

REFLECTIONS IN STUDY ABROAD: EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCE OF FIRST  
YEAR STUDENTS ON A SHORT TERM STUDY TOUR TO CHINA

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2015

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To Mom

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you first to Dr. Dale F. Campbell, my doctoral chair and program advisor, who has guided me as a professor and mentor. To my cohort, who mentored and supported me when I needed it the most, through the long nights of studying and the even longer discussions where the real business gets done. Charlie, during the roughest times I remembered my promise to you and wish you were here to celebrate with us.

I would not be the woman I am today without my mother, who has nurtured, loved, and supported me and my wild dreams, thank you for the passion for travel and the desire to help others. Your spirit has given me the confidence and curiosity to travel the world and I've somehow made a career out of it. To my friends, Elizabeth Humberstone, Heather Lear, and Patrick Irby especially, who were there during the long nights and many tears. As Mindy Kaling says, "a best friend isn't a person, it's a tier" and without my tier, I would not have crossed this finish line.

Professionally, I have had many mentors who have helped along the way but more than anything, thank you to Ana Portocarrero and Dr. Hyunjoo Oh, you have both given me opportunities to grow and have supported when I needed it the most. Everyone at the Warrington College of Business who has taught, mentored, supervised, or traveled abroad with me, I have always felt at home on your campus and would not be the academic or professional I've become without the Warrington family.

And finally, to the countries of China and India for taking me in when I needed to run, teaching me the importance of intercultural experiences first hand, and giving me stories for a lifetime to come.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

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Chair: Dale F. Campbell

Major: Higher Education Administration

This study investigates undergraduate business students' experiences through reflective narratives during a short term study abroad program to China. According to the IEE's *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (2014), students are studying abroad more than ever before but for shorter periods of time. Studies have begun uncovering students' experiences during these study abroad programs but very few have focused on students' personal experiences and fewer have focused on short term programs in non-Western European locations.

Utilizing personal, reflective journals I sought to understand how students reflect on their experiences while abroad without direction. Specifically, I investigated a) what experiences students chose to write about in reflective narratives and b) how students connected their organized academic activities with their personal lives. Following a postmodern epistemology, I collected data through daily reflective journaling and utilized phenomenological hermeneutical analysis to understand the meanings of the study abroad experience. The participants were first year students participating in an education abroad program for the first time. I utilized structural and thematic analyses methods to analyze the reflective journals.

My study resulted in important insights into the experiences students reflect on while participating on short term study abroad experiences, specifically a) without guided mentorship and direction they often fail to make the important connections in their own world to cycle through the Experiential Learning Theory's continuum and b) they choose to reflect on a multitude of the day's activities but lack the in depth thought process to engage in Intercultural Maturity Learning. This study is a source of valuable information for institutions, faculty, and private companies that specialize in running short term study abroad programs aiming to enhance experiential learning experiences and the overall experience of the study abroad program for students.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the experiences by first-year students on a short term (three weeks) study tour to China through their daily journal narratives. When I began this journey, I was inspired by Thomas Friedman's notion that the world is "flattening." As communication and transportation brings peoples, cultures, traditions, languages, and the world together in a new society. With each new world event shaping local happenings from afar (Giddens 1990) we are required to rethink "education for citizenship" so our students are prepared to be active global citizens in this flattening world (Battistoni, Longo, and Jayanandhan 2009). Global citizenship, a transnational and local idea, crosses more than nations' borders (Barber 2006) and like that, study abroad is more than just sending a student abroad. The larger implications of study abroad, specifically short term programs, are still widely unknown in the field and this introductory study sought out to begin to understand the student experiences.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The most recent launch of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005) demonstrates the United States Government's dedication to encouraging study abroad and increasing incoming foreign students for the greater good of the nation. Developed in 2004, Congress stresses the importance of study abroad and the fundamental need for an internationally competent society, which can be achieved through a globalized education. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the United States sent 289,408 students abroad for academic credit, which makes up about 9% of students study abroad before graduating. The steady growth has been encouraging, but more has to be done to ensure America's future is prepared for the

global society we operate in daily. With a focus on increasing the number of students studying abroad, the Lincoln Commission also focuses on diversifying the students who study abroad, where students study abroad, and funding study abroad for low-income students. Short term programs, defined as programs less than eight weeks in duration, are seen to be more accessible to diversified groups of students such as full time employees, family caretakers, and students with learning disabilities (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). With government support of study abroad, encouraging more students to study abroad more than ever before, it is likely that many students, specifically diversified groups, will continue to choose short term program (Mills, Deviney, & Ball, 2010).

While there are valuable educational lessons and personal growth opportunities that happen on study abroad activities and as researchers, we are still unaware of many of the personal experiences. This study aims to begin to understand the experiences and phenomena students may experience on study programs that are missed in traditional quantitative research.

### **Purpose of Study**

The amount and diversity of short term study abroad programs has grown over the past 20 years to become the second most popular type of study abroad program in which students will participate. While the short term program is a growing trend, most research in the field is focused on long term programs leaving a gap in literature about the increasingly popular short term program. The purpose of my study was to investigate students' personal narratives during a short term faculty led study tour to China and examine how they connect their academic and programmed experiences to their personal lives. To do this, I collected personal student journals, 43 narratives in all, to learn how students viewed their international and intercultural experiences, and to

learn students' perceptions of activities they found integral to their experience and what was helpful in their cultural sense-making process.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This study was guided by the theoretical perspective of phenomenological hermeneutics. Phenomenological hermeneutics is at the intersection of the study of the lived experience (phenomenology) and the interpretation of text (Ricoeur, 2007). This theoretical perspective allowed me to understand the lived experience of study abroad through the interpretation of reflective narrative texts.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of my study was to gain an understanding of the student experience on study tours through their own reflective narratives. Specifically, how students recapture and reflect on their experiences while abroad and what they choose to focus on. To gain an understanding of the experiences of my participants, my research was guided by two research questions:

- What do students choose to write about in written narratives of their study abroad experiences?
- How do first year students connect their organized academic activities with their personal lives?

### **Methodology**

This study utilized qualitative narrative research methods to gain an understanding of the student experience. In the beginning stages of my research, I constructed open research questions to not limit the data I collected or skew the participants' results. By using qualitative methodology, I explored the individual experiences of the phenomenon of study abroad through the participants own words utilizing interpretative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As the key instrument in the data

analysis, I searched to understand the meaning of the events the students experience through their own words (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). Using the individual participant as the focus of my study, I aimed to learn how the participants engaged and make sense of the world and their experiences (Crotty, 1998).

The theoretical framework used for this study was phenomenological hermeneutics. Phenomenology, developed to understand the lived experience (phenomenon), and hermeneutics, which allows the researcher to analyze texts to create an interpretation. Merging these two philosophies, Ricoeur (2007) explains that “[hermeneutics has the means to account for both the insurmountable character of the ideological phenomenon and the possibility of beginning, without being able to finish, a critique of ideology” (p. 35). Intertwining phenomenology and hermeneutics in my study, I am able to search the understandable meaning of the experiences of study abroad in the narrative reflective journals. Utilizing the concept of “distanciation,” first attributed to Heidegger, described by Ricoeur (2007) it is important to separate the text from the creator of the text. Simpler, in order to understand the phenomenon through the text, the researcher must search for an understanding of the text as it relates to the world.

### **Conceptual Frameworks**

The Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Maturity Learning conceptual frameworks were utilized to guide this study. Experience as learning, as opposed to the teacher transmitting information to the student, is at the foundation of *Experiential Learning Theory* (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Focusing on the student creating knowledge through grasping and transforming experiences, students try and test out experiences in their creation of knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Intercultural Maturity is largely based on

Kegan's theory of the evolution of consciousness presented in his book, *In over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1994).

### **Significance of Study**

While the United States government is continually supporting and promoting study abroad activities as recent as the February 2014 initiative, Generation Study Abroad. Partnering up with over 150 higher education institutions, Generation Study Abroad seeks to bring employers, governments, associations, and others together to seek to find ways to double the U.S. citizen study abroad student population to 600,000 by the 2017/2018 academic year (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2013). With continued support from the government, it is important for academic research to focus on the learning outcomes students are capable of achieving through study abroad.

Most study abroad research has been focused on traditional study abroad locations in Europe, long-term study abroad programs, or programs focused on language acquisition (Czerwionka, Artamonova, & Barbosa, 2014; Jackson, 2006). While there are many overlying topics that pertain to students studying abroad regardless of their destination, style, or length of program it is imperative that researchers begin to focus on students participating in a greater variety of study abroad programs. As short term programs can be extremely different from traditional programs, further research needs to focus on the differences in student learning outcomes and if they ultimately factor into a better learning experience for a student.

The data that does exist on short term study programs is mostly pre and post-survey, quantitative method studies (Czerwionka et al., 2014). Of the few qualitative studies, even fewer studies focus on the students' experiences and stories during the program (Jackson, 2006). By exploring student experiences while on their sojourn, this

study will attempt to capture the complexities of the student experience on study abroad.

By researching student narratives, I was able to understand how participants reflect on their experiences on study abroad programs. By utilizing phenomenological hermeneutics to guide the data collection of the participants' reflective narratives, I sought to understand how the students experienced study abroad through their own words. Upon collecting my data through a convenience sample based on criterion sampling, I was able to collect narratively rich reflective journals written by students on each day of their study abroad program. Utilizing a multi-step qualitative analysis process I first used structural analysis to break apart the daily journal entries to larger then smaller narratives, then used a thematic analysis to understand the stories and experiences the participants were conveying in their reflective journals.

### **Limitations**

As the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) it is important for me, as the researcher, to be aware and honest about my experiences and identity, specifically how they will influence the data collection and analyses. Specifically, as a professional in study abroad student affairs and a faculty member who has interacted and taught students internationally, it was important to me to rely on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide my research methodology. Aiming to distort the participants' experiences and narratives the least, I followed qualitative research best practices and will elaborate on my methodologies in Chapter Three.

### **Delimitations**

The timeframe or delimitation of this study was from research produced in real time as students were participating in the study abroad experience. Students wrote daily

journal entries filled with narratives about their experiences and reflections. These journals were submitted within one week of completion of their experience to ensure the information gathered was from the phenomenon of study abroad and not influenced by outside events.

### **Description of Chapters**

My dissertation begins with this introductory chapter that summarizes my research process and study. Following this chapter, I review the literature used to guide my study in Chapter Two. I first give a history and overview of study abroad, specifically as it relates to students from the U.S. leaving to study in foreign countries including the types, duration, educational outcomes, and critiques of study abroad. In this section I lay a foundation for the importance of my study and where it fits in with the literature and future of research in the field. Next, I review the theoretical concepts of Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Maturity Learning. These theoretical and conceptual frameworks are an important foundation for my research methods and analysis and helped to guide my study.

In the next chapter, Chapter Three, I describe my qualitative research methods. Starting with a summary of the importance of qualitative research and how it relates to my research questions, I discuss how phenomenological hermeneutics helped to guide my methodology. Next, I describe the setting of the research and the type of study tour program the students sampled participated in abroad. Introducing my data collection methods, I describe reflective journaling, demographic questionnaire, communication with participants, and reflective field notes. Once my research was collected, it was important to chronicle my data analysis procedures which included structural analysis

and thematic narrative analysis. I finish my chapter on my research methods with a subjectivity statement and limitations of my study.

The findings of my study will be presented in Chapter Four. I begin with introductory remarks of my study and a biographical sketch of my participants. Utilizing the data analysis methods described in the chapter prior, I present the substantive findings from the participants' reflective journals. Finally, in Chapter Five, the final chapter, I summarize importance of my study and conclusions of the research. I tie my research into current trends in international education by highlighting the study's implications for higher education including recommendations for future research and the study's limitations.

### **Definition of Terms**

- Culture: A group of people subscribing to or belonging to a way of life or social environment (Oxford English Dictionary, 2005) that influences communication and knowledge transfer between other members (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).
- Intercultural Competence: Also known as "intercultural communication competence" is the ability to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts to achieve one's goals to some degree. (Deardorff, 2006, Bennett and Bennett, 2004)
- Intercultural Learning: "Acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange." (Bennett, 2009)
- Intercultural Maturity: "Multi-dimensional and consisting of a range of attributes, including understanding (the cognitive dimension), sensitivity to others (the interpersonal dimension), and a sense of oneself that enables one to listen to and learn from others (the intrapersonal dimension)." (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574)
- International Education: Educational activities that contribute to internationalization at an institution. These can include on and off campus activities that are academic or co-curricular. (Forum on Education Abroad, 2009)

- Short Term Study Abroad: A study abroad program 8-weeks in length or less (IIE, 2014)
- Study Abroad: Academic education that takes place outside the student's home education. This education includes all international experiences that provide learning opportunities and is not limited to credit-seeking programs (IIE, 2014)

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Higher education institutions in the United States and across the globe are encouraging and oftentimes requiring students to participate in a multitude of study abroad opportunities before graduation (Ching, Lien, & Chao, 2014). Appreciation for diversity and cultural competency is becoming a needed skill to succeed today (Bikson & Law, 1994). Exposure to varying backgrounds, languages, customs, and religious beliefs are some of the methods students use to cultivate intercultural appreciation. Not only are global and intercultural experiences important to the development of a student, but the skills attained during international experiences are highly sought after by employers believing study abroad enhances desired skills (Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008). Communicating and interacting with differing backgrounds develops strong intercultural understanding, and executives of Fortune 500 companies increasingly desire employees that are capable and successful in working and communicating with those with different backgrounds (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009).

This chapter provides a review of literature related to study abroad focusing on learning outcomes of American students studying abroad. It begins by giving an historical overview of study abroad from the first known cross-cultural exchanges over two thousand years ago to the current trends of study abroad and what it means in the United States today. As study abroad is an overarching term that describes many different types of educational experiences abroad, I outline the different types and durations of study abroad education, specifically highlighting the current trends in U.S. higher education abroad. Next, I review the educational outcomes and critiques of study

abroad, focusing on the current literature in short term programs. Finally, I will review the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in my study including Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Maturity Learning.

### **History of Study Abroad**

Students have been leaving their hometowns to study in foreign lands for more than 2,000 years. The University of Taxila in India attracted students from the region and sent students to foreign institutions as early as 273-232 B.C.E., while the T'ang Dynasty of China encouraged students to study an internationalized education from the seventh through tenth centuries B.C.E. (Furnham & Bochner, 1982). These trends continued to the European tradition of the Grand Tours to Western Europe, which later was adopted into United States society although they were often associated with leisure and libertinism instead of academic coursework (Gore, 2005).

