engaging in a new culture as it relates to acknowledging their own cultural beliefs and attitudes. Casey shared in the student focus groups about his own cultural awareness and how it will help him to know this information before going abroad:

I think that I have learned the terminology for my beliefs because I never really realized how individualistic I am and how much I enjoy being individualistic. Because without knowing about collectivist societies and how they work, I had no idea that I would not like to have to report to someone and not be able to go straight to the source with something. That is partly because of how I was raised in this society, but now I can put a name to how I was feeling and appreciate that kind of viewpoint. This course really helped me to do that. (October 30, 2013)

Another student, Mike, shares how his own culture may not be well received while abroad and how he is now aware of that reality:

I've learned to apply cultural sensitivity and awareness by becoming more aware and understanding of my own culture by quantifying it in my own mind – that is, by actually looking at it objectively and putting words and ideas to behaviors that I usually take for granted. By actually knowing my own culture in an objective way, I hope to be able to 'tone it down' and control things that may offend others that I might take for granted. In this way, I can hopefully share the parts of American culture that will appeal to my host culture, and suppress the parts of it that they find distasteful. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

A theme also occurred for some of the students as it relates to better understanding their own culture when interacting with those cultures that are different from their own. Tony shared:

What I learned about culture through this course is that it is part of you. Before I use to underestimate some of the influences my Hispanic culture has had on me, but now I see that it has set the foundations for a lot of my beliefs about life. Before I use to think that living in Chandler, Arizona, was no different than living in Chicago or Mexico or any other place on the planet, but I see how I was wrong. The biggest thing I learned from this course is that culture sets your beliefs as well. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 23, 2013)

Another student, Christina, shared a similar thought:

I have learned that culture is not just the ethnicity you belong to. I, for the longest time, believed that culture just referred to the race you were. I, for an example, believed I was only part of a Hispanic culture since I am Mexican. But in this course, I have learned that I am part of a lot of co-cultures and not just one. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

Lastly, as it relates to students better understanding their own cultural identity, Carol shared the following about her specific experience with her self-selected Cultural Plunge location. She specifically identified that she would not have been able to identify these learnings if she had not stepped out of her own culture to experience it:

I realized that I did not fully understand the American culture until taking this course. Being part of a culture is not enough to fully understanding it until you see a perspective that is outside looking in. When I experienced my Cultural Plunge earlier this semester in this course, I was able to acknowledge my own moral codes from seeing another culture. In this activity, I got to see the values of a different culture. By attending a Hindu worship hour, it helped me appreciate and better understand my own values as well. You can never stop learning about culture and I am glad this class has helped me discover my own ethics and moral foundations. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

**Theme 5: Student participants expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own.** This theme was identified after students reported that they felt like they had grown in their desire to engage with cultures

different from their own. These specific data were collected from all the qualitative measures and will also be further discussed in Chapter 5 as it relates to the collected quantitative data. This particular student, Holly, shares her new desire to not only survive within a new culture, or cultures, but to thrive:

I think that when I came into the course and I thought about going abroad, I thought I just wanted to go over there and survive. Survive it. Kind of like - go over there and I'll do the best I can, but now, I want to go and really experience the culture instead of repelling it and just surviving it - I want to be a part of it and understand why they act the way they do and do the things they do as well. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Another student who participated in the student focus groups, Tom, shares his awareness that he once thought the world was "all about him" and the growth that has occurred from taking the course:

I think for me it's been looking at the differences in individualism and collectivism and before I used to think, "It's all about me!" Now, I am thinking about, even my parent's culture, and they are a lot more community-driven than I am. And so I am thinking maybe I deviated from their norm and so in a way, I am self-reflecting through that lens. (October 30, 2013)

Out of the 54 total enrolled students in the course, 19 of them were declared business majors within ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business. Because there are many international students enrolled within the school, the domestic students are asked to interact with the international students on a regular basis. Paul, a Supply Chain major, indicated that he experienced recent growth in managing a small group of peers who are from different cultures:

I am currently in a business organization and I am working with a lot of foreign exchange students - many Chinese students and students from Mexico as well. So having to deal with understanding how to change my leadership style to be able to incorporate them better into the group and this class has helped me a lot with that in terms of looking at the collectivism vs. individualistic side of things. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)



Another student participant, Patricia, shared in the student focus groups her realization about having a strong personality and how she wants to address it during her international experience so she can better engage with members of her host culture:

I feel like I have a strong personality when I am talking with people, and because of this, I could come across as overbearing or strong. And I have been abroad a lot, but I never really noticed that until I took this class and I have paid attention to culture when I've been in the countries I've been to, and the way they interact but I never really thought or looked deeper than that. (October 29, 2013)

Just as Patricia identified her own personality and how to manage it while abroad or when engaging new cultures, Liam shared about his growth and knowledge in simply being respectful when engaging with other cultures:

While taking this class, I have learned a great deal about culture. Culture can be very different than anything you can think of. At the same time, it is extremely important to be cautious of one's feeling as well as being respectful to a host culture through cultural sensitivity. It is extremely important to apply cultural sensitivity while abroad. Cultural sensitivity consists of being accepting to certain things that may be different than what you're used to but at the same time, being respectful and open to all. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Through the self-reflective journal entries, Janet shared about the growth she experienced in better understanding her pre-conceived notions about other cultures and how she now identifies that it will help her better interact with members of her host culture:

Through this course, I have learned an incredible amount about being aware of my pre-conceived notions about cultures and realizing that culture is learned. This is a helpful realization because I now know that as I go abroad, I can be aware of certain things in my culture that are offensive to the host culture and I can work at learning to adapt the cultural aspects of the host culture to best fit in while I am there. (October 23, 2013)

Throughout the course, the cultural framework of collectivism and individualism were extensively taught and described in great detail. The purpose of this was for students to understand the differences and to be aware that adapting to culture is not just doing

something different, but an entirely new worldview. Ruthann identifies her learning related to these cultural frameworks in the student focus groups:

I was surprised by the idea that culture is integrated. I had always summed up culture as a whole: American culture, Japanese culture, etc. I had never taken the time to break culture up into its constitutive parts and to examine how different aspects of culture are apparent in various aspects of day-to-day life. I had never taken the time to think about how, for example, the cultural custom of saving face would impact a work environment, and how I might have a difficult time assimilating to such a work environment. For me, a work place was a work place. I was only considering American corporate culture, not realizing how much of American corporate culture is influenced by specific elements of American culture; and consequently corporate culture in another country. For example: Japan would be very different, because their corporate culture would be influenced by Japanese culture. (October 30, 2013)

Part of growing in desire to engage in new cultures is to learn something about those cultures before traveling there. Being able to push your own culture aside is part of engaging. Some of the student participants expressed that they were not thinking about their host culture in their preparations and that it was not until this class that they started to think about their potential host culture. As a result, this mindset may assist them to engage their host culture in a deeper way:

My cultural awareness has increased because being integrated in the culture of my host country was the last thing I was thinking about when thinking about studying abroad. It has also increased by me realizing and learning how to accept and forget about my own culture for a little while. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Sam, who will be studying abroad during the spring 2014 semester in an Asian country, identified an action that he has taken since enrolling in this course and shows his willingness to step away from his own culture and engage with a new one:

Since I learned that the culture in Asia is to do things together in a group, I have made the effort to make more Asian friends on campus. I play basketball at the ASU Student Recreation Center and I always see a big group of Asian students playing a game of basketball together. So every time I see them play now, I make

an effort of introducing myself and asking to play in their game. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

Lastly, for Theme 5, in terms of identified growth to better engage with other cultures and to move beyond the cultural stereotypes, William identified that he has grown up hearing about certain cultures and now recognizes that he needs to move beyond those pre-conceived notions:

Through this class, I have learned that culture is shared. Every day we are sharing our culture with each other, intentionally and unintentionally. I have learned that we sometimes judge people based on the ideas we've heard growing up. This class has made me get to know the person on a personal level rather than pre-judging them based on things I've heard. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

#### **Theme 6: Student participants and the Community of Practice (CoP)**

**members identified growth in the researcher-practitioner's teaching style and abilities and diverse aspects of leadership skills.** Research Question #3, "*How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?*," was a question addressed on the Weekly Class Evaluation, the student participant focus groups, the Community of Practice (CoP) focus group, and the researcher's journal. The results of the data indicate that I identified growth in my teaching style and abilities, along with the student participants and the CoP members

***Teaching style and abilities.*** The data from the student participants, the CoP members and my research journal indicate that from the beginning of the class to the end of the class, I became a more effective instructor by being able to know when to stay focused on the prepared content and when to stray from the content to meet the presented

needs of the students. One of the Teaching Assistants (TAs), Mike, and an active member of the CoP, shared:

As far as your growth from teaching the course from beginning to end, I saw growth mainly in gearing the lessons more from the perspective of your students. Because you really cannot get that from the beginning knowing how the students will think and how you are going to interact with them. I definitely saw growth in that area. (Community of Practice focus group, November 7, 2013)

Another TA and member of the CoP, Tonya, shared that in the beginning, she felt like I was going through a list of objectives throughout the class and as the course continued, I became more relaxed and focused on the overall feeling in the room, while still focusing on the importance of the content:

Where I noticed growth the most was in terms of your teaching style. I think in the beginning it appeared you were going down a list of what you wanted to accomplish in the course, but as the course continued, you became more flexible and to think, ‘Okay, you know, I am going to scrap this all together...this is not going to work.’ This felt like it flowed better in terms of working with the class more. How the classroom felt that day – that is how you went with it that day. (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013)

Student participants shared similar comments in the student focus groups. Mandy shared, “I feel like Mr. Henry grew a lot and he became more comfortable as he went on. I think he was really formal in the beginning and now it seems like he feels a lot more comfortable in the classroom” (October 30, 2013). Another student in one of the student focus groups, Emily, observed that I became more free and comfortable in having the class discuss topics and themes that may have not been on my teaching plan, but that were relevant to the course content. In addition to the previous comments about me becoming more comfortable in the classroom and with guiding discussion with students to meet the needs of the topic, Helen shared in the student focus groups that she saw me change in how I facilitated the classroom discussion:

I noticed at first Mr. Henry went by the structure of the class and went by what he had prepared to talk about for that class. It is evident that he is now comfortable by letting the discussion go where it needs to go in order to get the most out of his students and to help us the most. If he needs to branch out on something else that was brought up in class, he feels more free to do that because he feels like it is more helpful and beneficial to us. (October 30, 2013)

Since this was the first time teaching the course, I also wrote in my research journal about the growth that occurred. To support this notion, a member of the CoP, when asked about the growth that occurred with teaching style shared, “I would say you grew into your teaching style. You seemed to have an idea as to where you wanted to go, but through the actual implementation of it, you grew into it and became more comfortable with it” (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013).

*Diverse aspects of leadership skills.* Throughout the intervention, meetings occurred with me and the other four members that made up the CoP. After each week, we would meet and review all that occurred in the classroom for that week, as well as discuss the content for the upcoming week. This allowed the CoP members to see me teach twice a week and fine tune the overall content. They were also able to observe my leadership skills in how I responded to their input, how I guided each CoP meeting, and how I responded to students in and outside of the classroom. A few of the questions asked of the CoP members in the focus group included, “How have you seen the instructor grow professionally during this course?” and “What leadership skills or abilities have you seen in the instructor throughout the implementation of this innovation?” The responses varied and a theme that was developed when analyzing the responses was “leadership.” The leadership that appeared in the data pointed towards diverse aspects of my leadership skills. Specifically, the previous instructor of the course commented:

I can comment about your organizational skills. I think from having the big picture and the big vision...and knowing what you wanted to do a year ago...to what actually materialized, it's like wow - 180 degrees difference – so awesome. I appreciate the fact that you are so well organized, or you became that. You put that structure in place for the course. (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013)

When asked about some of the strengths that they observed in my leadership skills, one of the members of the CoP, Mike, shared that it was direction. He stated, “I would say a strength of yours is direction. You knew what you were doing. There was never empty class time. You had direction and you knew how you would instruct the class...and I liked that too” (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013). With regards to instructing the class, my research journal, half way through the intervention, highlights what I was observing within myself and the direction I provided as the classroom instructor:

I am becoming a stronger facilitator through this process. Not only do I need to keep track of the time in class, along with the discussion, but I also am receiving plenty of practice with the CoP. Each time we meet, I need to receive their input and facilitate the 1.5 hours. I am also guiding the TAs with the grading that they are doing. In addition, I am receiving 5-10 emails a day from my students, and grading the majority of assignments, and this is in addition to the 7am-4pm work I do each day. (Research journal, September 10, 2013)

Leaders need the right attitudes as they lead others. In the CoP focus group, the member shared attitudes that they observed in me throughout the intervention. Two themes surfaced and included humility and vulnerability. One CoP member said, “I think what specific traits you have that is creating a safe environment in the classroom...I would say definitely humility and vulnerability” (November 7, 2013). Another member agreed, “Yeah, I like that one – humility” (November 7, 2013). Relating to vulnerability, another member expressed, “Something is that you always displayed was that you were learning along with your students. And that's something that you even told them. Even though you were teaching, you were learning. I remember you several times mentioning this”

(November 7, 2013). Being vulnerable with the student participants in the class was something that the CoP also said promoted a sense of vulnerability in the class. Tonya exclaimed that it is not common among other professors:

Vulnerability is definitely not common among professors, and to show the weaknesses and mistakes you made while you were abroad. And so that's why I think the reasons why the students respected you a lot. And that was a main point in the focus groups as well. They respected you – they related to you – they felt like you were passionate and cared about their personal growth. (November 7, 2013)

Another aspect of vulnerability and humility was expressed by an additional member of the CoP. A member shared how she felt that by me participating in the activities in the classroom with the students, which created an environment that allowed students to relate to me:

Another leadership skill that I saw was...when we would be doing activities like the Rocket simulation and stuff like that, you would be working, like, really hands on. Even though you were the instructor, you were working really hands-on with the students. It also made you more relatable and humanizes you a little bit and makes you more approachable so that students will ask you questions. (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013).