Formal and rigorous international educational experiences at U.S. institutions began in the 1920s with junior year abroad programs (Marion, 1974). These junior year programs were comprised predominately of women studying liberal arts education in European locations (Gore, 2005). In the past hundred years study abroad has become a diverse opportunity to internationalize the higher education experience.

Over time, study abroad programs grew from junior year abroad programs to include a variety of majors and different types of study opportunities through support from the U.S. government. As globalization has increased and the American economy is increasingly tied to the world's markets, it is becoming imperative for students do more than visit the museums of Europe on an elite study abroad program and an emphasis is continually being placed on strategic learning outcomes of study abroad (Long, Akande, Purdy, & Nakano, 2010).

In 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton released a policy statement citing the importance of citizens learning about the world, other languages, and cultures in regards to advancements in international education (Clinton, 2000). The “Year of Study Abroad,” designated by the United States Senate in 2006 to help the 2005 joint federal commission established by Congress and President George Walker Bush’s goal of sending one million U.S. students to study abroad (annually) by the 2016-2017 academic year is an example of how the global economy and competitiveness has prompted the United States to consider study abroad as a significant resource for the country (Stroud 2010). Through government support and their own needs for internationalization, institutions are now making internationalization movements critical in their curriculum (Watson, Siska, & Wolfel, 2013), which have continued to push study abroad as an opportunity for students and faculty to engage and learn other languages and foreign cultures through a variety of international education opportunities.

An all-time high of 289,408 U.S. students studied abroad in the 2012-2013 school year, up 180% from the 2001-2002 academic year of 160,920 students and 1.2% over the previous year (IIE, 2014). Of these students 65.3% were woman, and 76.3% were white; and junior and senior students made up the largest student populations, at 34.7% and 24.7% respectively.

### **Overview of Study Abroad**

While diverse campuses are important introductions to intercultural competency, they cannot replace the unique experience of leaving one’s home country to study in a foreign country (Braskamp et al., 2009). Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) break down multicultural education into five steps: understanding culture, learning about other cultures, deconstructing White culture, recognizing legitimacy in other cultures, and

developing a multicultural outlook. Pires (2000) suggests that lessons learned from study abroad fall into various categories including “learning about other cultures, about oneself, about one’s own country from another culture’s perspective, about foreign assistance to developing countries, and about possible culture career directions.” As intercultural awareness cannot be fully understood until students leave the comforts of home to study in a foreign environment, different from their own, it is imperative that collegiate institutions focus on the importance of study abroad.

### **Types of Study Abroad programs**

There are many study abroad opportunities – direct enrollment, “Island Programs,” and hybrid programs are just a few of the types of study abroad programs American students can participate in. Direct enrollment programs are when students directly enroll into the host institutions’ courses (Kehl & Morris, 2008). “Island Programs” are self-contained academic programs where students take courses with students from the same program and are often taught by professors from their home country. Students enrolled in “Island Programs” do not directly enroll at the institution and do not take courses with students outside their program. “Island Programs” traditionally include outside activities such as field trips and other hands on experiences (Pires, 2000).

Hybrid programs are mixed programs where students enroll directly into the foreign institution but there may be courses designed especially for the exchange students (such as language courses) and there may be experiential learning opportunities related to their activities. Experiential learning, a process where students go beyond the traditional classroom to interact with people and problems in a community, has significant returns on investment. Students participating in this type of

learning are able to observe, listen, communicate and problem solve in a real world setting (Pires, 2000).

Study abroad programs, regardless of the type, can all offer an opportunity for an American student to learn more about themselves and a new locale. They are able to make the personal connections and see the vast differences within villages, cities, countries, and the continent. Students returning from study abroad opportunities share stories of their experiences and become informal ambassadors representing the location they studied.

According to Pires, (2000) study abroad locations with languages, cultures, and customs vastly different from those of the United States help U.S. students learn skills such as negotiating, confidence, accomplishments, tolerance, and compassion. Students looking to learn and hone these traits while on their study abroad need a program where they will be guaranteed a safe learning and living environment that allows for inter and intra-personal growth. These students must feel positive encouragement from their mentors and family, and feel as if their learning outcomes will be relevant in their future endeavors.

### **Duration of Study Abroad**

The Institute of International Education's *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (IIE, 2014) breaks study abroad durations into the following categories: Summer Term, One Semester, Eight Weeks or Less during Academic Year, January Term, Academic Year, One-Quarter, Two-Quarters, Calendar Year, and Other. Of these options, Summer Term and One Semester study abroad are the most popular type of programs with 37.8% and 33.6% respectively in the 2012-2013 academic year and fewer than 3.1% of students study abroad for a full academic year

(IIE, 2014). When all summer programs and programs eight weeks or fewer are combined, *The Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (2014) reports they made up 60.3% of all students participating in education abroad. This growing trend towards shorter study abroad raises concerns in the ability for students to achieve the same learning outcomes as their peers on longer study abroad opportunities. Short term study abroad has not always been the most popular choice for education abroad, and in 1996-1997 only 3.3% of the students who studied abroad were in a short term program (Donnelly-Smith 2009).

Short term faculty-led programs have seen an increase as institutions and the government have encouraged more students to study abroad. While short term programs are open to more students based on the time commitment of less than 8 weeks or a summer as opposed to an academic semester or full year, they are seen as more accessible to non-traditional students and students in demanding academic programs. There are a multitude of reasons students are not able to participate in a semester exchange. Some of these reasons include: students who work full-time, students who have an internship opportunity, students who lack financial support or means, students who are primary caretakers for family members, or students who have learning disabilities (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Fox, Talbert-Hatch, & Bannatyne, 2014). Programs that require rigorous coursework or require lock-step academic plans such as engineering or technology can also hinder students from being abroad for a long term and programs in these majors are becoming more popular (Fox et al., 2014). Not all students have the means, availability, or opportunity to participate in long term programs and for various reasons but still strive for the opportunity to engage and learn

in international education. Many institutions are turning to short term programs to provide international education opportunities that result in many of the same learning outcomes as traditional study abroad without asking students to put their lives on hold (Mills et al. 2010).

Short term programs also allow for students to study in locations where English is not the primary language of instruction or even commonly used in the local community. By arranging many of the trip logistics such as flights, hotel arrangements, and meals, students are able to focus on the educational outcomes during their short stay instead of logistics. Short term programs offer students the opportunity to leave their comfort zone by removing many of the barriers of traditional study abroad (Mills et al., 2010).

As short term programs are more accessible to a variety of students, universities are developing and promoting more of these types of programs. They are often seen as gateway programs for students who have never been out of the country or are not comfortable moving to a foreign place alone. By allowing students to initially study abroad with a high comfort level, they are able to gain the skills needed to acclimatize to a foreign country and study in a cross-cultural environment. While the bulk of literature on study abroad is qualitative based on longer-term programs, most literature on short term study abroad programs was negative until recently. Critiques for short term programs suggest that they lack the academic rigor and immersion that students on longer programs experience. Other academics, however, suggest that the combination of classroom teaching and international experience give students a third space to create meaning (Lumkes, Hallett, & Vallade, 2009).

## **Educational Outcomes of Study Abroad**

Students who choose to study abroad go for a variety of reasons including a desire to see other countries, diversify from their peers, and gain academic and professional experience. D'Acquisto (2009) argues that students are looking for opportunities to develop skills that will help them to be successful on the study abroad opportunity and the rest of their lives. Students are eager to see daily life in foreign locations are aware that the growing diversity in the United States will continue to play an integral role in their career opportunities and success.

After the initial culture shock of a study abroad experience, students are able to adapt to and understand their culture (Hutchings et. al. 2002). Even in short term study abroad programs, Chieffo and Griffiths (2003, 2004), found that students participating in Short term programs through the University of Delaware had significant changes in in on the students' intellectual and personal lives including growth and development, awareness, and global interdependence.

Research on short term study abroad programs, while still limited, are begging to show generalizable results of situational factors unique to international or intercultural learning that provide the opportunity for growth and learning abroad (Ching et al., 2014). These situational factors provide the environment for students to learn a multitude of skills that include language learning, intercultural awareness, personal development, career preparedness, global networks, (Allen, 2010; Ching et al., 2014; Dryer, 2004; Hsu, 2014; Norris & Gilespe, 2009).

Programs as short as one month exchanges have been shown to have significant impact on participants' cultural awareness (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). In their study, 2,300 students from the United States sent on a short term program abroad and

their concepts of global awareness was significantly higher than the students who did not participate in a program abroad. There have been many studies on the cross-cultural or intercultural competencies students gain while participating in study abroad programs (Allen, 2010; Hsu, 2014; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). Students participating in study abroad programs are learning both in the classroom through structured course activities and outside of the classroom as they interact with their host environment throughout their experience and Laubsher (1994) and Erwin and Coleman (1998) emphasize the importance of out-of-classroom experiences in regards to their cross-cultural education. Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) elaborate that the skills involved with study abroad such as self-reflection on behavior and the techniques students utilize to learn about and implement when learning to adapt to a host culture's norms are more than simply learning intercultural skills.

Study abroad allows students to gain marketable skills for their professional lives after college. According to Sachu, Brasher, & Fee (2010) these goals include increasing knowledge, building confidence, and shaping attitudes about global topics. When students participate in programs that formatted to create immersion opportunities, Brux and Fry (2010) argue that study abroad is positive both personally and career wise. With the United States government encouraging study abroad to create more globally minded and competitive students (US Department of Education, 2005) literature supports the claim that it will become increasingly important for professionals in the workforce to have a working knowledge of other cultures and countries (Mills et al. 2010, Hoffa 2007). Study abroad is no longer an optional chance for travel as a

supplemental educational activity and institutions are beginning to see it as an essential part of the undergraduate experience (Biles & Lindley, 2009).

### **Critiques of Study Abroad**

The number of students studying abroad is growing and there is no indication that the number will stop anytime soon. The Lincoln Commission's goal of doubling the number of students studying abroad by 2019 is an easy indicator that study abroad goals reach further than for students to gain a purely global experience. Critiques argue that the U.S. government's push for study abroad focuses on maintaining our global competitiveness in the flattening world instead of explaining the more personal outcomes for both the student and the environment they study in to create a well-rounded global citizen (US Department of Education, 2005).

The current literature on the cross and intercultural advancements of students participating in study abroad suggest that prior preparation and support throughout and even post program can be essential to aid students facing the challenges of study abroad (Allen, 2010; Hsu 2014, Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). These studies show that behavior, cognitive, and affective changes happen, but there are opportunities for enhanced programming that can aid students in their cultural acquisition and learning. In short, for a study abroad program to claim intercultural and other learning outcomes are achieved, there must be programming in place to support and provide for the challenges students face.

While popular, short term programs are often seen as a week-long vacation to a foreign location instead of an intercultural educational experience. Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) suggest ways faculty and institutions can improve the quality of short term programs by reviewing and improving coursework to include research,

service-learning, and interdisciplinary connections to engage and promote learning. With little research on the effect of shorter durations abroad on student's cultural understanding, it is increasingly important for research to begin to make headway to ensure students on short term programs also have learning opportunities to engage and learn culturally given their shorter time abroad (Lemmons, Brannstrom, & Hurd, 2014).

As the numbers of study abroad students increase, programs must increase their capacity to allow for a more diverse group of students. Reaching these goals is a challenge and as quality increases a growing number of critics argue the focus leaves from educational quality and instead to quantity of programs (Lederman, 2007; McCabe, 2001). With an increase in support for short term programs, many students are studying foreign locations that are harder to access or travel without a translator or guide. While this can be seen as a benefit by helping students break out of their comfort zone, critiques argue that with little to no language skills, students struggle understanding the cultural norms of the host culture and are inhibited in their ability to interact appropriately (Molinsky & Perunovic, 2008).

The argument that study abroad programs often focus on the foreign experience over the learning outcomes is not new. Popular study abroad destinations to big cities in Europe often allow for students to continue their American education in a different location. These students live with other American (or foreign students), attend courses specifically for foreign students, and spend their time visiting tourist locations instead of communicating and interacting with locals. While they are living in another location outside of the United States, these "fun" study abroad locations are often the same

collegiate experiences from their home institutions in a different region of the world (Weinberg, 2007).

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The Experiential Learning Theory theoretical and conceptual framework will be utilized to guide this study. Utilizing Hermeneutics, this ethnographic study will focus on the in-depth view of participants' experiences to capture ordinary experiences of study abroad in their natural setting.

#### **Experiential Learning Theory**

Dewey (1938) suggested students should connect their own motives to their learning experiences to enrich their educational experiences to create an environment where they interact with the world around them in an experiential way. This theory, later elaborated on by Kolb & Fry (1979), provides situations in which students are confronted with "real problems in order to provoke critical analysis, hypothesis formulation, problem-solving, and reflection on the effects of their action" (Yang, Webster, & Prosser, 2011). Dewey further suggested that when students connect their own motives to their experiences through goal setting and other activities.

Experience as learning, as opposed to the teacher transmitting information to the student, is at the foundation of *Experiential Learning Theory* (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) as vied in Figure 2-1. Focusing on the student creating knowledge through grasping and transforming experiences, students try and test out experiences in their creation of knowledge (Kolb, 1984). In this theory, "Learners grasp experience through Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC), while they transform it through Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE)." (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; p. 194). Experiences (immediate or concrete) are what allows the learner to observe and

later reflect. Learners then create abstract concepts through the assimilation and distillation of these reflections to act upon new implications (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Students should process through the four models of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting to fully complete their knowledge and Chickering (1977) states that intellectually activity that is not thoroughly checked by observation and analysis does not lead anywhere regardless of its enjoyment.

The four learning styles associated with different approaches to learning in regards to Experiential Learning Theory are: diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating from the Learning Style Inventory (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). These learning styles are not meant to give students a fixed characteristic, instead help the learner understand the dynamic nature of styles of learning that students may experience. Study abroad students have the opportunity to experience situations that question their thinking, feeling, behaving, and communicating which Savicki (2008) describes as the epitome of experiential learning. The Experiential Learning Theory provides a framework and theoretical rationale (Bennett, 2008) for study abroad program design through experiential learning.