Each week in the CoP focus group, some of the facilitated discussion focused on asking the members their thoughts on the upcoming lesson plans and whether or not they thought the outline for the upcoming week presented to them would run well in the classroom. As this was practiced each week, the CoP members took notice. One member shares:

I think flexibility cannot be emphasized enough and we keep saying it, and I think it is so important. Because, I have had professors that are like, 'I've been teaching this course for 20 years and I have always taught this way.' And it's like...well, students are not the same as they were 20 years ago. (November 7, 2013)

This approach of working as a team was effective and because the TAs had been abroad and previously taken the course, their insights were well received. Maria shared how teamwork was a strength of mine throughout the process, and how I encouraged them to discuss the upcoming content, but also remained control of the group:

Specifically in regards to teamwork and skills, you were always the leader and in charge, but at the same time, you would work with all of us...and be the leader yet take the back seat at times...sort of doesn't sound like it would work, but it worked really well. (CoP focus group, November 7, 2013)

The student participants and the CoP members identified growth areas in my teaching style and abilities and diverse aspect of my leadership skills. They shared that they experienced me become a stronger instructor due to the ability to not just teach from the lesson plans, but to also pay more attention to the needs of the class and combine the lesson plan with teaching to the needs of the student participants. The CoP identified that my observed leadership skills were the ability to be vulnerable with the students and the CoP members and the flexibility to be open to change. CoP members also shared that my leadership style was more relaxed, but they recognized I was in charge and knew where I had a clear plan for the intervention.

The formed themes in this chapter represent the quantitative and qualitative data from the student participants in this study. The identified themes from the codes were:

1. student participants indicated that they are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own;
2. student participants gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills;



3. student participants reported that they received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor's knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources;
4. student participants identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities;
5. student participants expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own;
6. student participants and the Community of Practice (CoP) members identified growth in the researcher-practitioner's teaching style and abilities and diverse aspects of leadership skills.

Chapter 5 includes the findings from the data analysis and a discussion on the outcomes of the study.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I present an overview of the research study and assertions based on the findings. I also restate the identified need that the intervention is working to address. Students studying abroad through ASU's SAO, previous to this intervention, did not take a pre-international experience course that focuses on cultural development and awareness before they studied or interned abroad. Prior to this intervention being implemented, the cultural orientation they received before their international experience was limited, within a 90-minute orientation, to approximately a 10 to 15 minute discussion about generic cultural adaptation and awareness and topics. Researchers have identified that the cultural success for study abroad participants is directly related to cross-cultural training and orientation throughout their entire international experience. The focus of this study is on the pre-international experience training and orientation prior to going abroad. If an outcome of studying abroad is to see students increase their intercultural learning and gain cultural competencies (Deardorff, 2011), those who send them abroad cannot rely on the experience alone to accomplish such an important objective for those who participate (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

#### **Overview and Summary of Study**

To help students be more successful during their international experience, students should receive supplemental cross-cultural training before going abroad (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012). As previously stated in Chapter 1, to be known as the "New American University," ASU designed eight design aspirations. Included in these aspirations is Aspiration 8, "Engage Globally" (ASU, n.d.). This specific aspiration

creates the need to better develop the cross-cultural awareness and understanding of ASU's undergraduate students who study or intern abroad. Specifically, to engage globally, an effective way to accomplish this objective is for students to spend time studying in a culture different from their own (Dwyer, 2004). An objective of this study was to learn how the ASU SAO and the staff and faculty of SPGS can help students gain intercultural awareness and sensitivity through a pre-international course and focus less on the logistics and the "how-to" of studying or interning abroad and focus more on cultural adjustment, awareness, and development.

This study considered the outcomes of meeting a need at ASU with the development of an intentionally designed pre-international experience training course for undergraduate students before going abroad on credit-bearing international programs. The one-credit course focused exclusively on cultural awareness, development, and adaptation for the student participants. For the study, I developed and taught two sections of the course to 54 undergraduate students during the fall 2013 semester. The intervention was developed by collecting the following data: 1) a baseline study of past ASU study abroad participants; 2) thorough review of the current literature on study abroad and preparation programs; and 3) analysis of existing study abroad pre-international experience curricula.

### **Findings**

This study involved 54 student participants who enrolled in two separate sections of the pre-international departure course. As shown in the pre- and post-test survey results in Chapter 4, student participants experienced cultural growth, with significant growth occurring in the area of overall cultural sensitivity. As reported in Chapter 4 and

further discussed in this chapter, the following themes were identified in the qualitative data as the student participants reported that they:

1. Are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own;
2. Gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills;
3. Received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor's knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources;
4. Identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities;
5. Expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own
6. Identified growth in the researcher-practitioner's teaching style and abilities, and diverse aspects of leadership skills.

### **Discussion**

The quantitative and qualitative data from participant pre- and post-test surveys, the Inventory for Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS), the Weekly Class Evaluation, student focus group transcriptions, the CoP focus group transcription, and participant self-reflection writings answered Research Questions 1 and 2. The participant self-reflection writings, CoP focus group transcription, student focus group transcriptions, and the research journal answered Research Question 3. Figure 7 shows the assertions derived from the data analysis and findings and the research question each supports, followed by the data sources used for complementarity.

Assertions	Theme	Data Complementarity
<b>Assertion 1:</b> Students are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures after successfully completing the new course.	1, 2, 4, & 5	Pre- and post-test survey, student focus groups, weekly class evaluation, academic literature
<b>Assertion 2:</b> Students are more aware of other cultures and their own culture after successfully completing the new course.	1, 3 & 4	Pre- and post-test survey, weekly class evaluation, student focus group transcriptions, participant self-reflection writings, academic literature
<b>Assertion 3:</b> Students gained important knowledge about understanding others' worldviews after successfully completing the new course.	3 & 4	Pre- and post-test survey, weekly class evaluation, student focus group transcriptions, participant self-reflection writings, academic literature
<b>Assertion 4:</b> Students may have gained general openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own after successfully completing the new course.	1, 2 & 5	Pre- and post-test survey, weekly class evaluation, student focus group transcriptions, participant self-reflection writings, academic literature
<b>Assertion 5:</b> Developing and implementing a pre-international experience course changed me as a leader, instructor, and researcher.	6	Student participant self-reflection writings, CoP focus group transcription, student focus group transcriptions, research journal, academic literature

*Figure 7.* Assertions, related themes, and data complementarity.

## **Research Question 1**

There are two assertions that answer Research Question 1. These include: (a) students are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures after successfully completing the new course and (b) students are more aware of other cultures and their own culture after successfully completing the new course. These two assertions answer Research Question 1: (*What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad?*). The quantitative results of the pre- and post-test of the ICSI showed significant difference regarding students' confidence. The qualitative results taken from student focus groups, weekly assessment evaluation, and student self-reflection writings indicated that students also increased their confidence.

### **Assertion 1: Students are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures.**

The themes based on the qualitative analysis supporting this assertion include: (1) students are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own; (2) students gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills; (4) students identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities; (5) students expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own. These themes lead to the assertion that students are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures because these identified themes have provided students with the needed confidence to enter other cultures. They are now more open-minded, they have gained a number of competencies that encourages confidence, they better

understand their own culture which allows them to understand other cultures, and their cultural growth provides them a desire to interact with other cultures.

This assertion relates directly to how students expressed that after the successful completion of the course they are more confident in their abilities to cross cultures. Indications of more confidence include the ability to better understand non-verbal communication in high context communication environments, to effectively engage with people who are culturally different, and to push their own culture aside and adapt to a new culture. This confidence will assist them as they study and intern abroad and provide for a smoother transition into a new culture.

Quantitative data compliment the qualitative analysis. For example, results from the ICSI for the effect of time, pre- and post-test, showed the effect was significant for confidence scores, which is a very large effect size (Cohen, 1988; Olejnik & Algina, 2000). This quantitative data based on the ICSI questions measuring confidence, indicates that the intervention provided an increased perception of confidence to the student participants. Within the ICSI, confidence was noted in the areas of effective communication with people from other cultures when living abroad, the ability to manage conflict with people who are culturally different from the student participants, effectively solve serious problems with people who are culturally different from the student participants, and confidence that they could live for more than one year in another country of which they do not know the language. This is important as the increased perception of confidence could increase the likelihood that student participants will be more successful during their international experience.

The qualitative data also supports the increased perception of confidence. Throughout multiple data sources, students indicated that because of the knowledge they gained in the course, their confidence levels increased. One student, Carlos, shared, “Having gained more confidence in knowledge and awareness, I feel less uneasy about traveling abroad. The knowledge and tools I have obtained through this class will undoubtedly make more successful because of my new cultural perspective” (Self-reflecting writing, October 23, 2013). Another student, Sarah, shared about the lessons learned in the course that gave her more confidence and stated, “Through SGS 484, I’m prepared and able to integrate the lessons into daily life as I interact with people of different cultures and being conscious of my actions” (Self-reflection writing, October 24, 2013). As I spoke with students throughout the course in and outside of class, they shared with me that they gained confidence in their ability to now interact with cultures different from their own. Taylor shared:

Since I learned that the culture in Asia is to do things together in a group, I have made the effort to make more Asian friends on campus. I play basketball at the ASU Student Recreation Center and I always see a big group of Asian students playing a game of basketball together. So every time I see them play now, I make an effort of introducing myself and asking to play in their game. (Student focus group, October 30, 2013)

A literature review on cross-cultural training effectiveness, conducted by Black and Mendenhall (1990), focused on the self-dimension of cross-cultural skills. Within the review, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) highlight that essential skills needed to be successful in a new culture can be summarized within three dimensions: skills related to maintenance of self, including self-confidence, skills related to relations with individuals from the host culture, and cognitive skills that promote a correct perception of the host



culture. Per the self-dimension aspect, of the 29 studies conducted, 10 examined the connection between cross-cultural training and self-confidence, and all 10 found a positive relationship with the two (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Within these 10 studies, a control group was included and found significant differences in the pre- and post-test measures of confidence between the experimental and control-group subjects (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

The data analyzed through the ICSI, student focus groups, self-reflection writing, and weekly assessment evaluations provide evidence that the students felt like their confidence levels increased to engage with cultures different from their own, and the overall knowledge they gained in the course provided them with additional confidence. In agreement with the research literature, the pre-international experience course developed and increased confidence among the student participants.

**Assertion 2: Students are more aware of other cultures and their own culture.** The themes based on the qualitative analysis supporting this assertion include: (1) students are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own; (3) students received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor's knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources; (4) students identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities. These particular themes lead to the assertion that students are more aware of other cultures and their own culture as they have become more open-minded to understanding others. They also expressed that as a result of the course resources and overall learnings, they are more aware. Students also

expressed the importance of first better understanding their own culture before being more open to cultures different from their own.

Quantitative and qualitative data are used to provide evidence for Assertion 2. Specifically, the quantitative data from the ICSI shows that that there were significant interaction effects of the variables of *time x cultural framework*, and the difference between the *collectivism and individualism* scores at time 2 was significantly different from the difference between those two scores at time 1. Similarly, the interaction of *national context x cultural framework* was significant. The difference between the *collectivism and individualism* scores for the international context was significantly different than the difference between these two scores for the U.S. context. What this means is that students reported, on the ICSI, that from pre- to post-test results, their level of collectivism increased on the post-test, and their individualism decreased. It also shows that student participants' national context of the U.S. stayed the same, and when answering the ICSI questions, their awareness increased about collectivism and individualism in an international context. These results indicate that the student participants became more aware of their culture and cultural norms in an international setting, and they increased their awareness of other cultures outside of their national context.

The qualitative data supports the quantitative in that student participants reported their new found awareness of other cultures and their own cultures, in the student focus groups and the student self-reflection writings. They also reported on the Weekly Class Evaluation that their awareness of other cultures increased. A few students mentioned, "I will be culturally aware after learning about the intercultural models and theories in

class.” Another student stated in the weekly assessment evaluation, “I learned that cultures interact with one another differently and this has made me more culturally aware.” Alissa shared, in the student self-reflection writings:

Culture is integrated, because in the end, we are all people and we all share the same needs and desires. I need to open my eyes and realize that the world is a melting pot, and the bubble I live in needs to be popped. This class has opened my eyes on how completely different cultures are compared to the one I grew up knowing. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

This perceived awareness also related to their cultural identity. One of the core tenets taught in the course focused on recognizing that being successful abroad lies first in cultural self-understanding. Sarah shared that she learned the reality of her own culture when stated, “I’ve learned that my culture isn’t specifically special or unique because I am American” (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013). Carol shared in her self-reflection writing that she learned about her own culture in the class. She stated:

I realized that I did not fully understand the American culture until taking this course. Being part of a culture is not enough to fully understanding it until you see a perspective that is outside looking in. When I experienced my Cultural Plunge earlier this semester in this course, I was able to acknowledge my own moral codes from seeing another culture. In this activity, I got to see the values of a different culture. By attending a Hindu worship hour, it helped me appreciate and better understand my own values as well. You can never stop learning about culture and I am glad this class has helped me discover my own ethics and moral foundations. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 24, 2013)

For students to be successful in a new culture, they must learn the behaviors of the people of the host country (Schlid, 1962). In Schild’s study (1962) of 59 American Jewish students spending one year in Israel to discover how they learn the norms of the host culture, he discovered that there are three key ways for a “stranger” to learn about his or her host culture. They can “observe them, participate with them, and communicate with

them” (p. 43). To do this, a student must be aware of the host culture. The intervention encouraged student participants to pay attention to other cultures and to be sensitive to cultural norms. The experiential learning assignments focused heavily on awareness. The Cultural Plunge assignment and the *Rocket* simulation (Hirshorn, 2010) required the student participants to think outside of themselves and their own culture.

The data analyzed through the ICSI, student focus groups, self-reflection writing, and weekly assessment evaluations provide evidence that the student participants became more aware of other cultures and their own culture after successfully completing the intervention. Through the course activities such as *Rocket* (Hirshorn, 2010) and the Cultural Plunge, students were able to more closely identify with their own culture and look outside themselves to identify other cultures. Most importantly, the results show that student participants were not only aware of other cultures, but gained the knowledge to lessen the practice of their own cultural norms and to pay more closely attention to the norms of other cultures.

## **Research Question 2**

There are two assertions that the results support in answering Research Question 2 and include: (a) students gained important knowledge about understanding others’ worldviews after successfully completing the new course and (b) students may have gained general openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own after successfully completing the new course. These two assertions helped to answer Research Question 2: (*What specific cultural competencies are gained by the participants after participating in the pre-international experience course?*)

**Assertion 3: Students gained important knowledge about understanding others' worldviews.** The themes based on the qualitative analysis supporting this assertion include: (3) students received cultural support and encouragement through the instructor's knowledge and experiences, the examples shared in class by their peers, and the provided class resources; (4) students identified that they better understand their own cultural identity and want to learn more about these identities. These particular themes lead to the assertion that students gained new and important knowledge and as a result, they better understand the worldviews of other cultures. Specifically, the majority of this learning came from class discussions and activities. As students explored more of their own culture, they learned more about their own cultural worldview which in turn, allowed them to learn about other worldviews.

Quantitative results compliment the qualitative analysis. For example, the ICSI data analysis revealed that student participants increased their knowledge about the worldviews of others and became more sensitive to knowing when to apply their cultural worldviews in different settings. Per the ICSI, the interaction of *time x national context x cultural framework* was significant. A substantial difference occurred over time, national context, and cultural framework. On the ICSI, questions are asked based on how the respondent would answer based on his or her location. The two locations are U.S. and "international." "International" has a heavy emphasis on a country that practices collectivism – such as Japan. Collectivism is a cultural worldview that is opposite of individualism. In general, collectivists stress the importance of connection within social groups. Therefore, the quantitative results indicate that U.S. students, or the student participants in this study, are able to be more sensitive to collectivism in an international

context as a result of the intervention. The results indicate that over time, pre- and post-test, that students increased their understanding of being in a collectivist, international setting, by decreasing their individualistic worldviews.

Within the Weekly Class Evaluation, ten of the students indicated that their main learning from the course related to the better understanding of collectivism and individualism within a society. In the student focus groups, students shared that knowledge about individualism and collectivism was beneficial to them. Tonya stated that she realized new aspects of her own culture and aspects about the worldview of the others after learning more about the two differences:

Before this class, I assumed that I was fairly entrenched and enculturated in an American value system in terms of perceptions of the individual and ambition, your relationship to the collective, but as I have gone through it, especially with the readings on individualism and collectivism, I think I have discovered more about my family - half of my family is Iranian and the other is Italian, and so these are both extremely collectivist cultures - and so now that I have more of a label and see ways that I actually have more collectivism within me. I think this class has really enabled me to see that I do have a lot of collectivist ideals and maybe the culture that I study abroad, maybe that will actually help me in terms of understanding what on the surface it would look like to clash and different perspectives. (Student self-reflection writing, October 24, 2013)

Deardorff (2006) created a process model of intercultural competence. She defines that the process begins with attitudes and progresses to knowledge and comprehension.

Within knowledge and comprehension is “others’ worldviews.” Knowledge about “understanding others’ worldviews” is a cultural competency identified in a study by Deardorff. In the study, she surveyed scholars and states that “the only one element received 100% agreement from the intercultural scholars is the importance of understanding the world from others’ perspectives” (2006, p. 248). The quantitative and qualitative data sources complement one another to show that student participants

increased their knowledge about others' worldviews in relation to the participation of the course.

**Assertion 4: Students may have gained openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own.** The themes based on the qualitative analysis supporting this assertion include: (1) students are more open-minded about understanding cultures different from their own; (2) students gained the following cultural competencies: patience, flexibility, cultural humility, and cross-cultural communication skills; and (5) students expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own. These themes lead to the assertion that students may have gained openness toward overall cultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own because students indicated they are now more open-minded about understanding other cultures. They also indicated that they have cultural competencies that they want to use with others when engaging in other cultures and they have a desire to interact with peoples from other cultures. This assertion statement is derived from a component of intercultural competence, as defined by Deardorff (2006), "general openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures" (p. 249).

The qualitative data sources indicated that students may have gained openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own. Being open to differences was an identified theme throughout the eight student focus groups. Mike indicated that the class content had him think differently about his ability to be more culturally open:

Before this class, I would think I was culturally sensitive – like I am just going to go there, and meet great people, and study, but the [class] assignments made me realize that sometimes there is going to be conflict with the other culture, and then you have to be aware of that, and when I should be respectful, and when I feel threatened, and how I should act. (Student focus group, October 29, 2013)

Mike's comment about becoming more culturally sensitive indicates his ability to be more open to other cultures and to change. The course content made Tina feel that her cultural identity is not set in stone and that she is open to changing her beliefs and values when studying abroad (Student focus group, October 30, 2013). Many of the student participants also shared in the student focus groups and their self-reflection writing assignments that the cultural plunge activity provided them a chance to practice the competency of openness.

It is interesting to note that this is not a required course for those who enrolled and successfully completed it. Although one could assume that students who are studying abroad or interning abroad would be more open to intercultural learning, it is not always the case. One connection to the openness toward intercultural learning could be the course enrollments and interest from ASU students. Previous to re-designing the course, the enrollments for the course were small. Part of this was related to the fact that in the past, the course had only been open and available to Global Studies majors. For the Fall 2013 semester, SPGS administration made the course available to other majors and the response was encouraging. When other ASU Schools learned about the course, they contacted me during the implementation of the course and asked if I could teach the course for their specific School in the future. In addition to the enrollments, the former instructor of the course shared with me that she thought the course was well attended



with limited absences. She also expressed encouragement as she witnessed the students coming to class on time and many arriving before the start of the class.

The student participants also expressed that they appreciated learning and want to utilize the new knowledge they gained in the course. Janet shares that she can now be aware of certain aspects within her own culture and can work at how to best adapt to her host culture when studying abroad:

Through this course, I have learned an incredible amount about being aware of my pre-conceived notions about cultures and realizing that culture is learned. This is a helpful realization because I now know that as I go abroad, I can be aware of certain things in my culture that are offensive to the host culture and I can work at learning to adapt the cultural aspects of the host culture to best fit in while I am there. (Student self-reflection assignment, October 23, 2013)

Students also expressed that they became aware of being open to ideas and beliefs that are different from their own and this showed that are open to the intercultural learning that is required to do so:

In this class, we have learned about how you have to be versatile and accepting of changes in cultures in order to succeed. As technology improves and the world gets smaller and smaller, cultures will have more influence on one another and we must accept this. We must be open to ideas and beliefs. I have learned that we have to observe the values of other cultures, analyze them, and then determine whether we want to add them to our own core beliefs. It is through this process that we can advantage of how dynamic culture really is, while becoming well rounded individuals. (Student Focus Group, October 29, 2013)

Another key factor in students gaining openness to intercultural learning was mentioned by student participants in the focus groups, student self-reflections, and the Weekly Class Evaluations. They shared that before the course, they were only going to study abroad because it was a degree requirement or because it sounded like a fun thing to do. Student participants expressed that after the course, they now want to go abroad to learn from and

about other cultures. They expressed that they look forward to implementing the principles that were discussed in class.

*Openness to people from cultures different from their own.* In addition to being open to intercultural learning, students also may have gained openness to people from cultures different from their own. This was made apparent within Theme 5: “student participants expressed growth in their desire to engage and interact with cultures different from their own.” Within multiple qualitative data sources, student participants shared that they are open to respecting people from cultures different from their own, as well as not judging them. These two qualities expresses that openness was gained. Students without these qualities may not be open to people from cultures different from their own. Tom reflects that he feels more open to integrate what he learned in the course with the people that he will meet abroad:

Through this class, I am prepared and able to integrate the lessons into daily life as I interact with people of different cultures and being conscious of my actions. In doing so, it allows me to grow personally and learn more about those I interact with, and potentially use parts of their culture, too. (Self-reflection writing assignment, October 22, 2013)

The in-class activities also encouraged students to be open to people from cultures different from their own. This was expressed through the self-reflection assignment for the Cultural Plunge (Nieto, 2006). It was also discussed in the class debrief after the Rocket (Hirshorn, 2010) simulation. It is one thing to learn about culture, but if student participants are unable to apply to people they meet from other cultures, it is less effective. Researchers have stated that it is important for individuals to develop an understanding of their host culture and that openness to the host culture is required for this to occur. Brein and David (1971), state “the degree of social interaction or contact between the host national and the sojourner has been found to be related to the latter’s

adjustment” (p. 222). Student participants are more adept to be open to people and cultures different from their own as a result of the completion of the course. In return, they may be more effective in a new culture.

As highlighted in Chapter 4, the quantitative results from the ICSI for the effects of time showed the effects were not significant for openness. After reviewing the questions asked within the constructs of openness, the effect was not significant because the construct validity appears to be ineffective. The questions are also separately divided into questions that are to reflect openness, but not all of the questions reflect openness. The results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the effect of time showed the effect was not significant for openness scores. Additional discussion regarding the limitations of the ICSI in this particular study will be discussed in Chapter 6. Although the quantitative results for openness were not quantitatively significant, the qualitative findings show there was growth among the participants. Additional research will need to be conducted to strengthen the assertion as the quantitative data did not clearly reveal this result. The results for a student’s openness on the ICSI did not reveal significant findings. However, according to the qualitative data, and as expressed in one of the key themes identified by the students, students did increase openness to learning about other cultures. Student participants also indicated that they are more open to people from cultures different from their own.

The qualitative results and the literature support the assertion that students may have gained openness toward intercultural learning and to people from cultures different from their own. The student participants expressed that they were open to the intercultural teachings throughout the course and open to people from different cultures.

Although the qualitative results indicated more openness, the limitations of the quantitative measure make it difficult to support this aspect of the assertion.

### **Research Question 3**

There is one assertion that the data results support in answering Research Question 3 and includes: (a) Developing and implementing a pre-international experience course changed me as a leader, instructor, and researcher. This assertion provides evidence to answer Research Question 3: (*How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?*)

**Assertion 5: Developing and implementing a pre-international experience course changed me as a leader, instructor, and researcher-practitioner.** The theme based on the qualitative analysis supporting this assertion includes: (6) students and members of the CoP identified growth in the researcher-practitioner's teaching style and abilities, and diverse aspects of leadership skills. This particular theme supports the assertion that through the development and implementation of the course, I changed as a leader. It was also identified that I developed as an instructor and researcher-practitioner. Pine (2008) states that "Conducting action research is challenging because the researcher not only conducts research but simultaneously enacts change in implementing an intervention" (p. 262). This statement pertaining to action research mentions one of the challenges of action research, but also identifies one of its main strengths. In action research, the researcher-practitioner is often part of the study, and in this particular study, Theme 6 supports that my involvement led to growth and development.

**Leadership.** Action research has required me to practice flexibility. To actively participate in action research, the researcher must remain flexible with the ability to accept that change will occur and will need to be made to produce a successful plan or implementation. Stringer (2007) writes this about action research and how it is not as stringent as a prescribed plan:

Action research is based on the proposition that generalized solutions may not fit particular contexts or groups of people and the purpose of inquiry is to find an appropriate solution for the particular dynamics at work in a local solution (p. 5).

Stringer also implies that a solution to a social problem for one specific population may only tangentially be relevant for a totally different population (2007). He emphasizes that generalized solutions must be modified and adapted in order to fit the context it is being implemented. Stating this, the practice of action research and the implementation of an innovation, from beginning to end, changed me. Specifically, it changed me in how I lead. Previous to entering this doctoral program, I was not the most flexible of individuals in the workplace. I abided by a more stringent practice in the workplace. In the context of a shared project with a colleague, I would have been more focused on the intended outcome without taking time to reflect and determine if the methodology to reach the intended outcome was the best way to get there. In return, I would miss out on opportunities to advance the outcome due to my unwillingness to be flexible and change. Due to the nature of action research, I was forced to practice flexibility that required me to reflect and change my course of action based on what I was learning from my colleagues, the CoP, and the participants.

The CoP focus group provided additional input on how I have changed in this important area, and as a result, changes the way I lead in the workplace. When asked in

the focus group, “*How you have seen the instructor, Mr. Henry, grow professional during the implementation of this course?*” the themes of flexibility and adaptability were identified in the data set. One of the TAs within the CoP shared, “I want to say that how you have grown is you are quick to change and make changes. If something is not working for Tuesday, you are quick to make those changes and adapt it for Wednesday’s class” (November 7, 2013). Along the lines of flexibility, one of the other TAs shared, “You became more flexible and you even considered scrapping an entire exercise because it did not work the night before and this flowed more with the class” (November 7, 2013). The third TA expressed that she appreciated that I was open to change, “The leadership skill that I have seen is flexibility. You are constantly changing. Even in the beginning of the course, you would see something that needed to be changed and you would real quick change it” (November 7, 2013).