### **Intercultural Maturity Learning Model**

King and Baxter Magolda's Intercultural Maturity Theory (2005) seeks to explain intercultural development in college students. The term "Maturity" is used as it focuses on the development capacity to further apply the school of thought. Intercultural Maturity is broken into a multidimensional matrix including cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal. As intercultural development continues to be cited as one of the top desired outcomes of college, King and Baxter Magolda focus existing frameworks such

as Kegan (1994), Ortiz & Rhoads (2000) and Schoem & Hurtado (2001) among others in developing this theory pictured in Figure 2-2.

Intercultural Maturity is largely based on Kegan's theory of the evolution of consciousness presented in his book, *In over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1994). Created to resolve tensions between differentiation and immersion, Kegan's stages are temporary solutions that process throughout the lifetime Kegan's model focuses on three main developmental levels: Cognitive development, where students gain knowledge, Inter-Personal development, where students become sensitive to others and Intra-Personal development, where students are able to interact with others (Evans et al., 2010).

Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) break down multicultural education into five steps: understanding culture, learning about other cultures, deconstructing White culture, recognizing legitimacy in other cultures, and developing a multicultural outlook. This framework is a low-risk approach to intercultural development as students slowly engage and gradually reform how they see the world, themselves and their relations to others (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

In Schoem & Hurtado (2001) intergroup dialog programs are implemented to promote multicultural education. Through establishing guidelines and introductions, developing a shared vocabulary, slowly pursuing difficult topics and then preparing students for post-dialogue and alliance building, Schoem & Hurtado focus on student interaction among students from diverse backgrounds.

Intercultural Maturity does not just explain a student's basic knowledge about other cultures; instead it implies a transformation where students can apply their

experiences in other settings and contexts. This maturity and growth require self-authorship as the ultimate goal is for students to construct their own visions and to apply these decisions in an informed manner throughout inter and intrapersonal interactions (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

While King and Baxter Magolda (2005) argue for the importance of intercultural maturity, it is imperative that these discussions and learning opportunities are taken out of the American classroom. Education abroad is ideal for holistic intercultural growth and development (Braskamp et al., 2009). While King and Baxter Magolda's ends included cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development, Braskamp, Braskamp and Merrill focus on the means towards these goals: Culture, Community, and Curriculum, Co-Curriculum.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Study abroad is a broad term that can describe both a week long study tour and a yearlong internship program. The depth and diversity of study abroad programs are wide and research is beginning to show that no two programs can be created equal. Scholars must continue researching for best practices in study abroad opportunities, specifically short term programs as the growing majority of students are participating in programs 8 weeks or less. There are important lessons and experiences waiting for students on study abroad programs if the administrators and faculty design programs with deliberate student learning outcomes and the resources and infrastructure to support student learning, there are a multitude of lifelong lessons students can take away from their experience abroad.

Students can learn on study abroad program through a variety of methods and I utilize the Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Maturity Learning Model in my

research to understand how the students in my study use reflective journaling in their learning process. The Experiential Learning Theory, as a continuum, is often used as a learning outcome in study abroad but unless done correctly, with mentorship and guidance, students often miss the important steps of goal-setting and putting their reflective observation into action. The Intercultural Maturity Learning Model, which is utilized to explain how students transform to apply their experiences in new settings and cultures through a maturation process and is used as a framework to understand how the students in my study mature through their reflective journaling.

In the following chapter, Chapter Three, I explain my research methods as based on the literature highlighted above that has guided me as I designed my study. The chapters following presents the results of my data collection and finally, I will conclude with a chapter tying the results with current literature.

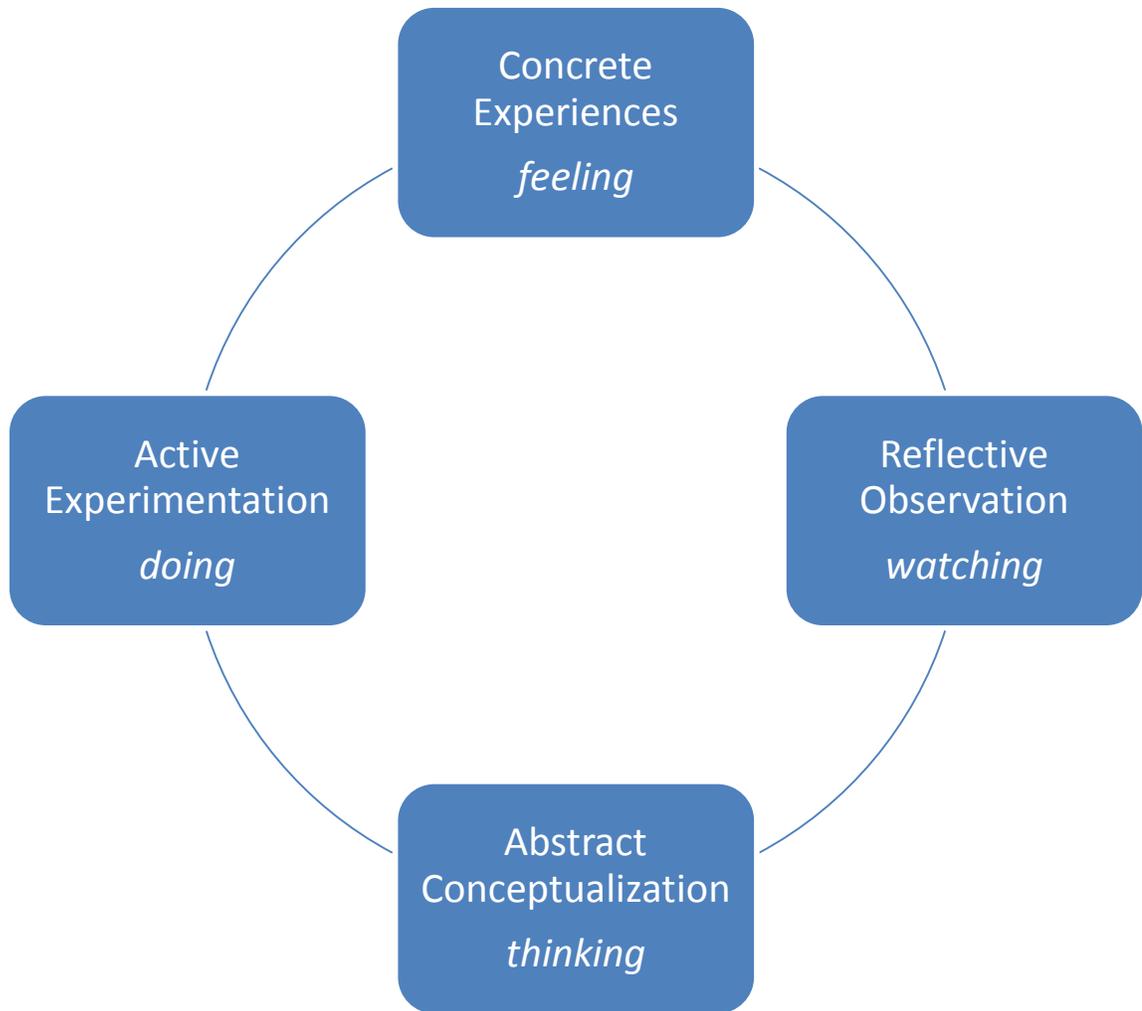


Figure 2-1. Experiential Learning Theory Continuum (Adapted from Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

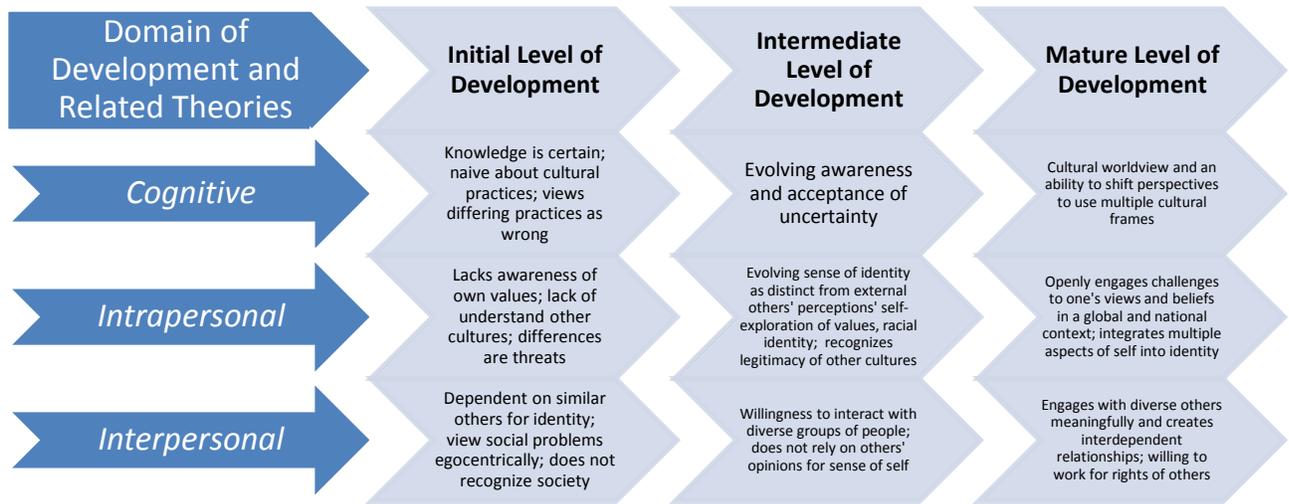


Figure 2-2. A Three-Dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity. Intercultural Maturity is comprised of three major domains, Cognitive, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal as seen on the left hand side. Each domain has steps that students process through on their journey towards Intercultural maturity: Initial Level of Development, Intermediate Level of Development, and Mature Level of Development. (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005)

## CHAPTER 3 METHODS OF INQUIRY

The purpose of my study was to explore the experiences of first-year students on a short term study tour to China. In particular, I wanted to learn what the student participants write about in their own reflective journals and how they travel through the experiential learning process. I choose to focus specifically on undirected reflective journals to gain an understanding of what students choose to reflect on when they are not given direction to not interfere with the personal reflection process.

My study was guided by two research questions:

- What do students choose to write about in written narratives of their study abroad experiences?
- How do students connect their organized academic activities with their personal lives?

This chapter will explain my study's methodology. Utilizing qualitative research methods, I explain the role of hermeneutics as it guided my study using narrative analysis to learn and understand the students' narrative journaling process throughout their time in China. Next, I will discuss how I conducted my study including a discussion of the setting, how I sampled the student population, and how I recruited student participation. Then, I will describe my data collection and analysis methods finishing with a discussion on research quality including the observer effect and limitations.

### **Qualitative Research**

Using qualitative methodology allowed me to gain a better understanding of the individual experiences of the phenomenon of studying abroad through the participant's own words. Where quantitative research looks for relationships between predetermined variables, qualitative research allows a researcher to understand "*how* social

experience is created and given meaning” (emphasis in original, Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, pp. 16). Qualitative researchers search for subject-driven, interpretive, and naturalistic data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Subject driven data focuses on the participant allowing them to guide the research and utilize their own methods of creating data.

Designing a research question or issue is a begging step to qualitative and other types of research (Cheek, 2000). Bogdan & Bilken (2007) recommend the research question describe the intent of the research concisely. Schutt (1996) directs that a researcher choose a research question that is feasible, socially important, relevant, and has accessible data. As I began my research, I found myself grappling with a research question. Having excitement and a passion for the topic is a successful place to start your research question (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007) and I began formulating questions based on current research and literature in the field and my research interested. Creswell (2009) states that a good research question has few key goals and has a specific focus which can be answered within qualitative inquiry.

Beginning my study and research collection with open ended and loose research questions allowed me to collect subject driven qualitative data that allowed the results to be open to an infinite range of possibilities. As I began my research, my research question was “How do students perceive their international experience during a foreign study tour through written narratives” which guided me as I created my study, utilizing narrative methods and interpretative inquiry.

Interpretative inquiry allows researchers to analyze the data as the key instrument, interpretation the various data to find understanding of the phenomenon.

Instead of bringing participants into a lab or a regulated study location, they utilize an up close gathering process by interacting and talking directly with the participants. Qualitative researchers aim to gather data in the natural setting, often where the phenomenon is taking place (Creswell 2009). By utilizing interpretative inquiry, I became the analysis instrument in the study, allowing me to utilize the expertise I gained while interacting and viewing the participants in the natural setting of the international study experience.

Phenomenology allows for the researcher to understand the meaning of the events the students experience through their own words (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). Using the individual participant as the focus of my study, I aimed to learn how the participants engaged and make sense of the world and their experiences (Crotty, 1998). Utilizing multiple forms of data, qualitative research allows for a holistic sample of data (Creswell 2009). Data such as interviews, documents, observations, narratives, photos, and other forms of data are combined for the researcher to make sense and organize categories or themes. In this research, I primarily utilized the participants' narrative journals as the key data while referencing my field notes from our interactions and observations to gain a more holistic view of their experience.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

The theoretical framework used for this study was phenomenological hermeneutics. Phenomenology, developed to understand the lived experience (phenomenon), and hermeneutics, which allows the researcher to analyze texts to create an interpretation. Merging these two philosophies, Ricoeur (2007) explains that “[hermeneutics] has the means to account for both the insurmountable character of the ideological phenomenon and the possibility of beginning, without being able to finish, a

critique of ideology” (p. 35). Intertwining phenomenology and hermeneutics in my study, I am able to search the understandable meaning of the experiences of study abroad in the narrative reflective journals. Utilizing the concept of “distanciation,” first attributed to Heidegger, described by Ricoeur (2007) it is important to separate the text from the creator of the text. Simpler, in order to understand the phenomenon through the text, the researcher must search for an understanding of the text as it relates to the world.

### **Setting**

I collected narrative entries from students who traveled throughout Hong Kong and China on a three-week faculty led study tour focused on understanding how retail industries engage and operate in this specific region of the world. Students visited large metropolitan areas such as Hong Kong, Hong Kong S.A.R; Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, P.R. China and a smaller industrial area, Yiwu, P.R. China.

Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (S.A.R.) of the People’s Republic of China (P.R. China) on July 1, 1997 but still retains its own currency and has a high level of autonomy (C.I.A. World Factbook, 2013). Considered by the C.I.A. World Factbook (2013) to be entirely urban, Hong Kong has approximately 7.18 million residents in 426.257 square miles – making it the 184th smallest country in the world. Over 93% of Hong Kong’s residents are of Chinese origin with Cantonese and English as the official languages although 89.5% of the population speaks Cantonese and only 3.5% of the population speaking English (C.I.A. World Factbook, 2013). Heavily influenced by British culture through colonization, Hong Kong has adopted Western customs with a distinct culture, which differentiates it from the rest of China.

The People’s Republic of China (P.R. China) has had a growing economy since 1978 when it opened its doors to international trading (CIA World Factbook, 2013). With

a population of 1.35 billion people, it is the most heavily populated country in the world but is roughly equivalent to the United States in total land area (9.64 million square kilometers) (Embassy of the United States, n.d.). Run by a single party, the Chinese Communist Party, since 1949, P.R. China opened its doors to foreign trade since the late 1970s which has positioned the country to become a worldwide trade power and brought an economic boom that has improved living standards and development throughout the country (Embassy of the United States, n.d.).

Beijing, which means “Northern Capital”, the capital of P.R. China, is the second largest Chinese city with 12.214 million residents, and over 20 million residents in the greater metropolitan area (CIA World Factbook, 2013). Located in the northeastern part of the nation, Beijing is one of four municipalities in the country surrounded by the Hebei Province and neighbored by the Tianjin Municipality to the southeast. Beijing’s history is three thousand years old and the city has been a political center for seven hundred years and the city is known for its rich living history in the form of palaces, temples, and gates.

Considered the economic capital of P.R. China, Shanghai is the largest Chinese city with 16.575 million city residents and over 23 million residents in the metropolitan area (CIA World Factbook, 2013). One of the four province level municipalities (along with Beijing), Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces border it to the west. Located on the East China Sea and the Yangtze (Chang Jiang) river delta, the city has been an important port for the past hundred years, which has encouraged its rapid growth. With a population of about 1.2 million people, Yiwu is considered a third tier market (CIA World Factbook, 2013) approximately 250 kilometers southwest of Shanghai. A mountainous

area in the Zhejiang province, Yiwu is surrounded by mountains on three sides and is known as a special commodities market for its production of jewelry and socks.

Located in the Guangdong province, both Shenzhen and Guangzhou are important cities in southern China. Shenzhen, near Hong Kong, has 9.005 million residents (CIA World Factbook, 2013) and is the largest city in southern China. A relatively new city, Shenzhen grew from a small village before 1979 to the large city it is today due to strong foreign investment based on its position as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Boarding Hong Kong, S.A.R. along the Sham Chun and Sha Tau Kok Rivers, it is 100 kilometers southeast of the provincial capital, Guangzhou. Guangzhou, has 8.884 million residents (CIA World Factbook, 2013) and holds sub-provincial administrative status as the capital of the Guangdong province.

The 13 undergraduate and one graduate students participating in the program arrived in Hong Kong on 10 May 2013 and stayed for four days before entering P.R. China. They spent one day in Shenzhen, two days in Guangzhou, 4 days in Shanghai, a day in Yiwu, and finished their final days in Beijing before departing back to the United States. They traveled on arranged busses, trains, and flights between the locations as part of the group portion of the trip. All hotel arrangements and many meals were included in the program cost and arranged by the tour company. Outside the scheduled meetings, tours, travel, meals, and other events students were free to spend their time however they wished. They were encouraged to visit tourist sights and to explore the new areas.

### **Sampling**

As qualitative studies are rigorous and collect data from a variety of combined data a small sample size of less than 8 were selected.

I recruited participants who:

- Were enrolled in the three week, short term faculty led Retail study tour to China
- Do not culturally identify as Chinese nor have Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) language skills outside the course
- Had never been to Hong Kong S.A.R. or the P.R. China before
- Had no relationship with me (as the primary researcher and key instrument) prior to the program
- Undergraduate degree seeking student

My goals did not mean to provide a representation of the student population or provide an opportunity to generalize using my findings. Instead, I looked to gain an in-depth understanding of my participants' process of narrative journaling during their experience on a short term study abroad.

I used convenience sampling based on criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). As I specifically looked to understand the student experience through personal narrative journals during a short term study abroad to China, I looked for students who fit my predetermined important criterion. Students needed to be participating on the short term, faculty-led Retail Study tour to China, and be undergraduate degree seeking students enrolled at the large state university, do not speak Mandarin or Cantonese at an intermediate or above level, and who have never been to Hong Kong S.A.R. or P.R. China before. Convenience sampling, in which participants select themselves without being representative of the entire population (Dooley, 2001), allowed students to choose if they would like to be included in the study and created a comfortable environment for them to participate.

This student population was chosen because it is a short term (fewer than eight weeks), faculty led program to a non-traditional location. After researching a variety of

these types of programs, I chose the Retail Study Tour to China program at a large south-eastern research university based on the access to participants and the ability to chaperone the tour to familiarize myself with the overseas portion of the study abroad and collect field notes.

In May 2013 I was the staff leader on the Retail Study Tour due to my experience leading study tours and my academic experience in international business. During this tour I participated in all company presentations, site tours, and many of the cultural excursions. Conducting a preliminary study with 6 participants with prior approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB-02) on a tour in October 2011 I familiarized myself with the data collection process for study abroad students. Having conducted similar research in the past, I chose to focus on a smaller participant population and focus my data collection on the narrative process utilizing field notes as secondary data.

I am interested in students studying short term programs partially based on my extensive experience with Short term study tours and the growing number of students participating. My experience in a college of business, working with, advising, teaching, and leading undergraduate and graduate business students has influenced my decision to choose a business focused study tour. This experience and interest has led to unique opportunities to participate as a faculty and staff leader on programs such as the retail study tour I collected my data on. I will discuss my experience and background further in the subjectivity section of my paper.

### **Retail Study Tour**

Developed in 2010, the China Retail Study Tour is a six-credit, three week long faculty led study tour focusing on the retail market in China. Developed by a research director in a retail center at a large south eastern research university, the course offers

a first-hand opportunity to learn about the retail market. Through an eight-week on-campus course, students learned about the culture of the Chinese peoples, survival language skills, diversity of the Chinese retail market, and gain a macro-view of the retail industry in Hong Kong S.A.R. and P.R. China. Directly following the eight-week course was the three-week study tour through Hong Kong S.A.R. and P.R. China spending time in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Yiwu, and Beijing. The six cities were chosen based on their importance to the retail industry in the region and their diversity. Visiting classic first tier as well as second and third tier cities, students had the opportunity to engage with companies in emerging and mature markets. IBM, Lenovo, Coach, Toys R Us China, Li & Fung, Mark Fairwhale, Walmart Headquarters, Umbra, 360Buy, Brown Shoe Company, Collective Brands, Outback Steakhouse, McDonald, Suning, Ogilvy, Hyundai Manufacturing, US Commercial Services, Foreign Affairs Office, US Embassy, and Ministry of Commerce were some of the companies and factories visited by the 2013 study tour group.

### **Participation Recruitment**

To recruit participants, I was given access from the professor to speak to the 14 student in the Retail Study Tour in China program to introduce my study and explain participation. As both the faculty member on the tour and I were conducting research on the program, we submitted a joint IRB to not confuse the students and have greater access to data collected. My part of the study was introduced to the class prior to the tour along with instructions on the confidentiality agreement. In total, six students indicated interest in being participants in the research. Two participants were not invited to be included in the research as they did not pass the criterion (one having been a former student of mine, and another for having prior experience in China).

Of the four students who passed the study criteria, only three submitted personal, narrative journals. The three students submitted their narrative journals within a week of returning to the United States. Unfortunately, after collecting the narratives, one of the participants acknowledged that his series of narratives was not specifically a narrative journal and instead he utilized artistic freedom to embellish events and activities to be able to share with his family and friends. While I applauded his efforts in creating a journal to share with others, this inhibited the study as the focus was to learn about what student participants write for themselves in narrative journals, not for others.

As qualitative research can be extremely in-depth and detailed, the 43 narratives collected resulted in a rich dataset. The smallest sample size used in qualitative research is the sample size of one, due to the in-depth approach of the research and data collected (Mason, 2010). As this study is not meant to generalize the experiences of students on study abroad, instead gain an understanding of their experience and opportunities where study abroad can be improved for the student experience, the 43 narratives provided rich data to be analyzed.

### **Participant Confidentiality**

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation. All personal data were de-identified and will be summarized so that individual student results cannot be identified. Participants' identities and all students and stakeholders involved with the tour were assigned a pseudonym to protect all individuals involved. The list connecting identities to this number were kept in a locked file and were destroyed when the study was completed and the data analyzed. Names of participants were not used in any report and participants' identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. The digital files and any other files related to the analysis of the data were stored in the

principal investigator's secure drive as well as in a USB drive (the USB drive was filed in the researcher's office securely). Results were be written in the form of academic papers for conference presentations and publications and this dissertation.

### **Description of Participants**

My first participant, Mae, was 19-years old at the time of the study tour. She is of Hispanic origin and born and raised in Miami, Florida where she attended an elite all girls private school for high school. For a college education, she chose to attend a large, land grant university in north-central Florida and is enrolled in a degree in Business Administration with a major in Accounting. My second participant, Will, was 19 years old while participating in the study tour. He is a White male who identifies as Jewish. He is from the Fort Lauderdale, Florida area where he was raised and went to high school before attending the same large, land grant university in Florida as Mae. He is enrolled in a degree in Business Administration with a major in Finance.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

I used narrative inquiry to guide my data collection and study analysis to interpret the human development of the study abroad experience from the point of view of the participant experiencing the phenomenon (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). As my aim was to understand the participants' experiences from their own words (Janesick 1994), I collected narrative stories from them about their experience while abroad. By utilizing participants' meanings, the research focuses on not only the words and stories created by the participant but also focuses on the word choice and arching themes to learn the meaning given to the stories by the participants (Creswell, 2009). Narratives were then retold in my own words to combine the views of the participant with the other data to create a collaborative narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

## **Data Collection Methods**

The primary data collection method was collecting 43 daily reflective journal narratives from the participants in the study. Secondary data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, biographical questionnaire, and observer field notes to help in the analysis of the participants' reflective journals.

### **Reflective Journaling**

Reflective journals, which allow participants to express their thoughts and stories in their own setting using their own words and styles without the presence of the researcher, is the main data collection method I utilized in my research. Journals are a type of first-person personal narratives produced by the participant in the research where they describe their own experiences, beliefs, actions, or anything else in their own words (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). Reflective journals are an opportunity for the researcher to learn about the personal experience through reflective commentary of the events they experienced, oftentimes regularly throughout the experience (Allport, 1942). Allport (1942) considers the intimate diary of a journal to be the personal document par excellence, as it is "usually written under the immediate influence of an experience, it can be particularly effective in capturing peoples' moods and most intimate thoughts" (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982, p. 98). The importance of written reflection is well known in a multitude of fields within education as reflective thinking is a measure of academic validation as they allow the student to "externalization, which distributes some of the process from inside the head to the outside world" (Oatley et al, 2008).

While the quality of the data in journals varied, I found it important that participants expressed themselves in their own words and at their own pace. As I utilized a convenience sample study, I included an emphasis on participant comfort with

written expression when I requested research participation. Per Hatch's (2002) recommendation, as a researcher, I was explicit in explaining my expectations of the journals and offer guidance for the participants to feel comfortable with their written journals. As my focus was to understand what students focus on in their daily journals, they were specifically asked to discuss their experiences throughout the day focusing on events or interactions that resonated with them, the stories or emotions they felt were most important to write down.

Student participants wrote a journal entry for each day of their journey, Mae wrote 20 narratives writing from 11 May 2013 through 30 May 2013 and Will wrote 23 narratives writing from 09 May 2013 through 31 May 2013. Journal entries were as short as a paragraph and as long as pages. For the course they were enrolled in, students were required to turn in notes on business visits which makes sense to their inclusion in their overall journal notes although the data they submitted for the research collection was not the same that they turned in for their class assignment.

Throughout the three-week study-tour, the students had a variety of scheduled activities. These activities included company visit, cultural experiences, group meals (hotel breakfast, alumni dinners, etc.), and travel (flights, bus trips, and a train ride). Both students wrote about these activities in their daily journal entries along with experiences outside of the organized group activities. The participants also included personal and group exploration, interpersonal social interactions, intrapersonal reflection, and other notes about non-organized experiences and emotions. The participants' journals are a rich mix of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal reflections. Often mixed together without a transition. Each author has their own style of

writing but both summarized the events of the day. This gave multiple perspectives of organized and social events through the program and show how differently students can reflect on the same experience.

### **Demographic Questionnaire**

Prior to collecting the research, each participant completed a demographic questionnaire. These questionnaires gave me an opportunity to understand the participants' educational, travel, and family backgrounds. As these were not part of the formal data collected (did not require the students to write narratives) they were used to give a background about the authors. During the data analysis portion of the research, the biographical sketches were used to gain an understanding of participant meaning in narratives and understand their prior experiences abroad.

### **Communication with Participants**

I was not involved with the planning of this program in any detail; the faculty leader based the 2013 program on feedback from the three prior years. I was asked to participate in 2013 due to my expertise in leading Short term programs in other regions of the world. The study was a closed and confidential study so student participants did not have to share if they were participating. There was an academic journal component to the study tour course but this was a strictly academic, business-centered assignment that was not utilized as part of my research. This component, however, helped the students participating in the research as they were encouraged to take notes and write daily while staying anonymous as all students on the program were completing daily writing assignments.

## **Reflective Field Notes**

With the influence of postmodernism, distancing requires that the researcher to be an interpreter in the research process. As I was a participant on the study tour program, it was important to keep field notes of my experiences to aid me in the analysis portion of the study and understand how my own experiences and interactions with the participants could influence me as the key analysis tool.

Studying participants on study abroad in their natural setting, I utilized an ethnographic method of data collection. Developing a rapport with the participants, I focused on understanding what the experience of study abroad meant to the participants through "an iterative or recursive process of continuous data collection, analysis, and reflection that results in changes in intervention." (Schensul et al., 1999, p.45). Monitoring the participants throughout the study, ethnographic methods allow the researcher to create a detailed description and analysis of the role study abroad and, in particular, certain events and experiences students face while abroad, holds in the student experience.

While ethnographic experiences allow an in-depth view of the participants' experiences, they are labor intensive and costly. As a researcher, one must handle a multiplicity of roles (observer, interviewer, evaluator, and confidant) which can be overwhelming even to the best of researcher (Byram & Feng, 2006). As the assessment tool, it was imperative that I reflected and kept field notes throughout every step of the data collection process. Comments or memos, which are reflections on the day's activities (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007) allowed me to reflect on the analysis, method, ethical dilemmas, conflicts, record my state of mind, and help to clarify other research findings. Bogdan and Bilken (2007) recommends that field notes follow a structure including

labeling the first page of each set of notes with heading, situation, and location information and coding the notes (in paragraphs or margins) with relevant information so they can be referenced easily which I attempted to stay consistent with throughout my journaling process. These field notes were incorporated into my transcripts and were considered when analyzing the data.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

I utilized thematic structural analysis, based upon the theoretical work of Ricoeur (2007) in phenomenological hermeneutics. This practical analysis model, as described by Lindseth and Norberg (2004), aims to “disclose truths about the essential meaning of being in the life world” (p 151). In phenomenological hermeneutics, the four stages of Phenomenological analysis (the epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis [Moustakas, 1994]) are merged with the three stages of Hermeneutics: pre-methodological meaning, analyzing parts and wholes, and summary and transition (Seebohm, 2004). This merger of the two models leads to Naïve Understanding of the text (Ricoeur, 2007).

According to Bodgen and Bilken (1982) taking a break after collection is an important opportunity to rest and come back to the data fresh. In the two years between my data collection and data analysis, I spent time living, working, and traveling abroad to gain a better understanding of the field of international education. This time away also gave me important insight to the field, a new lens to utilize, and further experience with narrative journaling and qualitative methods.

### **Naïve Understanding**

Once the data have been collected in qualitative research, the next task is to systematically search and arrange the data to increase understanding and make sense

of the data collected (Bodgen & Bilken, 2007). To begin the process of making sense of a text using phenomenological hermeneutics, the researcher begins by searching for naïve understanding. In this stage, the researcher does not search for a single, fundamental truth as the whole truth will never be fully understood. Instead, we search for ontological meanings, true narratives, in which we may discover the truths (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). By collecting reflective journals for their own records and no other audience, my study begins with true narratives. Ricoeur (2007) argues that a text never has one true meaning, but researchers must search for the interpretation “that makes sense of the greatest number of details as they fit into a whole and one that renders all can be brought forth by the text” (Klemm, 1983, p. 63).

When I began analyzing the data, it was important to get to know the data intimately and narrative thematic analysis require the data to be reviewed many times and I read and reread both student journals in their original formats multiple times until I was comfortable with their styles of writing and how they chose to write and organize. By reviewing the material several times, I was able to grasp its meaning as a whole and opened myself to be touched and moved by it switching my attitude to a phenomenological attitude per the guidance of Lindseth and Norberg (2004). At this stage of the analysis, the concept of the hermeneutical circle, the process of analyzing parts of the texts to search for the “meaning of the text as a whole” (Klemm, 1983, p. 93) and the first step in the analysis process. During this round, I also labeled specific narratives by the setting, whether it was a company visit or an event the group experienced together, organized by the faculty as part of the program or as an unplanned experience that students shared. While there was no direct instruction for

participants to include or omit anything in their journals, both participants choose to focus on many of the activities they participated in throughout the program.

### **Thematic Structural Analysis**

Narrative analysis utilizes the assumption that people use stories to make sense of their world and experiences focusing on what they want to convey to others (Bailey & Tiley, 2002). Qualitative methodologies are diverse, complex, and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003). As participants choose to tell their stories in their own words based on the meaning they want to convey of their experience (Bailey & Tiley, 2002), I utilized Thematic Structural Analysis to analyze the narratives once they were structurally separated. Thematic analysis is firmly independent of both epistemology and theory (Braun & Clarke 2006) and this allowed me to analyze the data without forcing my own judgments of what students should learn nor how they should write. As reflective journaling is a process where the participants write for themselves and their own records, it was important to try to understand and uncover the meaning without holding the participants to grammatical or other standards.

During my second segment of data analysis, I reviewed through each of the 43 narratives to begin to understand the many parts and narratives within each day. While narratives almost always fell under the same day, many entries would have multiple separate narratives under the same heading. Through a process of reading and dividing, I began to break the narratives into meaning units from a word to multiple paragraphs, any piece of the text that conveys just one meaning (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). After the process of naïve understanding, I began to have a better understanding of what each participant was sharing in their narratives and found it was important to reassess the narratives for completeness. Breaking their journals into smaller narratives

allowed me to gain insight to the specific topic they were writing about without being distracted by a separate story or thought they included in the same day's journal entry. This second analysis resulted in 148 complete narratives.

Ricoeur borrows from structural analysis, identifying areas to focus on to generate meaning and organizing the text including: action, social fixation, and relevance/importance (2007). Searching for importance and relevance within the texts as they relate to the phenomenon, according to Ricoeur (2007) I endeavored to utilize the two theoretical frameworks of Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Maturity Learning to represent the action, social fixation, and relevance/importance.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

I have had a continued interest in study abroad since co-organizing my high school short term study abroad to Paris and Cognac, France in 2003. During this time, my family also hosted two French exchange students on short term stays in the United States. When I entered college I became involved with a student run organization that fostered cross-cultural relationships through a mentorship program of incoming exchange students. Through this organization, I learned about collegiate study abroad and I spent my spring 2006 and fall 2007 semesters studying in Rouen, France and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania respectively. After graduating with my Master of Arts in International Business degree, I was hired to work full time with the graduate degree program. I have worked with international degree-seeking students and both incoming and outgoing exchange students during my tenure with the program. As a co-leader on the international study tours, I have led over 600 students on week-long study tours to Budapest, Hungary; Prague, Czech Republic, Berlin, Germany, and Barcelona, Spain.

Traveling is a personal hobby for me and outside of my professional travel experience I have traveled to over 30 countries around the world for leisure and tourism activities. I have traveled extensively throughout Western and Central Europe and Eastern Africa and have an interest in non-traditional travel to developing countries. I also have a personal interest in how people perceive their foreign travel experiences and how cross-cultural experiences can change their views and beliefs in life.

My experiences as a study abroad student and leader, along with my extensive travel have strengthened my ability to understand others' personal experiences while visiting foreign locales. As my experiences abroad have been extremely personal, I plan on focusing on how the student perceives their own experiences, in their own words, without my influence and to stay open to their unique narrative process. I plan on using memo style field notes throughout my entire study where I will be able to detail my experiences and I plan on bracketing my outside thoughts and opinions of the study abroad experience so I am able to give value to the participant narratives without perceiving them in a way based on my own values.

### **Limitations**

When the researcher is the key instrument in a study, there are obvious concerns related to data collection and analysis. By approaching participants with the goal of understanding their unique experiences, my aim is to distort the participants' experiences the least (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). By utilizing qualitative research best practices such as field notes and having the participants' main data be in their own words and narrative, my aim is to focus on the participants' experiences.

While sample size can be determined by numerous factors, and there are no commonly accepted numbers or ranges for sample sizes in qualitative research (Mason,

2010). Creswell (1998) and Morse (1994) suggested five to 25 and at least six in their publications, but qualitative studies can range from one to many. Instead of focusing on the number of participants, it is important to acknowledge the depth and richness of the data collected. With 43 narratives, the data was rich and worked well within the phenomenology (Mason, 2010).

### **Summary of My Study**

When I first began the process of proposing my research, I easily found many quantitative studies that rated students' skills or asked them to rate their experiences after participating on a study abroad experience. A small selection of the research I found was strictly qualitative in nature and I was inspired to learn more about what students really think about, not what they select after seeing a leading or provocative question. What do students choose to write about and how do their connect their experiences on study abroad programs to their personal lives were rarely, if ever, discussed in research and yet the qualitative research often wanted to show how study abroad experiences created the environment for students to grow in their skills and attributes without showing more than a correlation.

By researching student narratives, I was able to understand how participants reflect on their experiences on study abroad programs. By utilizing phenomenological hermeneutics to guide the data collection of the participants' reflective narratives, I was able to collect 43 complete daily narratives. Upon collecting my data through a convenience sample based on criterion sampling, I was able to collect 43 complete narratives written by students on each day of their study abroad program. Utilizing a multi-step qualitative analysis process I first utilized structural analysis to break apart the daily journal entries to larger then smaller narratives, then used a thematic analysis

to understand the stories and experiences the participants were conveying in their reflective journals.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of study abroad based on written narratives by students participating in the program. Participating on a study abroad program helps define how students interact with their world and I utilized a postmodern epistemology, phenomenological hermeneutics to guide my research study. The 43 narratives collected during the 21 day study tour to China and Hong Kong,

### **Introductory Remarks**

With limited research focused on student narratives during short-term study abroad and the exploratory nature of qualitative design, my research questions evolved throughout the course of the study. As I began the analysis, I kept a collective list of substantive questions that helped to guide my process. The findings in this chapter seek to understand student experiences through their study abroad narrative journals and do not seek to generalize all first year study abroad student experiences.

Throughout the initial phase of the qualitative data analysis, I followed Ricoeur's (2007) analysis methods to get to know the data intimately. This required a long process of reading the narratives and getting comfortable with the data. Throughout this process, themes began to emerge based on the narrative's topic. These themes created the first step of my analysis, the naïve understanding. For the second part of the analysis, I utilized experiential learning theory and intercultural maturity as theoretical frameworks for my analysis.

I present the findings in this chapter in four parts. In the first part, I will provide a biographical sketch of the authors who provided the narratives, Mae and Will. Next, I

include the results from the naïve understanding analysis. Following this segment, I will present the findings from the thematic structural analysis, first utilizing themes from the intercultural maturity learning model and second from experiential learning theory. I will conclude with a discussion and summary of my findings.

### **Biographical Sketch of Mae and Will**

Both Mae and Will were first year students completing their first formal educational study abroad program in an academic setting. While both students had traveled out of the United States prior to their study tour experience, neither had left the country alone before, always traveling with family members. Both students were from family households with the annual income at 100,000 USD and higher and did not rely on financial assistance to participate in the program.

Mae is from Miami, Florida and is an only child of immigrant parents. Her native language is Spanish and she did not learn English until she started her early education. Throughout personal conversations, I learned that her family lived with her grandparents while her mother finished her terminal degree and parents worked to support her on their own. Since her birth, her parents have achieved professional and career successes and have been able to afford to give Mae many opportunities. Mae attended a private all-girls high school and is familiar with luxury brands and products. She is studying for an undergraduate degree in accounting with the career goal of becoming an auditor or having an accounting role in the retail fashion industry. Mae discusses her academic and career goals in her narrative journal, citing the Fossil company visit as an important opportunity for her, “I had begun to question whether accounting was a major I should continue to pursue if I wanted to go into retail. But I finally heard from two people who had studied accounting and pursued a career in retail, which is my end

goal.” Her choice to participate in the program was based on her interest in the retail fashion industry and desire to learn more about the Chinese market. Mae included her fortune, given by a fortune teller on the streets of Hong Kong, in her journal in which the teller stated that she “may not really pursue a career in accounting, but it will lead [her] to fashion, handbags, interpersonal relationships” and while she explained that she did not know what that meant, there were multiple times during the study tour program that her career track and academic goals were considered based on the environment she was in.

Will is from Palm Beach Gardens in southern Florida and attends the same university as Mae, studying Finance in the College of Business. His flight to China was the first time he ever flew alone and his first international visit without his family. He highlights the challenges and successes as an independent traveler in his journal and takes pride in the lessons he learned including his emotional reaction after a challenging solo-trip across the city of Beijing, “It was a fantastic experience to simply see new parts of the city and to attempt to find the restaurant knowing only its name... it was a terrific feeling.” Identifying as a Jewish American male, he viewed his trip to China as the first time he ever felt he was traveling as a foreigner. While he had traveled to Israel often to visit family, and on family trips to the Caribbean, Canada, and Western Europe, he had never been to a location where American tourists weren’t in abundance and discusses his personal challenges of his travel through China. His Jewish heritage played an important role during the trip as he tried to follow the guidelines of keeping Kosher to the extent that he does state-side (namely, not eating pork products, a food product abundant in Chinese meals and cooking processes). He highlights his challenges with

maintaining a kosher lifestyle while in China multiple times in his journals and it was often the topic of informal conversation before meals.

### **Naïve Understanding**

In this section, I will present my findings from my first round of analysis, naïve understanding. As the students spent three weeks in an organized study tour, they naturally shared many of the same experiences. In order to choose which experience to include, I sought out narratives where the participant did not just list the events of the day, but offered commentary or insight to how the events or experience tied into another part of their lives or thought processes.

Both participants labeled their narrative journal entries by date, but as each wrote lengthy entries, each day was broken up into shorter, complete narratives topically. Often the participants' longest entries were times that they included notes from a speaker or the event by event order of the day without any personal reflection, these narratives – while long – often lacked substance and were mono-themed, so not usable for the thematic narrative analysis. While trying to make sense of the multiple narratives in one entry, I often had to read and reread entries three or four times to stay true to the spirit of the narrative breaks to ensure I kept narratives complete, even if they discussed a variety of topics. This strategy allowed me to work with my data long before I began to analyze it so I was quite familiar with both participants' writing styles along with the themes they often chose to include.

This method allowed me to compare narratives that were sparked from the same, often shared, experience while focusing on the unique story each participant choose to transcribe in their journal entry. By comparing the personal reflections and reactions of each participant, I focused my attention to unique themes presented by each author. In

this section, I will be comparing each participant's journal entry in regards to the following experiences: a series of presentations by Ocean Park leadership followed by a visit to the theme park, a private tour of the St. Regis Shenzhen, a Brownshoe factory tour, a knockoff market, and lastly, a train experience to the third tier city of Yiwu.

### **Ocean Park**

Participants rarely mentioned the speakers by name and it was noticeable when they did. Ocean Park, a wildlife and theme park in Hong Kong, hosted the students on their first full day of company visits. While the students had multiple speakers at the session, both students identified Mr. P by name. In Will's narrative of the company visit, he emphasized how Mr. P "single-handedly turned the park around from huge losses to huge gains," which he deduced the lesson from this being "the necessity of embracing change and the importance of giving people a specific reason to want, or even better, to need, to patronize your product to be successful."