***Instructor.*** Being the instructor of the course was a good use of my skill set. Before this intervention, I had not formally taught undergraduate students as the instructor of a course. This utilization of my skill set is asserted after both students and members of the CoP shared their observations in the two separate focus groups. Jonathan shares:

From the very beginning, he really cared about us and our learning, and he also cared a lot about what he was teaching us. So it was very effective - just him being passionate about it. So, I don't know if that changed in the semester, but from the very beginning it was good. (October 29, 2013)

One of the student focus group questions focused on the development of my teaching skills. When asked, “*From the first day of class until now, have you seen the instructor,*

*Mr. Henry, grow in his teaching skills?"* a student, Hannah indicated what she learned from based on multiple reasons:

I feel like sometimes I come across professors who they don't necessarily mean to be, but they kind of want you to learn so much and they come across as condescending, and I didn't experience that at all with Mr. Henry and I really appreciated that. I also feel like there was a lot that I was able to get from him because I didn't have that fear of him thinking that I should know this or that. And, it was a very fair even playing field. He was really approachable. (October 29, 2013)

In the focus group with the members of the CoP, participants also shared that they felt like some of what they observed was in direct correlation to me teaching the course and was a result of my teaching abilities. Tonya shares:

I think there was a really comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. And of course attendance was awesome. This is probably the best attendance that I have seen in an SGS 484 course in years. And think about how many of our students were there early. It was not 4:30 p.m. and everyone was there on time. It was rare they came in late. And this says a lot about you Adam. (November 7, 2013)

Within my research journal during the fourth week of class (September 17/18), my reflections changed regarding the teaching of the course. I began to feel more comfortable in front of the class and noticed that the usage of the Power Point slides decreased and I was teaching more based on the presented needs of the students. The reflective paragraph reads:

I am using the prepared Power Point slides less and less and making sure that the content focuses on the needs of the students and the questions they are asking. At the end of this week, I would have to say that this is a really good use of my past experiences and the skill set of public speaking that colleagues have pointed out to me in the past. The material that I am teaching is material that I believe in and that I am passionate about, and in return, want to make sure the students understand it as well. (September 19, 2013)

The former instructor of SGS 484 also shared, “The passion that you hold for the field and the passion you hold for the student and for the subject matter were evident”

(November 7, 2013).

Although the student participants and the CoP members shared positive aspects of my teaching, the CoP members also identified areas of growth for me to focus on as I continue to teach the course. They encouraged me to not “hand hold” the students as much as I did. They felt like sending out weekly announcements to the students about the upcoming assignments was too much. This was not expressed by the student participants themselves, but they may have not felt comfortable stating this observation knowing that I would be listening and analyzing all of the student focus group recordings. The CoP members also agreed that in the future, it would be advisable to not make any apologies to students when assigning a lot of homework. They felt like it could have made me lose respect from them. In the CoP focus group, they shared with me that it may be better to stay firm with the students throughout the entire course.

***Practitioner-Researcher.*** When I started this program in 2010, I can recall the realization that I needed to learn more about how to be an effective researcher. Throughout the coursework, it was stressed that research, and specifically action research, is more than finding a generalized solution to a problem. Specifically, “action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems” (Stringer, 2007, p. 8). This definition and the experience with implementing action research lead me to believe that it is not just about developing new theory. Rather, it is about finding solutions to current problems in a specific environment. Stringer (2007) also states that action



research “is based on the proposition that generalized solutions may not fit particular contexts or groups of people and that purpose of inquiry is to find an appropriate solution for the particular dynamics at work in a location situation” (p. 5).

Noted in my research journal, at the start of the program, I was able to read the research studies that our faculty presented to us but did not fully understand how they developed their study and conclusions. I remember attending professional conferences for international educators and hearing their quantitative results but not understanding all the used terminology, and in return, did not know how to apply what I was hearing. Now, after conducting action research, reading research studies, and learning from our quantitative and qualitative research methods courses, I have attained the required skills to further investigate problems presented to me in my workplace. This includes investigating the specific situation by gathering data and then analyzing it to discover the findings (Stringer, 2007). Over the last four years, my critical thinking skills have improved which is a direct result of what I learned in this program. I look forward to strengthening and practicing these skills as I move into the next phase of the research for this study.

The lessons learned from this process of defining and redefining a research topic has been rewarding. It is something I wanted to accomplish. In December 2009 when I applied to this doctoral program, I submitted a personal statement as part of the application process. My closing paragraph read:

This doctoral program will equip me with the requisite tools to be able to overcome barriers that international students face in the U.S. By obtaining this degree, I will gain the skills and knowledge needed to advance in leadership roles that are needed to be a high-level educational administrator who understands the international role in the vision of a university. As an influential leader, I believe I

can be a valuable asset to this doctoral program, an effective voice for the New American University vision, and a trusted partner to the global educational community.

The theme of my intended dissertation evolved into a different topic due to a change of a job position in early 2011. At the time of writing the personal statement, I was not aware of all that I did not know in regards to how to research a topic. I now recognize that the “skills and knowledge needed to advance in leadership roles” include the ability to effectively build knowledge for transformational change. Stringer, in his well-known book *Action Research* (2007), states “We therefore need to change our vision of service professionals and administrators from mechanic/technician to facilitator and creative investigator” (p. 3). To be a creative investigator, a practitioner and leader must be able to design a research study, implement it, analyze the results, and make the necessary changes based on the outcomes and findings.

### **Conclusion**

Through the complementarity of the study’s quantitative and qualitative data, along with the research literature, five supported assertions emerged. The assertions relate directly to the cultural growth that occurred among the participants, as well as the growth that took place within me. As a result of the pre-international experience course, students are more confident to cross cultures, are more aware of other cultures and their own culture, and are better understand others’ worldviews. The students in this study also may be open to cultural learning and to people who are from cultures that are different from their own. Students and the members of the CoP members reported growth and development in me as a leader and instructor. In Chapter 6, the conclusions and

implications of the study are identified, along with the limitations and potential opportunities for the future to utilize and continue the study.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the conclusions are presented as a result of the implemented intervention for this study, as well as the purpose of the study and how the results and analysis of the pre-international course answered the three research questions. A discussion of the lessons learned from the literature review and data are also explored. Next, a discussion on the implications that this study had on the participants, ASU, and for me are shared. A summary of how the refinement of the study can have an impact on future participants and for ASU is also presented. Finally, recommendations and the possibilities that exist to continue the study in multiple variations are presented.

I am an international educator because of my high school and university international experiences. I specifically entered into study abroad administration because of the impact it had on my own life at a young age. I also am intrigued in the implications that studying abroad can have on a university student, including the orientation they receive prior to departing. As the ASU Assistant Director of the SAO, I can work with my colleagues to help set the expectations for how cross-cultural learning can occur for students when they study abroad, as well as ensure that students are culturally prepared to study or intern abroad before they enter their host country. The purpose of this study was to discover how a pre-international experience course would impact the students who participate, what cultural competencies are gained through the course content, and how the implementation of it informs my practice as an international educator.

The quantitative and qualitative data reported in Chapters 4 and 5 show that the impact of the pre-international course was substantial among the participants. The

implemented course within this study positively influenced the student participants by introducing them to different aspects of culture that they were not aware of before taking the course, as well as encouraging them to self-reflect on their own cultural identity. From the course content and examples shared in class, they became more aware when engaging with cultures different from their own. As one of the main priorities and objectives for students studying or interning abroad, learning about other cultures and engaging with culture is important and as a result, has to be important to study abroad professionals (Deardorff, 2006). One way to support this objective is by having students study about culture awareness and adaptation before they go abroad. Based on the results of this study, the ASU SAO should continue to research how best to do this beyond this pre-international course. Additionally, I will continue to provide training to outbound students before they depart for their international experience as the course continues. This will be discussed later in this chapter. The conclusions of this study align with other literature indicating that providing this type of training to individuals before going abroad raises their confidence levels and increases their abilities to effectively engage with cultures different from their own (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

### **Lessons Learned From the Literature**

The literature helps to better understand the larger need to implement the study including the development of the course curriculum. The literature review revealed the importance of effective preparation of students and professionals going abroad from a cultural standpoint (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). I developed the course and conducted the study using Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1978). Many students return from a study abroad experience and talk about how it was a "transforming

experience.” Recognizing that it very well can be a transforming experience for a student participant, I applied a theory that would provide them a context and framework for potentially experiencing this type of transformation. While there are other well-known intercultural theories focused on intercultural adjustment and development, Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory offers a framework to help explain the transformation that may occur throughout a student’s international experience and journey.

Through the extensive literature review, I was introduced to a number of researchers within the field of international education at a deeper level. Specifically, the literature review allowed me to identify with the research conducted by intercultural experts Dr. Bruce La Brack, Dr. Michael Vande Berg, and Dr. Darla Deardorff. Dr. La Brack and the important research he and his colleagues have conducted on pre-international interventions at the University of the Pacific impacted this study in a significant way. Studying about Dr. La Brack’s life and his life-long research on cultural understanding personally impacted me. After extensively reading his research and reviewing the compiled resources that Dr. La Brack had published, the findings confirmed that utilizing a number of his intercultural training materials was an appropriate step in the creation of the course, along with many other research-based resources. The pre-departure courses that he and his colleagues have designed, implemented, and researched provide their students with the needed tools and resources to begin the culture learning process. I learned from La Brack the importance of international interventions and his belief and research that suggests that without this type of intervention, a study abroad participant can minimize their study abroad experience and miss out on the many rich opportunities it offers them.

Dr. Michael Vande Berg is well-known for the creation of Council on International Educational Exchange's (CIEE) Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad. CIEE is a study abroad provider. The Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad is a credit-bearing course that is offered to students who participate in CIEE programs in some of their program locations. The course is "designed to help students abroad learn to shift cultural perspective and to interact more effectively and appropriately with culturally different others" (Vande Berg et al., 2012, p. 383). Vande Berg designed this course while he was involved with the Georgetown Consortium Project (2009). Vande Berg was the principal investigator of that research project and is passionate about educating international educators that study abroad needs to be focused on student learning. Vande Berg is a champion for study abroad cultural interventions for students before they go abroad, while they are abroad, and when they return. Specifically, the Georgetown Consortium Project confirmed and solidified my commitment to completing this action research study. The findings in the study point directly to the influence a cultural intervention can have on study abroad participants, their success abroad, and the impact it can have on their overall cultural growth.

Dr. Darla Deardorff is well-known for her work on intercultural competence and the effectiveness of international education assessment. Dr. Deardorff is the editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (2009) and is the executive director of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), a national professional organization based at Duke University. After exploring her research findings throughout the literature review, I was able to attend a three-day professional development conference at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication (SIIC), summer

2013, and she was the primary instructor of the three-day workshop I attended at the conference. It was through this exposure that I gained incredible insights on how to effectively engage with students in teaching about cultural competency and awareness. Specifically, her research and her cultural activities provided me with many practical lessons that were implemented throughout the pre-international experience course. It was La Brack who provided me with a framework on how to set up this study as well as the data to support a pre-international experience course. Vande Berg provided me with the research on the impact of intercultural interventions on student learning and development. It is Deardorff, and her research, who taught me the importance of intercultural assessment, cultural competencies and cross-cultural learning.

Lastly, the literature on expatriate training was informative and helpful. Specifically, multi-national companies have identified the difficulties in hiring appropriate expatriate staff. Expatriates often need to adjust to their new cultural environment and carry out a successful overseas assignment in a reasonably short amount of time. Similar to a study abroad student, these competencies are not acquired overnight and require additional training (Ko & Yang, 2011). Reading and understanding this literature allowed me to better understand what type of training expatriates might receive before going abroad, as well as the approaches their companies take to effectively prepare them. This knowledge guided me to include certain topics within the course that I may not have considered before reading the literature. The topic of experiential training is also a focus of expatriate cultural training and a pedagogy that was used and implemented throughout the course.



## **Lessons Learned From the Results**

The results of this study are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Once the data were thoroughly reviewed and analyzed, I discovered that data not only answered my research questions but also the findings went beyond the research questions. Through the study, I learned how students are affected by a pre-international experience course. I also learned that for many of them, they are going abroad simply to go abroad. Some of the student participants shared with me that they are only going abroad because their major requires it or because it sounds like an exciting adventure. Thus, they have not taken the time to fully understand the implications of going abroad and were not thinking about how to best prepare for the experience. This was a revelation. I had assumed that if they were going abroad that they were also aware of the necessity to prepare for the cultural adjustment that will, most likely, be required of them in a new culture. I was surprised to read in the student group transcriptions that for some of the students, this class was the first time they really thought through the implications of studying abroad from a cultural standpoint. To me, this realization helps to emphasize the need for more pre-departure orientation focused on cross-cultural issues. Students can be more successful and appropriate with such training.

## **Implications of the Study**

This study has implications for ASU, the SPGS, the SAO, the student participants, and for my role as Assistant Director of SAO. The purpose of this research was to help ASU understand the impact and significance of pre-international experience course for students going abroad to engage in cultures different from their own. Prior to the intervention, this type of course did not exist at ASU. After the intervention, the course is

being institutionalized and will continue to be offered to Global Studies majors and other ASU students. Although still not a required course for any of the students, for the time being, the new course material now substitutes for the old course material. The course was taught after the intervention during the spring 2014 semester to 75 students. I am also teaching the course in the fall 2014 semester and discussions are in progress regarding the teaching of it in the spring 2015 semester and potentially including a 3-credit version of the course. In the student focus groups, student participants expressed that they did not have enough time to take in all the information that was shared in the class. Student participants mentioned that in the future the course could be offered for three credits to increase the learning. Some also expressed that it would have been easier to focus on the course assignments had the course met more than once a week. This information supports the notion to continue discussing if the course would be better taught as a three credit course instead of a one credit course.

### **Implications for Arizona State University (ASU)**

ASU administrators, staff, and faculty would like to increase the study abroad participation numbers among undergraduate students. This applies to the faculty-directed summer programs and the exchange and partnership semester or academic year programs. Through this study, I better understand the importance of appropriately preparing students before they go abroad. The data revealed that students had their eyes opened to cultural understanding which will assist them in their cultural development while they are abroad. As the SAO, we can continue to send large amounts of students abroad, but without declared student learning outcomes, we will continue to provide students with a quality global experience, but the cultural growth may be limited. It is my

recommendation that a pre-international experience course be implemented at ASU and made available to prepare more students than just those who participated in this study.

The reviewed literature in this study leads international educators to recognize the overall benefits of offering study abroad participants with a pre-international experience course, an on-site guided and facilitated course, and a focused intervention upon re-entry (Vande Berg, Paige and Lou, 2012). My recommendation is that ASU, and specifically SPGS, pilot the offering of these three types of interventions for study abroad participants. It is also recommended that the pilot include a developed assessment tool such as Hammer's (2012) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) which was developed in 2007 for appropriate assessment. The instrument used in this study, the ICSI, was effective for this specific study, but due to the fact that the goal of it is to measure awareness focused on collectivist and individualist worldviews, I recommend using an instrument that captures more aspects from the participants about their cultural growth. In future cycles, I will continue to use the ICSI as a coaching tool for students, but not utilize it as a pre- and post-test measure.