While Mae and Will experienced the same lecture and garnered the importance of the lessons they were learning, she focused on the importance of change citing his advice that "Sales are EVERYTHING. As a businesswoman you must work for the customer. One must also be willing to change. CHANGE IS KEY. A company must be willing to adapt and change in order to stay on top (original emphasis.)" She goes further in her narrative to talk about Mr. P personally: "[Mr. P] has the confidence and pride in something he did that I hope to have in my career one day," once again seeing success in others as a personal challenge for her future professional self.

### **St. Regis**

A classmate's father works for the corporate side of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and arranged an after hour tour of the St. Regis, Shenzhen.

Standing over 100 floors over the young yet bustling city of Shenzhen, this luxury hotel offered the students a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the behind the scenes and opulence of an elite hotel. As an exploration activity outside of the organized program, the student whose father arranged the tour invited only a select few of his classmates, which included both Mae and Will. The tour included viewing a standard room and the Presidential Suite, private dining facilities, and the highest accessible point of the building. While both students participated in the same tour of the facilities, their journal narratives differed greatly.

Mae's narrative focused on the feelings and emotions elicited from the experience. Her narrative includes an exclamation of, "HOLY SHIT" and continues to indicate her fascination with the hotel and utilizes the experience as a driving factor towards her hard work and success:

I've never seen a hotel like that, and I doubt I will for a while. Definitely reminded me that I need to continue working hard and never feel discouraged. Hard work pays off. I want to stay at that hotel because I could pay for it. Not some rich guy who wants to blow his money on me.

Describing it as, "arguably the most exciting day yet." Will's narrative on the experience is four paragraphs long and includes more information on the building and importance of the city of Shenzhen which grew from 1,000 farmland residents to 11 million in only 30 years. Describing the standard room, he considered it "The most incredible standard room I have ever seen... It was simply something else, beyond words..." and then continued to describe the presidential suite:

But it got better—next we went to Presidential Suite. I don't think anything I say can adequately describe it, so I won't attempt to. Even the toilet has a magnificent view of the city. In Jimmy's words, something is either luxury or it's not. Use the bathrooms to judge. Got to look through mega-binoculars at city...could actually see people up close from 86 stories high. An absolutely amazing hotel and building--hope to be back soon.

In his summary, Will focuses on the opulence of the building and its juxtaposition to the young city's reputation as a factory port citing the two extremes of the day including a sweat-shop style factory.

Taken together, these two narratives show that the participants choose to focus on an exciting opportunity, but each shares the story in their own unique way. Mae's choice to overlook the details of the building and the tour instead focusing on how it inspired her to work harder was completely different from Will's choice to chronicle the activities of the experiences. This experience also shows the importance of experiences that are not officially part of the organized program to enhance student education and experience.

### **Brownshoe**

Both participants wrote lengthy narratives about their experience at the Brownshoe sourcing facility and the Vice President of Talent, Mr. C, who spoke to them on behalf of the company. While each student spoke about what they learned about the company and factory, they each focused on how his culture and upbringing framed how he spoke to us. Mae focused on how his Taiwanese cultural background led to his criticisms of the Chinese government:

After further criticizing the Chinese government, he said from a political perspective all big companies are located in the south because it's the farthest province from Beijing (political capital). He concluded the presentation with saying that China has the home court advantage in manipulating the government. "The law says one thing, and the government executes another". The fact that [Mr. C] was from Taiwan prevented him from being blinded by Mao's ideologies.

In this narrative, Mae attempts to make sense of why Mr. C would be openly critical of the Chinese government. While Mae focused on how his cultural upbringing influenced his political views, Will emphasized Mr. C's American culture:

We then had a presentation by the VP of Talent, [Mr. C], who is from Taiwan and spent time studying in US. Diction throughout presentation seemed like wanted to prove that he was a true "American." For example, referred to "we" when talking about US, tried specifically to use comparisons of distances in China to states/flying times in US, etc.

Both participants choose to include Mr. C, their company speaker, in their journal entry, something they did not include in all of their company visit summaries throughout the tour. Emphasizing his cultural backgrounds being both Taiwanese and American, both students found significance in his ability to link the students to the business through his multicultural outlook in many areas of his life.

### **Knockoff Market**

Following the Brownshoe company visit, the speaker, Mr. C., brought the students to "Wal-Mart." While the organized activity was to stop for lunch on the way to the next company visit, the professor allowed the speaker "to take us to where he buys all of his wives fake designer bags!!" as Mae described it. Will includes how the group arrived at the market:

Super sketchy. Drove to a local smaller-scale shopping mall, walked through it, got to a room with two elevators, rode up elevators to dimly lit hallway, and then entered a special room with tinted doors... Had every knockoff product of every brand that could imagine. Isles and isles full of handbags, wallets, watches, belts, etc. of all major top brands.

Both students made purchases in the store and commented that, "We bought some really great handbags and wallets. Although we missed lunch and were late to our next company meeting, I think purchases were definitely worth it." (Mae) and "As a group, we bought a lot: The store probably made thousands of dollars on our purchases!" (Will).

Mae again includes her character analysis of Mr. C in her narrative, "I honestly thought it was crazy that [Mr. C] was taking us to buy illegal handbags, but once again, this showed how un-Chinese he was." While Will highlights the importance of Mr. C in

the opportunity to visit the shop “If it wasn’t for [Mr. C] I don’t think we would have found such good quality fake handbags.” As both participants wrote about the speaker’s involvement being key to the opportunity and his cultural insight to help the participants make the purchases.

Mae also includes her personal involvement in the knockoff store experience, which differs from Will’s, “Although I was helping everyone in the group pick out stuff I felt severely judged by everyone. I feel like they think I’m this materialistic snob. But I know a lot about fashion because it interests me.” Mae’s inclusion of these lines shows an interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict Mae felt she experienced. By adding this to the end of her narrative, Mae describes the way her classmates treat her and her presumptions of their opinion on her based on her knowledge and ability to help them in the experience.

Both participants’ narratives describe the experience in a way that clearly shows how unexpected and fascinating the unorganized visit was for them. Will concludes his journal entry summary on the knockoff market with, “Again, like out of a movie to see this operation in full action.” This experience, through neither legal nor part of the organized visit, prompted both participants to write multi-themed journal narratives, which included cultural observation, intrapersonal, and interpersonal growth themes in their entries.

### **Train to Yiwu**

The program required that students take the high speed train from Shanghai to Yiwu, a third tier Chinese city of more than a million residents, for a day of visits before flying to Beijing later that evening. The trip was only an hour, in comparison to the over four hour drive had the program chosen to arrive by bus, and gave students the

opportunity to utilize the Chinese high speed rail line, which is one of the fastest in the world. Will describes the train experience in his narrative:

Shanghai train station was massive and modern, very similar to an airport terminal. Wasn't really expecting it, as main experiences with trains were with the Long Island Railroad, was imagining something less modern and not at the scale that it was. But it makes sense...trains are such a major form of transportation here that it is only logical to have the infrastructure to support it.

By utilizing the train, the students were also able to see the transition from China's largest city through rural land to Yiwu. Mae noted the benefit of the train ride, "We jumped on a train to Yiwu. I liked the train much more than the plane because you can actually see the countryside of China." Will describes his view from the train with more description:

As travel SW to Yiwu, very interesting to look out window at what pass and get even broader perspective of China. As move away into less developed areas, few tall buildings, more old apartment buildings, rural farmland, small towns/cities, many mountains. Guess majority of China is more like this (happy got to see some of "real China" apart from the huge and modern Tier 1 cities where we had been thus far).

As Mae also writes, they both found value in being able to see the Chinese countryside, and seemingly enjoyed the opportunity to see the "real China" despite their comments on the difficulty of traveling by train with their luggage. Stopping for only 60 seconds, Will notes that the "Train only stops for 60 seconds at Yiwu, so everyone had to get ready with their luggage and stand by the door beforehand to make it out before the doors closed. Luckily everyone made it." While Mae includes "And it was such a pain to travel with our luggage," despite requesting that "Yiwu should have been a day trip out of Shanghai and we should have gone back to Shanghai that night..."

In these five notable experiences, it is apparent that while the events the students participated in were the same with the same overall themes, they each

focused on different take away lessons in their reflective narratives. In the Orange Park narratives, both students understood the lesson that change is important from Mr. P., but while Will focused his narrative on the sales strategy lesson, Mae's narrative personally challenged herself to build her own success much the way the speaker, Mr. P. had. Following the St. Regis tour, the participants focused on different themes in their reflections. Will, spending much of his narrative discussing the opulence and luxury of the facilities, focused on the building itself while Mae included how the experience will encourage her to become successful independently so she can be a patron herself. Mr. C's presentation was an important part of both the Brownshoe and Knock-Off Market experiences and both students emphasized his multiculturalism of being Taiwanese-American and his ability to be a successful bridge for the students. In the Knock-Off Market, however, the participants' narratives focused differently and Mae included a social reflection of how she perceived her classmates judged her based on perceived socio-economic status. Finally, each student wrote compelling narratives about the train experience from Shanghai to Yiwu. Both narratives included enjoyment of the ability to see the Chinese countryside or the "real China" while also highlighting the frustration of a hectic train experience. Each shared experience elicited compelling narratives from the participants, but it is important to note that each narrative on a topic was distinctively unique.

### **Individual (Mae):**

In the second section of my results in naïve understanding, I will present Mae's notable narratives that were individually compelling, without a similar narrative from Will. I will begin with a company visit to Fossil and an unorganized yoga experience. In the second half of this section, I will analyze Mae's narratives with social themes.

Throughout her reflective narratives, Mae included many narratives on her social interactions both with her peers on the program and her boyfriend in Florida. This analysis will highlight themes and compelling experiences that Mae chose to reflect on throughout the program.

### **Fossil**

Mae rarely spoke to her major (accounting) and her plans after graduation, but included a note about her accounting career in her journal entry on the Fossil company visit. “I had begun to question whether accounting was a major I should continue to pursue if I wanted to go into retail. But I finally heard from two people who had studied accounting and pursued a career in retail, which is my end goal.” This was the first time Mae spoke about her goals after university, but both its inclusion and placement in the middle of a company summary, highlights that the retail tour experience had her questioning her future, despite not writing about them in her journal until this day in Shanghai.

In her narrative, Mae continues to discuss her interest in retail, while summarizing the visual merchandising session:

It was interesting to hear from someone who worked in visual merchandising. I've always admired windows in stores, like the Saks on Fifth Ave in New York! A few years ago they even shot a whole catalogue with the models standing in the windows, it was really cool. I never realized how much work went into designing the lay out of the stores.

This narrative shows her interest in merchandising along with her excitement to learning different facets of the industry. Mae's narrative of the organized Fossil company visit is not like many of her other company visit narratives which typically included a simple summary of the company, visit, and key takeaways from the speakers. Mae's narrative

on Fossil shows her ability to link the lectures to other facets in her life including her career decisions.

## **Yoga**

The students speak about their Chinese guide, Peter, multiple times in the narratives. In one specific narrative, Mae wrote about a cultural activity her and a fellow classmate participated in because of her relationship with Peter:

Earlier in the trip we had told Peter that we wanted to do Yoga in China since his wife is a yoga instructor. He told us about this free class that his wife's studio was offering. K and I went because D was too tired. It felt so good to workout! The class was great. One of my favorite things I've done in China so far.

While a short and simple narrative of the event, this was one of Mae's first cultural experiences that was not part of an organized event or a shopping (meal or retail) experience.

## **Social**

Mae's journal entries included multiple narratives focused on her social experiences while on the study program. In this part of the section I will focus on three narratives that are rich in narrative and themes focusing on her social interactions with peers on the program and a fourth narrative where she discusses an interaction with her boyfriend at home. While both participants included narratives that discussed social interactions with peers on the program and in other areas of their lives, Mae's detailed and extensive narratives on social situations carried a theme throughout her journal.

No open container laws in Hong Kong: In Mae's first narrative her journal entry begins with "When we landed in Hong Kong, I thought the airport was really nice" and directly proceeds to a full narrative of the social adventure she took apart in the night before with two of her classmates:

We were dying to go out the first night we got there since we knew company visits would start on Monday and we probably wouldn't be able to stay out late. The fact that there are no open container laws was something I had never experienced before. D and K wanted the three of us to separate from the group since the boys were cockblocking. They wanted men to buy us drinks because they didn't want to spend any more money. I said I'd go along with them, but didn't know what I was getting myself into. We got super wasted with these ex-pats from the US. They were cool and all but I wasn't going to hook up with anyone, I have a boyfriend. And I've always lived by the philosophy that you don't do to others what you don't want to be done to you.

Mae begins her narrative showing her interest and intrigue in Hong Kong social life, "The fact that there are no open container laws was something I had never experienced before." As she continues, however, she indicates that D and K's motivation is to find men to buy them drinks and to hook up, including "but I wasn't going to hook up with anyone, I have a boyfriend" showing that her incentive to be out was not the same as her classmates, K and D.

Mae's narrative then takes a turn:

Well, around 1am I stopped drinking because I realized I needed to get K and D back to OUR hotel. They were making out with some ex-pats who wanted to take them home but I somehow convinced them that we needed to go back to Mongkok. I also directed the ex-pats to the ATM because they were too drunk to realize that they were going to pay for the taxi back. The taxi drive was nothing but AWKWARD because they were all making out with each other. But I was just happy that I was getting them to the hotel. When we got there S heard us come in and flipped out. I tried to convince him to not go to D's room but that was a FAIL. He apparently walked in on all four of them doing God knows what. Whatever, he needs to get over D. Because she's way beyond over him. I didn't hear about this until morning.

While Mae was seemingly enjoying herself to this point she indicates here that it was her responsibility to take care of her two female classmates (both older than her) who were making unsafe decisions under the influence of alcohol. The narrative continues as Mae describes the events that follow including an "AWKWARD" (original emphasis)

taxi ride and an interaction with S as the trio of ladies along with their two guests return to the hotel.

By beginning her program journal entry with this narrative, Mae introduces herself socially before academically, professionally, or personally. While this narrative seems to be telling a story of a sequence of events, Mae also includes her opinions and feelings as the night progressed by adding stylized emphasis and using language to separate herself from the others in the group at times, “The taxi drive was nothing but AWKWARD because they were all making out with each other. But I was just happy that I was getting them to the hotel.”

I don’t even know why she was upset: Mae’s next richly descriptive narrative on her social environment happens while the group is in Shanghai. Her narrative is written as two separate journal entries written on two days, May 18 and May 19, they run together fluidly and make for one complete narrative. In these two narratives, Mae describes a social outing that follows an alumni dinner and things go wrong:

We went to Cloud Nine, which was a bar that [Alumna in Hong Kong’s boyfriend] G had recommended to us back in Shanghai. It’s a shame that A got sick but it was about time it happened. I’m glad Dr. Oh didn’t get upset with him. K, S, and I decided to take a cab back from because D wanted to stay with A and there were 5 other people taking care of him. While we were in the taxi, D then called S and asked where we were and then bitched at him for leaving her and told us to fuck off...when we got to the hotel she just looked at us and went upstairs. S, K, and I went to buy A crackers and we stayed in his room until he fell asleep.

This narrative begins with part of the group and their professor going to a bar that was recommended to them by the alumna’s boyfriend in Hong Kong but quickly focuses on the aftermath of A getting sick seemingly from drinking alcohol. The rest of the narrative focuses on the social and dramatic interactions that ensued. The next day Mae’s narrative continues:

I hope D is over about last night. I don't even know why she was upset, she told us to leave. She didn't bring it up all day so I wasn't going to say anything. She also needs to grow up a little bit. For example, if she has to sit next to J then so be it. I feel like she expects people to accommodate to her. Like she didn't even thank Hannah for moving so that D could have a seat in the upper row at the show we went to.

While it is a new narrative entry as indicated by the date, she continues her narrative about the social implications of D on this trip. Mae includes a commentary of D's maturity with, "She also needs to grow up a little bit" which she follows up with an example. Mae's critical and rich description of her classmate's behavior in her reflective journal shows the influence of her social atmosphere in her daily life, even when on study abroad.

They're almost like fiends on the Bund River Cruise: In her third narrative about her social group, Mae describes an organized group outing on the Shanghai Bund river cruise. She opens her narrative by describing a conversation her and I had on the cruise about my collegiate experience, "I had a good talk with H on the boat ride. It's nice to hear about UF from a perspective of someone who wasn't Greek." She follows these two opening lines with a discussion on her classmate's behavior on the river cruise:

I was sort of surprised that the people I usually hang out with wanted to get off the boat before it left dock. They were arguing that because they paid for it they have the right to get off the boat. But their only reason for getting off the boat was to get alcohol...they're almost like fiends. And the fact that they had to ask if it was douche-y for them to get off the boat before it left dock should have been enough to tell them that it was.

Mae is straight forward that the classmates she is writing about are the friends she usually hangs out with and that their behavior was "almost like fiends." While Mae was the second youngest participant on the trip (Will was the youngest), her astute observations about her older friends and classmates are poignant in this narrative.

While she does not indicate that the people she usually hangs out with are affiliated with Greek organizations on campus, her choice to begin the narrative with learning about non-Greek experiences is more than a coincidence. Mae is clearly comparing her experiences and her social group's behavior and beginning to evaluate how she wants to spend her time and whom she would like to spend it with. Having already commented on behavior by her classmates that she felt was inappropriate, Mae's reflective journals show that her social interactions play a part in her reflection and development while abroad.

I know I'm not their person of choice: Mae's fourth rich narrative on her study abroad social circles continue on the theme of Greek affiliation and evaluating her peer's behavior in regards to her own choices and morals. In her narrative, she begins with the opening lines, "Lunch was terrible. I had to eat Subway. I don't even eat Subway at home!" Mae continues to describe how her lunch became a terrible experience in her narrative.

I walked with K and D we went into the mall down to the food court level. Well, as always, they just walked into the first place they saw. I really didn't want to eat at that place but they could care less and told me to go eat somewhere else. I was kind of scared to go alone so I didn't wander too far. But I know if one of them didn't like the restaurant we would have left immediately.

While Mae never discusses her friendship groups before the study tour, her narrative indicates that she feels apart of her social group and positions herself in a "me verses them" situation. She shows the strain of her social situation with phrases such as "but they could care less and told me to go eat somewhere else." Her breakdown of this behavior is included in her next line, "But they just continue to prove ZTA's stereotypes

as the trip progresses,” once again discussing a Greek student organizations in opposition to herself and follows with, “Whatever. Maybe I’m just being selfish”

Circling back to her lunch experience, Mae continues to describe her terrible lunch experience:

So I ended up at Subway, I bought a sandwich. And went back to where they were eating but there wasn’t a seat for me (surprise). I just walked back to Outback and ate in the lobby area between the chocolate store and Outback. Luckily I found a table to lean on and eat. I only took a few bites and threw it away. I didn’t really have an appetite.

Mae’s narrative beings to show her emotional feelings on the subject, highlighting that the experience left her without an appetite. Being left out of the table clearly bothered Mae despite her choice to eat at a different restaurant. She finishes her narrative with her understanding of her place in the social circle, “I know I’m not their ‘person of choice’ because I don’t talk like them, I don’t look like them, and I’m not skinny like them, but they can at least let me tag along until the trip ends. It’s almost over anyways.” Describing her differences in talking, looking, and being skinny like her two female peers, Mae is pointing out reasons she feels she does not belong and yet hopes that she is allowed to tag along until the end.

By ending the narrative with “It’s almost over anyways,” Mae shows how her social environment can have an effect on her program outlook. In addition to her program outlook, Mae’s narrative highlights how her peers can also affect behaviors such as eating and other health related concerns, which are heightened in student experiences in the developing world where a healthy diet can have an effect on physical and mental health. In addition to how her peers can affect her health and mental wellbeing, Mae’s narrative describes the feelings of loneliness students can face when devoid of comfort zones and lacking a strong social network.

I just haven't had the heart to do it: In Mae's final narrative on her social network, she describes a social media interaction with her boyfriend home in Miami. Mae opens her narrative explaining the situation:

So this morning my boyfriend messaged me at 8:40am and asked me if I was awake. I obviously was awake- I woke up at 8:10. I just hadn't sent him a message because I wanted to get dressed and get to breakfast and then message him when I was there. And if I have to take time to text him while I get ready it would just take me longer. Especially because he's the type of person who needs to receive instant replies. Like if I take longer than 5 minutes to answer he blows up.

In this narrative, Mae positions her boyfriend's perception of her time on the study tour and her interest and ability to respond in a timely fashion as counterproductive. She describes how their morning interactions have an effect on how she organizes her morning time. She states that she prioritizes getting ready for the day and eating breakfast before interacting with him. Mae continues with the narrative of their specific interaction in the morning:

Well anyways, when I told him I was awake, he asked me why I hadn't messaged him yet. I liked and said I woke up at 8:30. Then he said that my WhatsApp said I was "last seen at 8:10" which was true. I told him that when I snoozed my alarm I had seen the messages but was still half asleep and thought it would be okay to answer when I was completely awake. Well then he went on this rant about if I don't want to talk to him to just say so and he's sick of waiting around like a puppy for me to message him. And then he said to enjoy the rest of my trip, to message him when I get home IF I want to see him and to just dump him right there and then (through WhatsApp).

In this second part of her narrative, Mae begins to write out the conversation, quoting his remarks to her responses. She describes his message to her as a "rant" and paraphrases his desire to end the relationship based on miscommunication through a phone messaging service.

Mae continues her narrative with her opinion of their relationship, “Well dumping him has been an interest of mine for a while already. I just haven’t had the heart to do it. And I definitely wasn’t going to do it through WhatsApp.” She then writes their last communication, “After about 7-10 messages from him I finally answered and said that no one told him to “wait around like a puppy” for my texts and that he was being ridiculous. I told him that I loved him and that I would talk to him later.” By describing him as being ridiculous, she continues to position herself as without blame in the miscommunication and quotes her response “wait around like a puppy,” to show her opinion on the entire matter. Finishing her narrative, Mae assumes his intentions behind his behavior, “I guess he has an epiphany and he just started apologizing for blowing up on me and for everything he said.” She then follows with, “But I told him I was leaving the hotel and was going to lose Wi-Fi but that I accepted his apology and I was still upset with him. We left the hotel shortly after so I have no way of communicating with him now,” completing the story.

Mae’s inclusion of this narrative on their interaction in her journal shows that communication with home can have an effect on at students experience abroad. By writing out her narrative, Mae commits the interaction to her journal between entries on business visits and cultural experiences. Her choice of words in the narrative, describing his messages as rants and blowing up, repeating his use of “waiting around like a puppy,” and finishing with “so I have no way of communicating with him now” shows that she may view him as an insignificant part of her life despite being important enough to include in her narrative.

Focusing a large amount of her narratives on social interactions was interesting as it gave me an opportunity to analyze how she was affected socially throughout the program and how those interactions influenced her experiences through her narratives. In her interactions with her peers she was often questioning their behavior and reflecting on interactions that happened. She also mentioned more than once that she did not feel as if she belonged with the social circle she was in. These narratives were not only compelling but sometimes weaved together personal interactions with tour-programmed events, further showing that she blended her experiences together.

### **Individual (Will):**

In this third section of the results of naïve understanding, I will present Will's notable and compelling narratives. While Will often focused on the business visits, he included multiple narratives that were substantive and thematically rich. In this section, I will analyze three reflective narratives about his experience entering Mainland China from Hong Kong, visiting the Wal-Mart Asia headquarters, and the overall adventure to the city of Yiwu. After these analyses, I compare two factory tours to the Umbra factory, then the Brownshoe factory the following day.

### **Wal-Mart**

Will wrote longer journal entries about many of the company visits. One of his most robust entries was his discussion on the Wal-Mart Asian Headquarters visit and the following Sam's Club tour. In his entry, Will does not only include notes from the lecture, but also weaves personal insights and interest into his narrative:

On a broader level, it was really cool to see a variety of different elements at work in synergy in the Wal-Mart office: expats working hand in hand with locals, the sourcing and merchandising team, the marketing team, and the branding directors, etc. Wal-Mart's "no worry" campaign and the red and yellow in their stores that they use to market it reaffirmed the high

importance of adapting to local culture. The practical, directly applicable advice at the end of the presentation was great.

In this segment of the narrative, Will shows his interest in the learning experience by including “it was really cool” while putting emphasis that the “expats [were] working hand in hand with the locals” along with other examples of collaboration to achieve synergy. This narrative focuses on the fact that Will was not merely taking notes to fill a journal entry but that he was genuinely interested in the presentations. This insight may have been sparked by a variety of unknown reasons including his interest in the company, the speakers’ abilities to capture an audience, the topics of presentation, etc.

It is important to note, however, that while at the Wal-Mart company visit in Shenzhen, Will had a unique encounter with a company leader. Arriving early, the students visited the restroom and settled into the conference room before the formal business presentations began:

For sake of time, instead of focusing on details of presentation, will just mention that during the presentation break was walking around the office and ran into the Wal-Mart China CEO. Was a very nice guy...Wes and John were with me and he stopped to talk with us. He initially didn't know who we were and why we were there...Wes thinks he may have thought we were Proctor and Gamble representatives. He said that he has only been here a little over a year, and he ended up telling us about some crazy issues that he has to deal with such as weird store incidents and deaths of customers in stores that apparently occur more than you would think.

Will's inclusion of this unique event shows that his learning opportunities in the company visit spanned much further than the content of a presentation. The CEO's known or unknown honesty and stories of company issues unique to China was interesting to Will, and the opportunity to meet and have a candid conversation with such an important figure in the company gave him the chance to learn more than he would in just a classroom setting.

While the entire program of students participated in the Wal-Mart presentation and the later Sam's Club tour, Will's narrative was interesting for multiple reasons. In many of his narratives, he focuses only on the events that happened and the notes from the lectures and presentations. The opportunity to meet and talk with the CEO of Wal-Mart China may have given Will a different view of his experience and having the conversation before the presentations started may have given him an added incentive to pay attention to the speakers. This personal encounter made the Wal-Mart mission in China a reality to Will and his narrative from the presentations reflects his piqued interest.

### **Adventure to Yiwu**

While both Mae and Will wrote about their train journey to Yiwu, Will included extensive detail of the visit in Yiwu and Small commodities market. Will begins his Yiwu narrative with a description of the Shanghai train station, "Shanghai train station was massive and modern, very similar to an airport terminal." In his description of the station, Will begins to rationalize the style of the station:

Wasn't really expecting it, as main experiences with trains were with the Long Island Railroad, was imagining something less modern and not at the scale that it was. But it makes sense...trains are such a major form of transportation here that it is only logical to have the infrastructure to support it. In this narrative he not only explains that the modern train station surprised him but he uses his train experience on the Long Island Railroad to explain why he was surprised. He does not end his observation of the train station and his logical reasoning behind the modern building, instead he includes an observation: "Interesting observation: Went to restroom in train station, big non-smoking sign right when walk in, and yet about 5-10 people smoking, spewing out cigarette smoke standing right under the sign! Interesting...smoking is a very big part of culture." In this part of his narrative he

juxtaposes the description and necessity of the modern building with the story about smoking, including “spewing out cigarette smoke,” which indicates that while one part of the culture may be modern, there are other areas of Chinese culture that do not align with the modern building. He also uses this opportunity to draw a conclusion on a cultural behavior, smoking, which is happening directly below a non-smoking sign showing not only the importance of smoking in the culture but the unspoken yet mutually agreed upon trumping of ancient culture over modern law.

Following Will's narrative on the Shanghai train station and train to Yiwu experience (discussed in part 1), Will continues his narrative leaving the train station in Yiwu: “From moment walked out of the train station, apparent that Yiwu was like nothing had seen thus far. A Tier 4 city, was nowhere near the modern level of Shanghai. Typical of what many think of as China...” In this continuation he remarks on his first introduction to Yiwu through the train station, following his emphasis of “[the] majority of China is more like this (happy got to see some of “real China” apart from the huge and modern Tier 1 cities where we had been thus far)” and noting his desire to continue to explore the city.

The program was in Yiwu to visit the Indoor Commodities Market, the largest in China. Will expresses his interest and excitement in this part of the narrative through a variety of stylistic aspects and his word choice. Using ellipses, capital letters, and exclamation marks along with words such as “sensory overload,” “absolutely amazing and almost overwhelming to see,” and “lot of fun to go around together with them” while describing his experience in the market. Will then highlights his feelings on the Yiwu experience and includes:

Very happy went to Yiwu. Many people complaining about it from moment that got there that didn't like it, but I enjoyed seeing another aspect of China that's not a Tier 1 city for a few hours. Adds even more depth to my understanding of China.