### **Implications for the School of Global Studies and Politics (SPGS)**

The implications of this research study for SPGS are numerous. As the Global Studies major is housed within SPGS, the data revealed that although Global Studies majors are learning about cultural differences in their coursework, Global Studies majors indicated that they have not thoroughly discussed how to implement the cultural learnings they have gained in previous courses. The previous course design of SGS 484 focused on the logistics of studying or interning abroad. The data show that this information still needs to be taught to the students. The data also points to the importance of teaching

students the practical ways to implement cultural awareness. My recommendation is for SPGS to consider offering this course as a requirement for their majors. If implemented into the curriculum, the course could be re-evaluated to potentially make it more focused on intercultural interactions in the global workforce and not only focused on the actual international experience.

### **Implications for the ASU Study Abroad Office**

Another implication from this study is the value of assessment and the recommendation that ASU's SAO implement and utilize a cultural assessment tool, like the IDI, for returning study abroad students. If ASU would like to see this type of study progress and better evaluate cultural learning outcomes for study abroad participants, a credible assessment tool will need to be implemented to capture the growth that occurs among these students. Otherwise, the data are anecdotal and not statistically sound. By assessing cultural growth, ASU will have a better idea as to why students are growing from a cultural standpoint and in return, have a direct impact on ASU's study abroad programming and program options for students. The cost factor for implementing a cultural assessment tool will need to be assessed by SAO and ASU leadership.

The other important implication for the SAO is the decision on whether or not to adopt the course as an SAO-sponsored course. If ASU wants to offer the course to study abroad students prior to their international experience, the discussion will need to occur about how to appropriately scale it for the number of participants going abroad. The course will continue to be offered by SPGS and the discussion may lead to increasing the number of offered sections of the course to accommodate ASU's study abroad enrollments. In the case of increasing the offered sections, a plan will need to be

implemented on how to develop the number of instructors that will be needed to teach the students the course curriculum. The University of the Pacific has a strong model in place and can be reviewed if this need arises.

### **Implications for the Students**

Many of the student participants in this study indicated that before the course, they did not know how to effectively engage with people from different cultures. Students also shared, through the self-reflection writing assignments, that they did not know much about their own culture and cultural identity and as a result of some of the in-class exercises and assignments, they now know more about their cultural identity. The results also revealed that due to the experiential learning focused exercises within the course, that students have more of an open-mind to engage with cultures different from their own and to try new things. Because of what students learned about cultural observation and suspending judgment about others, students expressed that they look forward to meeting more people who are from cultures different from their own. Students shared in the focus groups that they want to try harder in welcoming international students who study at ASU. One student said she better understands what they may be experiencing and wants to assist them on the ASU Tempe Campus, and another student said that he now plays basketball with a group of international students. When students have their minds opened to the possibilities of engaging with people of other cultures, new and exciting possibilities are opened to them.

The theoretical framework emphasized within this study, Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978), also has implications for the student participants. Mezirow believes that to experience transformation, an individual must first have a

disorienting experience. Once students become aware that such an experience has challenged their existing worldview, it is their ability to respond to that challenge and determine whether it will lead to transformation. As reviewed throughout the course, this occurs through critical reflection. Specifically, it is the awareness that what students learn abroad can be transforming if they bring in and adopt the new ideas, values, and beliefs that Mezirow believes must be incorporated to result in transformation. Students shared in the focus groups that they are more open to the idea of accepting new ideas, values, and beliefs into their lives.

### **Implications for Leadership Growth**

This study provided me with the opportunity to become well versed in the area of intercultural training and preparation for students going on a study or intern abroad experience. Although I have previous experience in developing intercultural training curriculum for university students and professionals, this dissertation allowed me the opportunity to engage in the research literature, survey past participants, and design and implement the course. I transformed by reading the published work of intercultural experts and Mezirow, dialoging about the topic with professionals within the field of international education, attending the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, and being tasked with teaching students about intercultural theories and essential intercultural themes. Through this process, I moved from being an international educator who knew a lot about the application of intercultural teachings to an international educator and scholar who has gained a thorough understanding about how to effectively train adults, organize a cross-cultural preparation course, and facilitate the intended learning among its participants.

The study also gave me the opportunity to be a university instructor and teach undergraduate students. Since the age of 16, I have been speaking in front of large audiences about international opportunities and the impact that they can have on one's life. After these speaking engagements, I was humbled to have people share with me that they felt I was a quality public speaker and facilitator of discussion. Within my professional experiences, I have also been given many opportunities to facilitate small and large groups, provide professional development trainings, and speak at student orientations. Throughout all of these opportunities, I knew that I enjoyed facilitating discussion and teaching new concepts, but it was not until this study that I had the opportunity to spend 10-weeks in the classroom teaching students. Through this experience, I realized that I thoroughly enjoy teaching undergraduate students and want to continue teaching them. Although the data collection for this specific research study has ended, as previously mentioned, I am currently teaching the course again to undergraduate students and will teach the course again in the fall 2014 semester. I would also like to explore opportunities to teach other courses at ASU that are focused on intercultural learning and understanding.

### **Validity and Limitations**

Validity and credibility are essential in all types of research, and specifically within action research (Creswell, 2003). As previously highlighted in Chapter 3, I used member-checking “to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report and themes back to the participants” and determined whether they felt they were accurate (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). I also used what Creswell (2003) refers to as

“peer debriefing.” Peer debriefing enhances the accuracy of the overall account. This was conducted with the members of CoP and an ASU faculty member.

To further discuss the validity and credibility of this dissertation study, I review the widely cited validity criteria created by Herr and Anderson (2005). Specifically, I review the five validity criteria: outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic. As Herr and Anderson (2005) state:

Most traditions of action research agree on the following goals: (1) the generation of new knowledge, (b) the achievement of action-oriented outcomes, (c) the education of both researcher and participants, (d) results that are relevant to the local setting, and (e) a sound and appropriate research methodology. (p. 54)

Outcome validity “Is the extent to which actions occur, which leads to a resolution of the problem that led to the study” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55). It also acknowledges the fact that rigorous action research requires the researcher to reframe the problem in a more complex way which often leads to a new set of questions or additional problems (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Outcome validity asks the question, “Did the actions based on the data gathered lead toward a resolution of the issue under study?” (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007). This action research study identified the positive outcomes of a pre-international experience course and generated additional information regarding the need to continue exploring the course content and the implementation of it at ASU.

Process validity asks, “To what extent problems are framed and solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55). Process validity also relates to the “evidence to sustain the assertions and the quality of the relationships developed with participants throughout the study” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55). The usage of multiple perspectives protects viewing the data in a



simplistic way. I used several sources of qualitative data to explore the outcomes of the data and I was able to confirm complementarity among the data sources. I also learned about many of the different obstacles that are involved when implementing a new course at a large university.

Democratic validity refers to, “The extent to which research is done in collaboration with all parties who have a stake in the problem under investigation” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 56). This study began as a collaborative effort with me and the Director of the SAO, our staff and staff within the SPGS. I can recall that in early 2011 when I began researching the topic of pre-international experience interventions, I asked ASU’s Vice Provost for Global Education about how we prepare our students to engage in culture before going abroad, and I received a response that indicated a need. Specifically, it presented a need to further investigate the question and the topic at hand. Since then, I have collaborated with many different stakeholders, and it has resulted in receiving many different perspectives on how best to encourage intercultural growth among students going abroad for academic purposes.

Catalytic validity is the research process toward “knowing reality in order to transform it” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 56). In this case, the participants and the researchers must be open to the change of direction that the new reality could reveal to them, as well as their own role in the process (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Catalytic validity includes the stakeholders of the study with the intent to deepen their understanding of the topic under study and be willing to change it based on the results (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Since the beginning of this action research study, I have been in dialogue with staff within SPGS and the SAO about the potential outcomes of the results. SPGS staff

has asked me to teach it again in spring 2014, one semester after the study was conducted, and I will teach multiple sections in fall 2014. My colleagues within the SAO are also reviewing the way we conduct our pre-departure orientations and discussions lead to the possibility of hosting additional orientations focused on cultural awareness and adaptation skills in the near future.

Dialogic validity emphasizes the importance of peer review, a critical friend, and collaborative inquiry (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, practitioner peer review serves to ensure the goodness and dissemination of the knowledge generated from educational action research projects (Anderson & Herr, 1999). The implementation of the innovation and this dissertation study was reviewed by my dissertation committee that includes three university professors. In practitioner research, it is suggested that practitioner-researchers “engage in critical and reflective dialogue with other practitioner researchers” (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 16). It was also reviewed by six members of my Leader Scholar Community (LSC) as well as the four members of my CoP, including the former instructor of the course. The quantitative data of the ICSI was thoroughly reviewed by an ASU faculty member. Through the criteria of outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2005), this study ensures credibility.

### **Limitations of the Study**

If provided the opportunity to conduct another cycle or cycles of the innovation, I would design the study differently in a few specific ways. First, the time allotted to collect data for this study is a limitation. Specifically, the data would be more varied by collecting it over multiple semesters versus one semester. As related to the

implementation of the study, Wetzel and Ewbank (2013) state, “Timing refers to the need for students to plan their innovations at least one semester prior to implementation and that it fit into a 15-week period” (p. 403). Action research that focuses on problems in the workplace cannot always occur during the time requirements of my program’s timeline. Action research requires time to understand the context, the problem, the possible solutions, the cycles of action research, and the reasoning for the outcomes. Oftentimes, an action research study requires additional research and data collection to come to solid conclusions (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Second, the instruments used in this specific study would be further analyzed and the pre- and post-test of the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) would not be re-used. When this study began, I was very satisfied with using the ICSI. What was learned is that the ICSI serves a specific purpose. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) designed the instrument to determine how culturally sensitive MBA students were before entering into careers in international business. They designed their study to specifically seek out how people engage in certain behaviors in an individualist country such as the United States, and how people engage in the same behavior in a collectivist culture such as Japan. Although the results of the pre- and post-test of the ICSI show that students increased their cultural sensitivity in this study, the ICSI measures their sensitivity specifically within a collectivist and individualistic culture, and does not extensively measure cultural adaptability and ethnocentric orientations like, for example, the IDI. However, using the IDI in this study was cost prohibitive. In order to use the IDI effectively, individuals need to attend an intensive qualifying seminar conducted over three days. The cost to attend the training is \$1,600.00 plus traveling and living expenses. The cost to issue the IDI, per

student, is \$5.50 and I would have needed 54 students to take it twice for a total of \$594.00. If I had the opportunity to make changes to this study, I would use the ICSI as a coaching tool for the student participants, but refrain from using it to indicate the overall intercultural growth of the student from the beginning to the end of the course. My plan is to become certified in the IDI in the near future.

Third, recognizing that the IDI is a study abroad industry standard, it would be used as a main instrument for the study if I were to extend the study beyond the classroom and conduct the post-test of the IDI after the student participant's international experience. The IDI has been used in well-known research studies related to cultural interventions, including the long-term study being conducted by Dr. Bruce La Brack of the University of the Pacific. Current studies on the IDI supports the notion that students who study abroad and participate in intercultural interventions, before, during, and after the experience, return home with significant gains in intercultural competence (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

Lastly, the inability to follow the student participants and collect data from the beginning of the course to the end of their international experience is the final limitation. La Brack's research that has been conducted at the University of the Pacific assesses the student participant from their departure course through the participant's study abroad experience. Within this research study, the effectiveness of the course and the content that was learned would be better assessed to see how the student participants utilized the knowledge and experiences that were presented to them in the course during their international experience. The research goals could include the investigation of how the students utilized their newly gained knowledge as result of the completion of the course.

### **My Self Reflections: As an International Educator, Practitioner, and Researcher**

As a practitioner in the field of international education, this doctoral program, the process of implementing the course and conducting the action research, all allowed me to become a researcher-practitioner who is now equipped with essential tools and resources to conduct action research. Over the last five years, I have observed myself and other practitioners make decisions without having much evidence to support the decisions. I have also experienced practitioners create a new assessment for program evaluation without piloting it first to collect and analyze the data, and in return, making it more effective for the intended audience. My conclusion is that this practice occurs because we have professional staff in place and across our universities who are practitioners and program managers, but do not have the necessary skills of a researcher. Although my development as a practitioner-researcher is an on-going process, the experiences, skills, and knowledge I gained throughout this program have given me the confidence to be a voice in our office and on our campus to make data-driven decisions that affect participants at a deeper level.

Effective action research requires the researcher-practitioner to collaborate with others. This study emphasized to me how valuable relationships are in the workplace. Throughout the implementation of the course, I realized that it is critical that leaders create and uphold relationships within an organization. These connections with staff will cause others to feel more engaged, supported, satisfied with their job, and more efficient. For my innovation to succeed in my organization, the need to build relationships and collaborate with insiders and outsiders presented itself (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Specifically, I worked with staff in SPGS and within our office. For other academic units

to promote the course, I had to share the intended outcomes of the course to them so that they, in return, would spread the word to their students. I will continue to work with my SPGS and SAO colleagues to respond to their thoughts and suggestions on the course and how to expand the course offerings to other ASU students.

My own personal transformation as a leader progressed through this study. One of the primary goals of action research is that the outcome of the innovation or intervention will result in change. Change will be a continued theme throughout my career. Change and transitions are inevitable. Bridges (2009) highlights three phases of transition. The last phase is, what he calls, the “new beginning.” I recognize this is only one of the three phases, but it stands out as the most important to me. The new beginning starts when individuals make a commitment to the new way of doing things and see themselves in a new way (Bridges, 2009). Bridges uses four “P’s” in launching a new beginning: the purpose, a picture, the plan, and a part to play. This program, the implementation of this study, and my past professional experiences have prepared me to be a leader that identifies a problem or obstacle, discovers a solution, and implements the needed change while assisting others in the new beginning. Within my individual context and the context of my innovation, the most powerful lesson I have learned is the clear understanding that there is a process for change. Action research provides an outline to successfully implement change.

Throughout this study and within the four years to complete the doctoral coursework and complete the dissertation, I have reflected heavily on the “21 Leadership Responsibilities” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) that were discussed in our doctoral program. Within this specific list of leadership responsibilities, I have spent time

reflecting on intellectual stimulation. As I brought about change in my professional context, I needed to ensure that staff members were aware of the most current theories and practices within international education and specifically, student learning outcomes for study abroad. To effectively do this, I must continue to learn about theories and practices that support intellectual stimulation. I am grateful for this doctoral program to learn about multiple change and learning theories that can be applied and utilized in my workplace.

### **Opportunities for the Advancement of the Study in the Future**

The teaching of the course that was implemented in this study will continue. One semester after the innovation, I am now teaching the course to 76 undergraduates and implementing the changes that were noted during the innovation by the student participants and the CoP. I am discussing with SPGS administration the opportunity to teach multiple sections in the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters. I plan to resubmit acceptance by the ASU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the fall 2015 semester and collect data from the participants during the course, their time abroad, and upon their return back to the U.S. I also plan to explore utilizing a different tool as a pre- and post-test measure and compare the results to ASU students who do not enroll and complete the pre-international experience course.

After the completion of this dissertation, I will meet with SPGS leadership to discuss the possibility of offering the course as a two or three credit course versus a one credit course. Specifically, the one credit course is a step in the right direction, but student participants shared in the data collection that they would like to learn more and that time allotted for the course was limited. They also shared that it was difficult at times

to stay focused on the course assignments because the course only met once a week in 50-minute segments. By changing it to a two or three credit course, there would be more time to discuss the topics and allow the students to have more time to self-reflect on their cultural learnings. I will also discuss with the SPGS leadership about requiring the course for Global Studies majors.

A number of universities across the U.S. are orienting their first-time freshmen international students (non U.S. visa holders) upon arriving to the U.S. institution and the orientation lasts more than a few days of workshops or gatherings. The purpose of the in-person orientation and the extended length of it is an effort to increase retention among international students studying at U.S. campuses. Institutions with large enrollments of international students from one or two of the same countries are also discovering that the dominant population groups feel comfortable with staying together and not intermixing with other international and domestic students. As a result, these international students are studying in the U.S., but not interacting with U.S. students or learning about their host culture. The same concern occurs among study abroad students. One way to combat this is to facilitate a longer orientation period that includes first-time freshmen international students to enroll in a course that assists them with adjusting to U.S. culture and the U.S. classroom. The curriculum that has been designed and tested in this study could be adapted to meet this need at ASU. Many of the topics are universal to the individual who is adapting to a new culture. Currently, I am mentoring 16 international students who are part of the International Leaders in Education Program (ILEP), part of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, and studying in the ASU Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College. Each week I meet with them to discuss their



practicum in local secondary schools, the ASU courses they are enrolled in, and their overall cultural adjustment. Without them fully knowing it, I am also taking them through the pre-international course curriculum, and they are self-reporting that it is helpful in their overall cultural awareness and adjustment.

Another possibility for the advancement of this study is a potential collaboration with ASU Housing. Currently, the SAO and ASU Housing work together to facilitate ASU's Global Village Residential Community, a multicultural housing option for students from all over the U.S. and the world. The Global Village's mission is to welcome international students and introduce them to the American university experience. The Global Village also exists to encourage cultural growth of ASU domestic students to encourage a higher level of global awareness in the larger ASU community. Beginning the fall 2014 semester, the SAO will no longer sponsor the Global Village but will promote it to incoming international exchange students. The future of it will be facilitated by ASU Housing, and they recently contacted me to see if I would be interested in teaching the pre-international experience course, or a rendition of it, to international and domestic students living in the Global Village to help them adjust to cultures different from their own.

Dependent on how the course further develops, I would like to use the curriculum to collaborate with other ASU staff and faculty and develop a pre-international experience online course that is designed for all study abroad or international intern participants as well as an on-site course and a re-entry course. Each course could potentially be offered a one credit course. This approach seems to be a more realistic end goal if ASU would like to research the implications of such courses. This model is more

in line with the intervention models that are researched and discussed in the conducted studies about the Georgetown Consortium Project and the University of the Pacific's international interventions.

Lastly, I will continue conducting research on this topic and will continue collecting and analyzing data of course participants starting in the fall 2014 semester. The goal will be to show the cultural impact of students who enroll and complete the course, . I will also continue to present the findings of this study and future studies at professional conferences. In February 2014, I co-presented with a respected international educator from Wake Forest University at an international educator's conference focused on equipping faculty with resources to encourage cultural development among their students. The individual I co-presented with has successfully taught a series of cultural preparation courses to Wake Forest students before, during, and after their international experience. I also plan to propose the development of pre-international experience courses at future international education conferences such as: NAFSA and the Forum on Education Abroad conferences.

I look forward to exploring all of these possibilities in the future to advance the results of the study at ASU. As previously mentioned, the ability for a leader to collaborate is a needed skill. My hope is that I will be given the opportunity to collaborate with decision makers at ASU to implement some of these possibilities. These include extending the study and collecting data from students after they take the pre-international experience course and return from their study abroad or internship experience. It also includes the exploration of offering the course for three credits, requiring it for Global Studies majors, and potentially offering a variation of it to ASU

international students. Finally, it involves the potential of collaborating with ASU Housing and other study abroad stakeholders to develop a rendition of the course for ASU domestic students living with international students, as well the possibility of developing an online version of the course to reach a larger number of students prior to studying or interning abroad.

The results of this particular study indicate that pre-international experience training and orientation is beneficial to students before they go abroad for either study abroad programming or an international internship. The quantitative results revealed growth in cultural sensitivity and the qualitative results, although self-reported, indicated the cultural impact that the course had on students who completed it. This action research study was focused on the workplace of the researcher. As a result, one of the primary objectives of this study was to collect data to determine if the SAO might offer the course to all study abroad participants in the future. For now, and because of the results and feedback from the course from those who participated, the course continues to be offered through SPGS to Global Studies majors and other majors. The results of the study will also hopefully encourage the SAO to emphasize the development of cultural competencies and cultural development outcomes for students who study abroad. I propose these recommendations and look forward to being around the table to discuss and develop such strategic initiatives that will impact students for their international experience and beyond.

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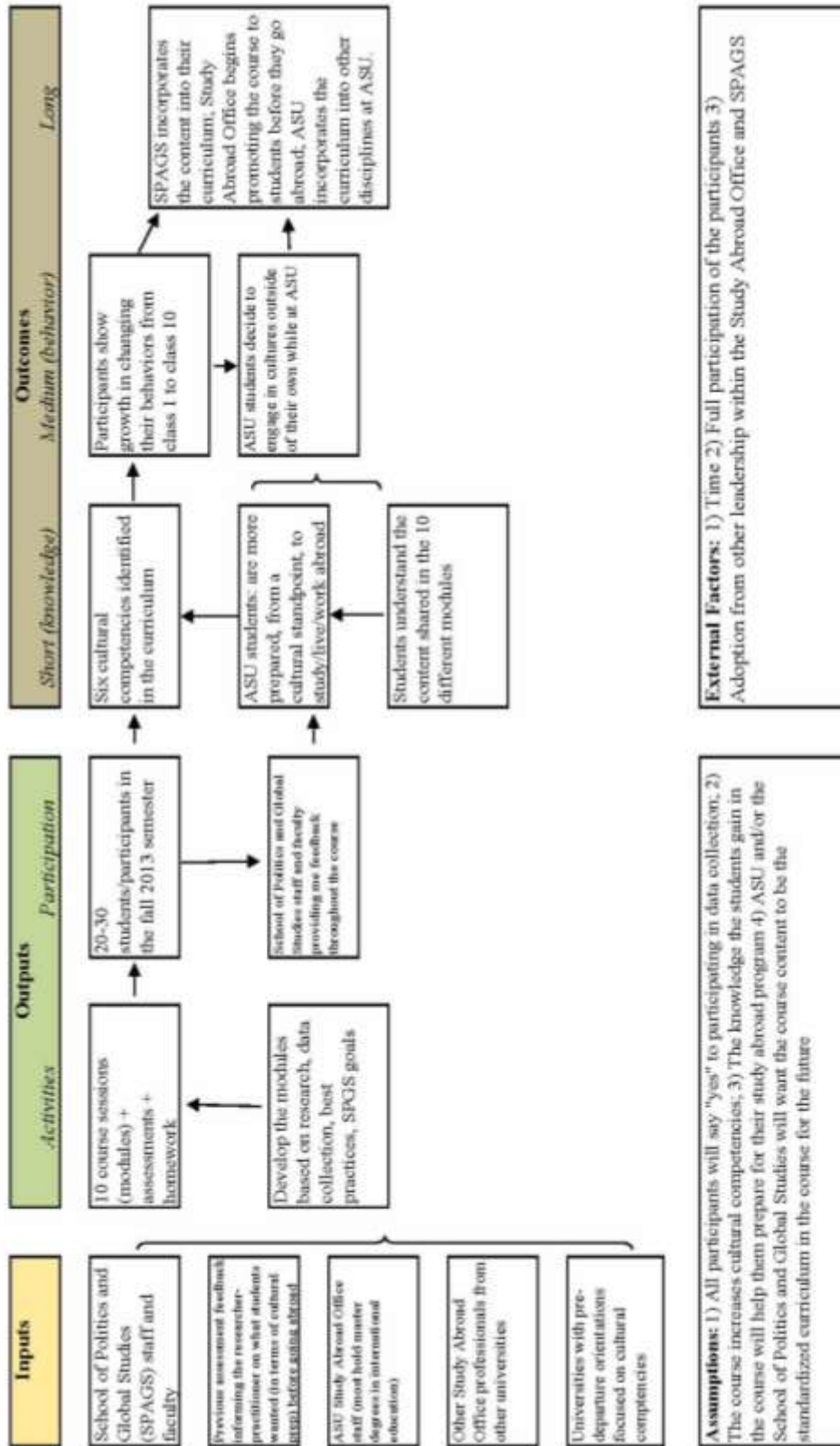
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APPENDIX A  
LOGIC MODEL



APPENDIX B  
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER





APPENDIX C

STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE COURSE ASSESSMENT

# Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment<br>

## Your Past Cross-Cultural Experience(s)

**1. How long did you study abroad during your most recent study abroad experience through the Arizona State University (ASU) Study Abroad Office?**

- One semester
- Academic year
- Calendar year

## Type of Cultural Training or Orientation You Received Before Going Abroad

**2. Please respond to the following statements about the cross-cultural portion of the Study Abroad Office (SAO) Pre-Departure Orientation you attended before going abroad:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not remember
The cultural portion of the orientation was helpful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The cultural portion of the orientation sparked my interest to learn more about my host culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I remembered the cultural portion of the orientation while I was abroad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would have liked more information about cultural development and cultural adaptation before going abroad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3. Did you actively participate in the ASU Study Abroad Office (SAO) ONLINE Pre-Departure Orientation?**

- Yes
- No
- I do not remember

**4. Was the timing of your orientations appropriate?**

- Yes
- No
- I do not remember

## Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment

**5. If not, when specifically would you have appreciated them occurring before going abroad?**

- One month after mine occurred
- Two months after mine occurred
- Three months after mine occurred
- Right before going abroad

**6. Were there past, ASU study abroad participants involved in your in-person Pre-Departure Orientation?**

- Yes
- No

### Type of Training You Desired Before Going Abroad

**7. What type of preparation and training would you have liked more of before going abroad if it would have been available to you as an ASU student?**

- Language Training (e.g. language, direct vs. indirect communication style)
- Immediate Concerns (e.g. currency, school system, transportation, housing, etc.)
- Area-Specific Knowledge (e.g. history, geography, politics, economics, etc.)
- Host Culture-Specific Knowledge (e.g. time and space, roles, group vs. individual, superstitions and rituals, etc.)
- Non-verbal Communication (e.g. facial expressions, eye contact, scents or smells, touching, etc.)
- Culture Sensitivity (e.g. anxiety, ethnocentrism, etc.)
- Emotional Reaction (e.g. culture stress or culture shock, homesickness, fear, etc.)
- Cross-Cultural Skills Acquisition (e.g. simulations, case studies, role playing, etc.)

Other cultural differences, please specify:

### Future Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course

**8. If a pre-departure course at ASU, focused primarily on cross-cultural development, would have been offered to you before studying abroad, would you have enrolled in it?**

- Yes
- No

## Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment<br>

### 9. If yes, how many credits would you have preferred?

- 1 credit course
- 3 credit course
- Not applicable (I would not have taken the course)

### 10. If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what topics do you think should be covered in detail, based on your experiences abroad?

- Understanding others' worldviews
- Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment
- Adaptability - adjustment to a new cultural environment
- Skills to listen and observe
- General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures
- Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication
- Flexibility
- Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
- Deep knowledge and understanding of culture (one's own and others')
- Respect for other cultures
- Cross-cultural empathy
- Understanding the value of cultural diversity
- Mindfulness
- Withholding judgement
- Curiosity and discovery
- Learning through interaction
- Culture-specific knowledge/understanding of host culture's traditions

Other (please specify)

### 11. If a pre-departure course (for 1 or 3 credits) is developed and offered at ASU, what other aspects of orientation do you think should be included in the course curriculum (ex: hosting a panel of current international students to have them discuss the difficulties of adjusting to a new culture and how they have worked to overcome the difficulties)?

## Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment<br>

**12. If a pre-departure course is not developed, rather, a series of optional workshops (8 total workshops, 50 minutes each) focusing on cultural understanding, cultural adaptability skills, and intercultural communication skills - would you have attended the workshops had they been available to you?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Maybe

Other (please specify)

**13. What other cross-cultural training, knowledge or orientation do you wish you would have had, prior to going abroad, that would have made you more successful while you were overseas (from a cultural standpoint)?**

## Now That You Have Returned from Your Study Abroad Program

**14. Now that your study abroad program is over, what type of training would have helped you DURING the time you were abroad?**

- Language Training (e.g. language, direct vs. indirect communication style)  
 Immediate Concerns (e.g. currency, school system, transportation, housing, etc.)  
 Area-Specific Knowledge (e.g. history, geography, politics, economics, etc.)  
 Culture-Specific Knowledge (e.g. time and space, roles, group v. individual, superstitions and rituals, etc.)  
 Non-verbal Communication (e.g. facial expressions, eye contact, scents or smells, touching, etc.)  
 Culture Sensitivity (e.g. anxiety, ethnocentrism, etc.)  
 Emotional Reaction (e.g. culture shock and culture stress, homesickness, fear, etc.)  
 Cross-Cultural Skills Acquisition (e.g. simulations, case studies, role playing, etc.)

Other cultural differences, please specify:

## Study Abroad Pre-Departure Course Assessment<br>

**15. Now that your study abroad program is over, what do you wish you would have known about your study abroad experience prior to going?**

- More about the host culture
- More about how to overcome culture stress/shock
- More about adaptability skills
- More about cross-cultural communication skills
- More about (in general) how to be successful while abroad (from a cultural standpoint)

**16. What do you think the ASU Study Abroad Office should do for ASU students in regards to re-entry activities and orientations upon a student's return to campus/the U.S.?**

### Expectations and Interest

**17. What were your expectations for going abroad?**

- Gain cross-cultural competencies
- Take courses for your major in a different setting
- Have the opportunity to meet other students from other cultures
- To learn about other cultures

Other (please specify)

**18. If your expectations were not met, what would have helped you meet them?**

APPENDIX D  
COURSE SYLLABUS



## **SGS 484 – Pre-Internship Seminar Arizona State University (ASU)**

**Course name:** SGS 484, Pre-Internship/Global Experience Seminar  
**School sponsor:** School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS)  
**Semester:** Fall 2013 / **Course dates:** August 27/28 – October 29/30 (10 weeks)  
**Course days:** Tuesday/Wednesday **Time:** 4:30pm-5:20pm  
**Course Location:** ASU Tempe Campus, Tempe - STAUF132  
**Course Syllabus/Course Assignments:** posted on Blackboard “BB”

### **Instructor Information:**

**Instructor:** Adam Henry, M.Ed.  
**Title:** Assistant Director, Study Abroad Office and Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College Doctoral (Ed.D.) Candidate  
**Email:** Adam.Keith.Henry@asu.edu  
**Office Hours:** by appointment only (office: Study Abroad Office, Tempe Center)

### **Co-Instructor Information:**

**Instructor:** Gisela Grant, M.A.  
**Title:** Global Studies Internship Coordinator  
**Email:** Gisela.Grant@asu.edu  
**Office Hours:** by appointment only (office: Coor Building)

### **Course Description:**

SGS 484: Pre-Internship/Global Experience Seminar, addresses the theory and practice of studying, working, and living in cultures different from your own, and focuses on the preparation to learn successfully in diverse cultures. The course is designed for students who plan to study or intern abroad or who are considering working in an international context upon graduation. It is intended to help students develop an awareness of intercultural sensitivity and recognize its value, gain specific intercultural competencies, and enable students to better understand their own culture so they can comprehend other cultures at a deeper level. These are focused on culture-general skills, not culture-specific ones. Students will also gain career development skills to prepare them to apply to study abroad programs and related scholarships, and guidance on how to best utilize international experiences for maximum benefit and long-term career planning.



## **Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:**

### **This course should help students:**

- gain cross-cultural development skills and cross-cultural sensitivity;
- learn how to be culturally appropriate in a variety of settings;
- observe different cultural behaviors and ways to adapt to them by learning about intercultural development theories and models.

### **Students who complete the course will be able to:**

1. Cultivate cultural awareness, understanding and development;
2. Understand intercultural skills and competencies relevant to studying, working, and living among cultures other than your own;
3. Learn about the cultural adjustment process by reviewing numerous models;
4. Understand and appreciate their own self-identified culture;
5. Investigate a variety of funding sources to study/intern abroad;
6. Understand culture as it specifically relates to personal, cultural and universal;
7. Research and select three possible international opportunities/programs;
8. Define and state personal learning objectives that relate to possible long-term career plans;
9. Develop a purpose statement which can be turned into a personal statement and/or scholarship essay.

### **Establishing a Safe Environment:**

Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established in the classroom. Students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. The success of the course rests on your ability to create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share and explore ideas. We must also be willing to take risks and ask critical questions. Doing so will effectively contribute to our own and others intellectual and personal growth and development. We welcome disagreements in the spirit of critical academic exchange, but please remember to be respectful of others' view points, whether you agree with them or not.

### **Communicating with the Instructors:**

This course uses a "three before me" policy in regards to student to instructor communications. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these three sources for an answer before contacting the instructors for a reply to your individual questions:

- Course syllabus, Announcements in Blackboard, the "Course Questions" discussion boards

This policy will help you in potentially identifying answers before the instructors can get back to you and it also helps your instructors from answering similar questions or concerns multiple times. If you cannot find an answer to your question, please first post

your question to the “Course Questions” discussion board. Here your question can be answered to the benefit of all students, by either your fellow students who know the answer to your question, or the instructors. You are encouraged to answer questions from other students in the “Course Questions” discussion forum when you know the answer to a question in order to help provide timely assistance.

If you have questions of a personal nature such as relating a personal emergency, questioning a grade on an assignment, or something else that needs to be communicated privately, you are welcome to contact your instructors via e-mail. An e-mail contact is generally preferred. Your instructors will usually respond to e-mail messages from 8am to 5pm, weekdays. Please allow 24 hours for your instructors to respond.

**Course Code of Conduct:**

1. Honor confidentiality! Be respectful of others
2. Arrive on time (4:30pm) – we will get started on or before 4:31pm
3. Complete and submit your own work
4. Actively participate
5. No side-bar conversations when class is in session
6. No texting/internet cruising during the 50 minutes you are in class

**Written Work:**

All assignments and written work are expected to be of high quality. Your writing should always be thoughtful, logically organized, complete (answering all parts of questions or prompts), and lead the reader to a conclusion. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, proper referencing, and organization will be graded as well as content and presentation.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:**

“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990 provides comprehensive Civil Rights protection and is designed to remove barriers which prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the same educational and employment opportunities as persons without disabilities. The law also provides access to public accommodations, state and local government services, transportation, and telecommunications. The Americans with Disabilities Act also prohibits discrimination against a qualified individual with a disability with regard to admission to educational institutions or vocational training programs (public or private); employee compensation; job training; and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.” For more information, please see ASU Disability Resource Center (DRC) website at: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>

**Syllabus Disclaimer:**

The course syllabus is an educational contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes via email, or in the *Announcements*. Please remember to check your ASU email and the *Announcements* as often as possible.

**Academic Integrity:**

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. All College of Liberal Arts and Sciences academic integrity policies are located here:

<https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity> and will be applied to this course.

**Student Conduct Statement:**

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed below:

- Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct <http://www.azregents.edu/policymanual/default.aspx>,
- ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.htm>, and
- the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/srr/index.htm>.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. If a student is disruptive, an instructor may ask the student to stop the disruptive behavior and warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in withdrawal from the course. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>).

Course discussion messages should remain focused on the assigned discussion topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion.

Inappropriate discussion board messages may be deleted if an instructor feels it is necessary. Students will be notified privately that their posting was inappropriate. Student access to the course Send Email feature may be limited or removed if an instructor feels that students are sending inappropriate electronic messages to other students in the course.

**Religious Accommodations for Students:**

Students who need to be absent from class due to the observance of a religious holiday or participate in required religious functions must notify the faculty member in writing as far in advance of the holiday/obligation as possible. Students will need to identify the specific holiday or obligatory function to the faculty member. Students will not be penalized for missing class due to religious obligations/holiday observance. The student should contact the class instructor to make arrangements for making up tests/assignments within a reasonable time.

**Military Personnel Statement:**

A student who is a member of the National Guard, Reserve, or other U.S. Armed Forces branch and is unable to complete classes because of military activation may request complete or partial administrative unrestricted withdrawals or incompletes depending on the timing of the activation. For information, please see <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-18.html>.

**Harassment Prohibited:**

ASU policy prohibits harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, Vietnam era veteran status, and other protected veteran status. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employees or expulsion of students. Contact Student Life (UCB 221) if you feel another student is harassing you based on any of the factors above; contact EO/AA (480-965-5057) if you feel an ASU employee is harassing you based on any of the factors above.

**Attendance & Assignments:**

Previous seminar students discovered that in order to maximize the benefits of this resource seminar, attendance was necessary and actively working on the assignments while paying attention to deadlines was most beneficial.

**NOTE:** Attendance for the nine (9) meetings is required. We are not meeting ten (10) times due to the Fall Break. Should you have to miss a class, you must make prior arrangements with the instructor to complete your work in advance. The instructor(s) do not offer make-up sessions.

Attendance is required unless absence can be justified for emergency situations. Students are also expected to arrive to class, prepared, and at the time specified or will otherwise be considered tardy. Excessive tardiness and/or absences (particularly for unjustified circumstances) will negatively impact course grades.

**Submitting Assignments:**

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, must be submitted at the beginning of class (in person) on the day it is due. **NOTE:** late work is only accepted at the discretion of the instructors.

### **Course Assignments and Grading:**

There will be no mid-term or final exams in this course.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points (out of 200 total)</b>
1. Participation and Attendance	45
2. Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)	10
3. In-Take Form	5
4. Read the “Informed Consent Letter,” sign, date, print and submit to Instructor at first class	5
5. Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) (x2)	30
6. Self-Reflections (x3) (5 points each)	15
7. Cultural Plunge proposal paragraph	5
8. Personal Statement	15
9. Submit Internationally Themed Resume/CV	10
10. Three (3) Tentative Program/Internship Choices	15
11. Proof of Registration with the ASU Study Abroad Office & Sun Devil Career Link	5
12. Cultural Plunge Paper (2-3 pages)	30
13. Culture Mapping Exercise	10

### **Grading Criteria:**

Course grades will be based on faculty judgment of the quality of students’ written and oral presentations, and of the quality and extensiveness of their contributions to the collaborative learning community. There will be no + or – grades assigned in this course.

- 190-200 points A
- 180-189 points B
- 170-179 points C
- 160-169 points D
- 150-159 points E

### **Grade Appeals:**

The professional responsibility for assigning grades is vested in the instructor of the course, and requires the careful application of professional judgment. A student wishing to appeal a grade must first meet with the instructor who assigned the grade to try to resolve the dispute. Grade grievance processes for CLAS courses can be found here: <http://clas.asu.edu/faculty-and-staff/guide-student-academic-grievance>

### **Course/Instructor Evaluation:**

The course/instructor evaluation for this course will be conducted online 7-10 days before the last official day of classes. Response(s) to the course/instructor are anonymous and will not be returned to your instructor until after grades have been submitted. The use of a course/instructor evaluation is an important process that allows our college to (1) help faculty improve their instruction, (2) help administrators evaluate instructional quality,

(3) ensure high standards of teaching, and (4) ultimately improve instruction and student learning over time. Completion of the evaluation is not required for you to pass this class and will not affect your grade, but your cooperation and participation in this process is critical. About two weeks before the class finishes, watch for an e-mail with "ASU Course/Instructor Evaluation" in the subject heading. The email will be sent to your official ASU e-mail address, so make sure ASU has your current email address on file.

Date(s)	Class Topics	Assignment(s) Due: The Beginning of Class
<p><b><u>Week 1:</u></b> <b>Aug 27/28</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction, What is Culture and Cultural Competency?</b></p> <p>Adam Henry/Gisela Grant</p>	<p><b>Prior to Week 1:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Complete the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)</li> <li>5. Complete the "In-Take Form"</li> <li>6. Read the "Informed Consent Letter," sign, date, print and give to Instructor on first day of class</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Week 2:</u></b> <b>Sept 3/4</b></p>	<p><b>Financing your International Experience</b></p> <p>With guest presenter: Jannan Poppen, ASU Study Abroad Office</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Read brief article on individualism and collectivism</li> <li>5. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)</li> <li>6. Weekly Class Evaluation from Week 1</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Week 3:</u></b> <b>Sept 10/11</b></p>	<p><b>Preparing for Your International Experience: Purpose Statement, Resume, Selection of Tentative Experiences</b></p> <p>Gisela Grant</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Self-Reflection #1</li> <li>4. Cultural Plunge proposal paragraph</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Week 4:</u></b> <b>Sept 17/18</b></p>	<p><b>In-Class Cross-Cultural Simulation:</b> <i>Rocket: A Simulation on Intercultural Teamwork</i></p> <p>Adam Henry</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Purpose Statement</li> <li>5. Resume/CV</li> <li>6. Selection of 3 Tentative Experiences</li> </ol>

<b><u>Week 5:</u></b> <b>Sept 24/25</b>	<b>Self-Identity, Cultural Awareness and Cultural Plunge Debrief</b>  Adam Henry	2. Complete the Cultural Plunge and Paper
<b><u>Week 6:</u></b> <b>Oct 1/2</b>	<b>Intercultural Development Theories and Culture Matters</b>  Adam Henry	1. Culture Mapping Assignment
<b><u>Week 7:</u></b> <b>Oct 8/9</b>	<b>Intercultural Development Student Panel</b>  In-Class Guests	1. Self-Reflection #2
<b><u>Week 8:</u></b> <b>Oct 15/16</b>	<b>Strategies for Effective Cross- Cultural Communication - Fall Break</b>  NO CLASS – ASSIGNMENTS ASSIGNED Optional – Oct 17 is the SPGS Open House	2. Review Health & Safety Video on BB 3. Read two articles on cross- cultural communication
<b><u>Week 9:</u></b> <b>Oct 22/23</b>	<b>Attitudes (Curiosity, Openness and Cultural Humility) and Cultural Tips</b>  Adam Henry	1. Self-Reflection #3
<b><u>Week 10:</u></b> <b>Oct 29/30</b>	<b>Debriefing and What's Next for You?</b>  Adam Henry/Gisela Grant	1. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)

APPENDIX E

PAST PARTICIPANT SURVEY INTRODUCTION LETTER



March 11, 2013

Dear study abroad returnee,

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Keith Wetzel in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University (ASU).

I am conducting a research study to investigate your feedback on a study abroad pre-departure course that will focus primarily on cross-cultural development and understanding. I am inviting your participation, which will involve completing an online survey. The survey will take approximately 8-12 minutes to complete and submit.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can skip questions if you wish. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the survey.

Your responses are confidential and you will remain anonymous as your responses do not provide any personal information that can be shared. When presenting the collected data, I will refer to you as a past participant on an ASU study abroad program. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. The results of this study may be used in my dissertation, a presentation, or publications but your name will not be known.

This is a needs assessment for study abroad returnees in the specific area of pre-departure cross-cultural development and preparation. The purpose is to better understand the needs of ASU students, before going abroad, on the topic of cross-cultural preparation and training. All feedback will be used as quality data in designing a course for ASU students during the fall 2013 semester at ASU. The data you provide will be used to inform the curriculum design of the course and strategically assist the researcher in meeting the needs of future study abroad participants at ASU.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Keith Wetzel at [Keith.Wetzel@asu.edu](mailto:Keith.Wetzel@asu.edu) and Adam Henry at [Adam.Keith.Henry@asu.edu](mailto:Adam.Keith.Henry@asu.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Submission of the survey will be considered your consent to participate.

Sincerely,

Adam Henry

APPENDIX F  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER  
FOR STUDY ABROAD PAST PARTICIPANT SURVEY



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Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

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**To:** Keith Wetzel  
FAB

**From:**  Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 03/13/2013

**Committee Action:** **Exemption Granted**

**IRB Action Date:** 03/13/2013

**IRB Protocol #:** 1303008934

**Study Title:** ASU Study Abroad Past Participant Survey

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX G

WEEKLY CLASS EVALUATION

**Weekly Participant Course Content Evaluation, Fall 2013 SGS 484**

**This is for week (please circle)** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Directions:** Please **CIRCLE** the extent to which you agree with the following statements: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Not Applicable*

Today's class met the stated learning objectives for the unit.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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Today's class material will be relevant to my international experience or long-term (global) career goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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I will be able to be more successful while abroad/global workforce as a result of completing today's class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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Today's class content helped increase my knowledge on the topics.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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Overall, today's class was effective.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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The instructor(s) demonstrated extensive knowledge of the subject matter today.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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The instructor provided relevant examples today.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
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**Additional Questions:**

1. What do you feel were the least valuable aspects of today's class as they relate to your preparation for your international experience or future international professional experiences?
2. What do you feel were the most valuable aspects of today's class as they relate to your preparation for your international experience or future international professional experiences?
3. What theme, concept, or idea will you take from today's class and use or practice during your international experience or potential global workforce environment? Why?

APPENDIX H  
STUDENT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How did the course content and assignments affect you from a cultural learning standpoint?
  2. In what specific ways were the course Units (Units 1-10) helpful to you?
  3. Based on what you learned through this course, do you believe that you are now experiencing views, ideas or beliefs that are different than you are used to or different from when you started the course? If so, in what ways?
  4. At this point I'd like to hear from you regarding what specific cultural competencies you feel like you gained through this course. How?
  5. From the first class until now, have you seen the instructor, Mr. Henry, grow in his teaching skills?
  6. Have you critically examined your assumptions about your own cultural values or identity through this course? If so, in what specific ways?
  7. Would you say that you have experienced any disorientation in your values, knowledge, or identity through this course? If so, how?
- 

If time permits, you can ask these questions:

1. Is there anything else we haven't discussed yet that you think is important for the School of Politics and Global Studies to know about as Mr. Henry teaches this course again in the spring?
2. In what ways do you feel that the course Units fell short in helping you reach your cultural goals?



APPENDIX I

SELF-REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ENTRY PROMPTS

### **Journal Prompt Assignment #1**

Students are to answer these questions in a Word document, print the responses, and submit them to the instructor. Even though these are typically personal and reflective in nature, they are still to be considered formal writing assignments. Please refrain from using slang, abbreviations, etc. and make sure these are well-written and free from grammatical errors. A maximum of one paragraph (3-5 sentences) is expected per question.

1. What ideologies are you taking with you on your international experience or when you interact with people of other cultures? Identifying these beliefs and their source may help you when you are challenged by those with a different point of view.
2. What expectations and what preconceived notions do you have of your host culture or intended host culture (choose one if you have not selected a program)? How do you see yourself interacting with the host culture in light of your expectations and preconceived notions?

Source of questions: <http://www.wou.edu/provost/studyabroad/nafsa.php>

### **Journal Prompt Assignment #2**

Students are to answer these questions in a Word document, print the responses, and submit them to the instructor **AT THE START OF WEEK 7 IN CLASS**. Even though these are typically personal and reflective in nature, they are still to be considered formal writing assignments. Please refrain from using slang, abbreviations, etc. and make sure these are well-written and free from grammatical errors. A maximum of one paragraph (3-5 sentences) is expected per question. Students should respond to questions 2-4, after understanding the content in question 1.

1. Read and understand “Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions: Understanding Workplace Values Around the World” available at [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_66.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_66.htm)
2. Indicate and locate your study/internship/work abroad host culture here: <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>. Read about your study/internship/work abroad host culture and understand it. Then compare it to your own culture.
3. What cultural competencies (as defined on page 2 of this rubric) can you gain before going abroad that will help overcome any potential challenges that you may identify between your culture and your host culture? Briefly explain why.

### **Journal Prompt Assignment #3**

1. Culture has five basic characteristics: It is learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic. All cultures share these basic features.

#1: Culture is learned. It is not biological; we do not inherit it. Much of learning culture is unconscious. We learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. The process of learning culture is known as enculturation. While all humans have basic biological needs such as food, sleep, and sex, the way we fulfill those needs varies cross-culturally.

#2: Culture is shared. Because we share culture with other members of our group, we are able to act in socially appropriate ways as well as predict how others will act. Despite the shared nature of culture, that doesn't mean that culture is homogenous (the same). The multiple cultural worlds that exist in any society are discussed in detail below.

#3: Culture is based on symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Symbols vary cross-culturally and are arbitrary. They only have meaning when people in a culture agree on their use. Language, money, and art are all symbols. Language is the most important symbolic component of culture.

#4: Culture is integrated. This is known as holism, or the various parts of a culture being interconnected. All aspects of a culture are related to one another and to truly understand a culture, one must learn about all of its parts, not only a few.

#5: Culture is dynamic. This simply means that cultures interact and change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. All cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system must adjust.

Source of culture definitions: <http://home.earthlink.net/~youngturck/Chapter8.htm>

2. Write 2-4 sentences about 3 of the 5 “characteristics of culture” based on the following:

- a. Your own interpretations of culture
- b. What you have learned about culture in this course?
- c. What you have learned about applying cultural sensitivity and awareness in this course?
- d. How has your cultural learning and awareness increased in this course?

APPENDIX J  
RESEARCH JOURNAL PROMPTS

*Objective: To assist in answering RQ #3:*

How has developing the curriculum, teaching the curriculum, and implementing the innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and the Assistant Director of the Arizona State Study Abroad Office?

1. How are your leadership skills being developed through this process?
2. How are your skills being developed through this process?
3. What important lesson(s) are you learning about the power of effective communication?
4. How have you evolved as a leader since the last time you wrote in this journal?  
What insights have you gained about your talents and strengths?
5. What have you learned about intercultural development that will influence your practice in the future?

APPENDIX K  
DATA COLLECTION PLAN

**Week 1 (week of August 26, 2013)**

1. Complete the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS)
2. Complete the “In-Take Form”
3. Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 1
4. Read the “Informed Consent Letter,” sign, date, print and give to Instructor on first day of class

**Week 2 (week of September 2, 2013)**

1. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) – pre-test
2. Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 2

**Week 3 (week of September 9, 2013)**

1. Self-Reflection #1
2. Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 3

**Week 4 (week of September 16, 2013)**

There was no data collection this week, except at the end of class, the Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 4.

**Week 5 (week of September 23, 2013)**

There was no data collection this week, except at the end of class, the Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 5.

**Week 6 (week of September 30, 2013)**

There was no data collection this week, except at the end of class, the Weekly Class

Evaluation: Week 6.

**Week 7 (week of October 7, 2013)**

1. Self-Reflection #2
2. Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 7

**Week 8 (week of October 14, 2013)**

There was no data collection this week, except at the end of class, the Weekly Class

Evaluation: Week 8.

**Week 9 (week of October 21, 2013)**

1. Self-Reflection #3
2. Weekly Class Evaluation: Week 9

**Week 10 (week of October 28, 2013)**

1. Complete and submit the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) – post-test
2. Student focus groups (8 were facilitated)



APPENDIX L

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE WORKPLACE

February 27, 2013

Dear Amy,

As a doctoral student within Arizona State University's (ASU) Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC), it is required that I have written documentation from you, my supervisor of the ASU Study Abroad Office, for the last year of my degree program. Specifically, as I continue to develop my dissertation proposal and before I obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I would like to receive consent to continue my research and all that is included in this extensive process. Although my research participants are ASU Global Studies majors within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, many of them plan to study abroad in one of our approved programs. None of my teaching will take place during work hours as the classes will be taught after my regular schedule of 7:00am-4:00pm Monday-Friday. However, I would like support from you before collecting all my data during the fall 2013 semester. My upcoming schedule is the following:

1. Spring 2013 – defend my proposal on April 23, 2013 (I will take this day off using a vacation day)
2. Summer 2013 – continue writing the curriculum and piloting my assessment tools plus an elective course that takes place on the Tempe Campus after my normal work hours
3. Fall 2013 – teach “SGS 484” after 4pm on Tuesday and potentially Wednesday evenings; collect data; facilitate interviews
4. Spring 2014 – analyze and develop findings (expected graduation date: May 2014)

The following aspects of my research may affect the ASU Study Abroad Office and for this reason, I would like to formally communicate them to you.

**Purpose of the research:** The purpose of this mixed methods research study is to further investigate the impact of a study abroad pre-departure preparation course and how it can assist ASU students to gain intercultural awareness and development before they study abroad or participate in an international internship.

**Research questions:** (1) What cultural impact does a pre-international experience course have on students who complete the course before studying or interning abroad? (2) What specific cultural competencies are gained through participating in the pre-departure study abroad course? (3) How has developing this curriculum and innovation influenced and informed my practice as an international educator and an Assistant Director of the Study Abroad Office?

**Expected and desired outcomes of the study:** The ASU School of Politics and Global Studies (SPGS) incorporates some or all of the course content into their curriculum; the

ASU Study Abroad Office begins promoting the course to students before they go abroad; the Study Abroad Office works with an academic unit at ASU to offer this student to all study abroad participants; ASU incorporates the curriculum into other disciplines at ASU; participants show growth in cultural competencies from the first day to the last day of the course.

**Research participants:** 20-35 Global Studies majors enrolled in SGS 484 during the fall 2013 semester at Arizona State University

**Frequency of meetings:** I will meet with the research participants the first 8 weeks of the fall 2013 semester in the evenings (after my work hours). We will meet during week 9 and 10 for interviews and data collection follow-up.

**Assessment instruments:** 1) Baseline study (need to receive this input from past study abroad participants and need your full permission to contact these students) 2) Cultural Experience Survey 3) Self-reflective journals 4) Pre and posttest of reliable cultural assessment 5) Semi-formal interviews 6) Digital ethnography 7) Cultural simulation 8) ASU course evaluation provided by SPGS

**Utilization of Study Abroad Office staff:** I would like to utilize the knowledge and expertise of some of our Study Abroad Office professional staff throughout the curriculum. Specifically, I would like to bring some of our International Coordinators into the classroom as outside guest speakers to help influence the participants in specific areas: culture stress, funding study abroad programs, health & safety and re-entry resources.

**Meeting rooms:** All of the courses will take place in the COOR building. However, I would like to request that use of an SAO conference room for interviews after week 8.

**Dates of intervention:** August 26-October 14, 2013

**Resources needed:** SAO meeting space for interviews

**Who to share findings with:** If the results of the study are positive, I would like to speak with you about potentially working with the right academic unit or college to offer this course in the future to all study abroad participants, or to begin offering the 8 course modules as potential workshops to study abroad outbound students at ASU.

I appreciate you reading through this letter and for considering the requests included. Please let me know if you have any questions and/or concerns about the content of this course. I am grateful for all of your support and encouragement throughout this process. As a result, I am growing as a professional and continue to try and implement all that I am learning in the program into our workplace.

Sincerely,

Adam

Adam Henry  
Doctoral Student  
Ed.D. in Leadership and Innovation

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*I acknowledge that I have read through and understand this letter and sign my name to show that I am support of this particular doctoral student moving forward with his/her research as it relates and affects our work environment.*

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Name, Title

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Date

APPENDIX M  
FOCUS GROUP COP QUESTIONS

1. How have you seen the instructor, Adam Henry, grow professionally during this course?
2. What leadership skills or abilities have you seen in Adam Henry throughout the implementation of this innovation?
3. How did you see or experience Adam Henry influence and inform the curriculum based on his past international experiences and knowledge on the topic?
4. If you were asked about Adam's teaching philosophy, how would you respond?
5. What do you consider Adam's areas of growth with the development of this course and implementation of it?
6. What do you see as Adam's strengths with the development of this course and implementation of it?
7. Tell me more about Adam's communication and teamwork skills.

APPENDIX N

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR STUDY



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Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

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**To:** Keith Wetzel  
FAB

**From:** Mark Roosa, Chair   
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 07/25/2013

**Committee Action:** Exemption Granted

**IRB Action Date:** 07/25/2013

**IRB Protocol #:** 1307009403

**Study Title:** Dissertation: The Making of Global Citizens: A Cultural Awareness and Adaption  
Intervention in a University Setting

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.