Will finishes his long narrative about the Yiwu experience with a description of the Yiwu Airport: "Airport was, for lack of better word, funny. Is international airport but only 2 other flights aside from ours scheduled for around that time, relatively small, was still under construction—banging was very LOUD as walked in." which seems to echo his entry for the day with the group experience in the modern and large Shanghai train station, which was much bigger than the Yiwu International Airport.

The symmetry of the narrative on Yiwu, both beginning and ending in terminals, shows Will's ability to weave multiple experiences into a narrative. In his narrative he both describes the occurrences of the day while including his personal thoughts and feelings, and cultural and business related observations.

## **Factories**

The study tour brought students on guided tours and lectures to learn about two consumer products factories: the Umbra factory located in the Shenzhen Grand Industrial Zone outside Shenzhen, which made plastic home wares for large box stores such as Target, and the Brownshoe-Leeway factory in Nancheng District, Dongguan City which held the designer sourcing facility for the Brownshoe brand. While both factories were located in Guangdong Province in southern China, the Umbra factory was in a rural location surrounded by lodging for the employees, whereas Brownshoe was more urbanized, in a city close to retail centers and family housing. Will included two narratives rich in substance on both experiences that I will analyze and compare next.

Umbra: On the first full day in the mainland of China, the students toured the Wal-Mart headquarters before heading to lunch and an afternoon meeting at Umbra's head office in the city. After the presentation, the students boarded buses to a rural site to tour "Umbra's ANBO factory about 1.5 hours outside of Shenzhen in a Special Export Zone," as Will describes in his journal, being "very happy that we got to see actual Chinese factory where they actually manufacture, assemble, and package products from start to finish. One of my favorite things we did so far, very eye-opening, this is what I hear about factories producing all "Made in China" goods, so was amazing to see what it's actually like."

Describing the factory, Will includes note on the building, "The factory was essentially a huge warehouse-like building with all different machines...not the most modern, although you could tell it was very efficient...no AC." Location of the building, "Factory located in a Special Export Zone, so products exported overseas from here get special tax breaks from the Chinese government, providing an incentive for companies to bring their business to China," and details of the machinery inside including: "3-D printer: So cool. Allows designers to create plastic models of new products before production begins." Alongside his description of the factory and machinery, Will weaves in pieces about the machinery workers who were not currently working but left traces, "Workers were already off when we were there, but could tell employ many cheap Chinese laborers as factory workers."

Afterwards, the program concluded with a private room group dinner, but a student participant arranged the St. Regis hotel tour for a small group of students after. Will's journal entry on the factory compared these two experiences, "Once again,

though at the other end of spectrum...from compete luxury to hourly wage labor in a factory, it was as if it were out of a movie.” The stark differences between an A/C-less factory in rural China and one of the tallest hotels in the world are easily apparent, but Will’s comment shows that he considered the extremes of the day but did not go in depth in his journal entry.

In his summary, Will indicates that he is impressed with Umbra’s factory even after commenting on the building utilizing low-paid laborers living on the compound. In his bullet listing of thoughts on the manager led factory tour he includes: “Can tell Umbra knows what they’re doing. MASSIVE factory and warehouse. All Umbra products worldwide originate here,” (emphasis original) and “Makes you think of where products come from that see on shelves...never really think about it...will be hard to look at a picture frame on a shelf at Target or Wal-Mart the same!” While Will’s journal entry shows that he is aware of the spectrum of experiences in the day, his narrative does not concentrate on the potential plight of the workers or any ethical concerns, instead his narrative indicates that he is interested more in the process of product conception at the 3-D printer to arriving on the shelves at Target.

Brownshoe: The morning following the Umbra group tour and private tour of the St. Regis, the program brought the students to the Brownshoe-Leevy factor in Dongguan City, Guangdong. Choosing to break Will’s narrative on the Brownshoe experience in two parts, I included his discussion on the company visit and presentation in section one as a comparison to Mae’s and am including his observations of the factory and setting in this section. Will begins the Brownshoe Company visit with a description of the factory, “Brown Shoe Company Visit: Very nice building, only \$2

million dollars, which is cheap for such a building!” He indicates what the group toured describing the “sourcing facility and got to see full-scale factory with over 500 blue-collar workers (who live in dorms there) to produce samples of shoes before the designs go to mass production.” He continues to explain that this factory experience was:

Not AS shocking as yesterday after already having been to one factory, amazing to see: people working with masks, molds, complex machines, different color yarns, rooms and rooms of designer shoe samples, and the whole building had the smell of new leather. (Original emphasis)

His description of the factory again focuses more on the machinery and process of the factory, and not of the human lives involved. Instead, he later indicates that they learned about labor costs and human capital during the presentation by Mr. C., “provided insight into sourcing and how despite increasing labor costs over the last few years, over 97 percent of the world’s sourcing is done out of China, simply because they make it so easy and efficient with everything in one place.”

Having visited the St. Regis the night between these two tours, Will had personally witnessed two extremes of Chinese life, that of a poor migrant factory worker and the posh life of China’s young and wealthy. In his narrative on the St. Regis tour, Will includes the following

It was absolutely stunning--never seen anything like it. It was literally like out of a movie, which seems to be the theme of the day. We experienced two extremes, almost one right after the other, and each seemed so surreal yet so close to what you would imagine based on movie stereotypes but never got to see in person that it seemed as if it were out of a movie.

This powerful entry indicates that Will had been contemplating the extremes and was trying to make sense of a surreal experience. His simplification of the extremes shows his desire to make sense of the juxtaposition of the factory and hotel tour, and yet he does not include a personal connection to either lifestyle in the narrative.

Will includes a variety of themes in his reflective narratives. While his narratives often focused on the business visits and political climate more than Mae's, the rich thematic narratives I chose to analyze show his ability to reflect on the events of the day and discuss their effects on his professional goals, views of the country, and cultures of China.

### **Thematic Structural Analysis**

In the second part of my analysis was guided by thematic structural analysis. After the process of reading, reviewing, and working through the data for naïve understanding, I began to utilize my two theoretical frameworks, experiential learning theory and intercultural maturity learning, to help guide my thematic analysis. I utilized the trajectory of intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) as a framework for the structural analysis, I reviewed each of the 148 narrative pieces and identified them based on their subject: cognitive, interpersonal, or intrapersonal then identified if the narrative expressed an initial, intermediate, or mature level of development based on King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model. In total, 116 of the 148 narrative segments exhibited examples of intercultural maturity (Table 4-1). Of the 116 narrative segments, most texts expressed an initial or intermediate level of development. Experiential learning theory describes experiential learning as a continuum that students process through, from the initial concrete experience, to abstract conceptualization, next reflective observation, and last active experimentation before beginning over again. As I read each of the 148 narratives, I also identified which levels of the experiential learning theory each narrative achieved (Table 4-2). In this section, I will share my results from the second part of my data analysis, thematic structural analysis, based on King and

Baxter Magolda's (2005) trajectory of intercultural maturity and Kolb & Kolb's (2005) experiential learning theory.

### **Intercultural Maturity**

King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) theory of intercultural maturity seeks to explain intercultural development as it relates to college students. Utilizing a multidimensional matrix, the theory breaks down intercultural learning into three parts: cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The theory explains how students can grow and transform while applying their experiences in other settings and contexts, working with diverse others. In this section, I will present the findings as they relate to the theory of intercultural maturity.

### **Cognitive**

Of the 148 separate narratives, there were only two that expressed a mature level of cognitive intercultural maturity, one by each participant. In Mae's example, she discusses her visit to the company Y&R earlier that day. She begins her narrative with "I think there was a huge language barrier here. The presenters had a hard time articulating their ideas in English." In this narrative, she opens with a cognitive observation acknowledging that the language barrier and difficulty of speaking in English to be the issue. As the narrative continues, she discusses the advertisements the firm shared during their presentation, remarking that they were strange to watch and yet following up right away with, "but this has to do with my 'cultural' lens. I watched these advertisements through western eyes, not eastern eyes." In this statement, Mae conveys a new cultural worldview and an ability to shift perspectives from her lens to another. This example, while an example of a mature level of development, shows that

there is still room to grow to start to utilize multiple cultural frames, not just be open to them.

In the second example of a mature cognitive level of development, Will discuss the train experience from Shanghai to Yiwu. Will describes the modern train building, focusing on the importance of train travel to the Chinese culture and society. In his observations, he indicates that he “Went to the restroom in train station, big non-smoking sign right when walk in, and yet about 5-10 people smoking, spewing out cigarette smoke standing right under the sign!” Instead of including commentary on how this behavior is disgusting or illegal, he finishes this thought with “Interesting... smoking is very big part of culture.” In this narrative, Will shows an ability to shift perspectives and use multiple cultural frames as opposed to just accepting or the extreme, viewing differing practices as wrong.

Unfortunately, these two examples of mature intercultural development are two of 49 total narratives with examples of cognitive maturity, the other 47 being split almost evenly between the initial and intermediate levels of development. Examples of the two lower levels of cognitive intercultural maturity are common and include concerns of peeing all over oneself “popping a squat” in the toilets (Mae) and commentary on how behaviors or customs “are just weird” (Mae) but mostly consist of narratives that do not do any exploring into how the observations of their experiences are related to the Chinese or their own culture in any way.

### **Interpersonal**

Of the 45 narratives that included intrapersonal themes, they were split between the initial and intermediate levels of development, as there was not one example of a mature level of intrapersonal development. Both participants showed signs of an ability

to reach the intermediate level of intercultural development maturity, and Will's example of arriving in Shenzhen from Hong Kong was a good example of his ability to understand the community practices of diverse others. After spending time in Hong Kong, the tour group left the city on bus to transfer to Shenzhen, the first city in China's mainland directly north of S.A.R. Hong Kong. Will includes a narrative on the ride from Hong Kong into the People's Republic of China, "In the evening, we said goodbye to Hong Kong as we drove on our bus to Shenzhen. On the way, we passed a massive port full of shipping cargo crates, reaffirming the large-scale manufacturing and export hub Shenzhen is known for." The symbolism of the skyline transitioning from the Hong Kong Island high rises to shipping cargo crates was not lost on Will. Nor was the experience of staying in the same country but needing to pass through passport control and customs, "Because Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region and not a part of Mainland China, we had to get off the bus, go through passport control and customs, and get back on a different bus on the other side of the 'Shenzhen Bay Port.'" Will's ability to see the cities of Hong Kong and Shenzhen as two separate, diverse places shows an ability to regularly reach the intermediate level of development.

While Will's interpersonal entry highlighted above is on the grand scale, comparing two of the largest cities in the world, Mae's example is personally driven and based on an experience with two of her classmates. In her experience, she describes getting extremely lost on the way home because of a misunderstanding by a classmate, "But we got extremely lost on the way home because D misunderstood the stop Peter was talking about. It happens, I understand. I honestly wasn't upset." She begins this narrative by setting the scene and being understanding of a mistake that anyone could

make. But as she continues, “But when we realized we were so far from the hotel then they should have wanted to take a taxi. But they didn’t want to pay for the taxi” she begins to show that while she is open to others’ perceptions’ she does not legitimize them as easily. By including, “after roaming around for about two hours we ended up having to take a taxi anyways and we made it to the hotel” the intercultural maturity of accepting others’ points of views and opinions are seen to be lacking.

As there were no examples of a mature level of development in the interpersonal category, it is important to note that many of the examples barely touched on the subject. Often narrative entries would discuss interactions between people and not offer commentary on the engagements with others, even in charged situations. The lack of clearly developed opinions and insight into these interpersonal situations is apparent in the narratives.

### **Intrapersonal**

The intrapersonal domain of intercultural development is concerned with personal views, beliefs, and sense of identity as they apply to their intercultural experience. Only 21 of the 115 narratives included in the intercultural maturity development segment of the analysis focused in intrapersonal topic, the smallest percentage of the three aspects of intercultural maturity. The few narratives that discussed intrapersonal topics, such as identity, were often lacking much of an intention to discuss the topic and, instead, grazed the topic.

During Will’s last day on the trip, he was left behind the group and attempted to visit the city of Beijing on his own. Throughout his narrative, he discusses the challenges he had navigating the city across town to a new part he had never been to before. In the end, he single-handedly navigated the city on foot. He describes his

feeling of success as “fantastic.” While this could be seen as an interpersonal experience, as he engaged with diverse others, his maturity shows in his ability to see himself as more than a student on a tour being led around, and how his maturity and motivation to be successful in this intercultural environment shows intrapersonal growth.

### **Experiential Learning**

In the second part of the thematic structural analysis, I utilized Kolb and Kolb’s (2005) experiential learning theory as a guide to building the themes. In this section of I searched to learn if the narratives conveyed examples of students creating knowledge through grasping and transforming their experiences. To understand the students’ process of experiential learning, where learners begin grasping “experience through Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC), while they transform it through Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE).” (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; p. 194). This process of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting is what was used in the second part of the thematic structural analysis.

By definition, every narrative piece included concrete experience, as they were written narratives from a study abroad program. While there was the possibility that a participant could have written about a past experience or an abstract concept, these thoughts and narratives would be experiences in their own right and therefore be considered concrete experiences. The next step in the cycle of experiential learning, abstract conceptualization was seen in over half of the narratives, 84. In these examples, students would distill their reflections into abstract concepts so they can draw implications from action (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Reflective observation was found in only 27 of the narratives. While narratives often described the day’s events and reactions, they often missed a reflective element that would speak further about the actions and

consequences. Finishing the cycle with active experimentation would be difficult with so few narratives including reflective observation and only five narratives included these examples.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The results of this chapter were formed from two different analysis methods: naïve understanding and thematic structural analysis. These two different methods worked together well to give me, the researcher, the interpreter, and research tool, the ability to get to know the narrative data well and in time, the truth about the essential meaning of the study abroad experience began to reveal itself. Throughout the analysis process, I continuously circled back to trying to understand the narratives and what they were trying to show me. The naïve understanding process gave me the opportunity to engage with my data in a new way and paved ground for the thematic structural analysis. The narratives research are diverse and while there were some trends in topics, each narrative was unique and gave me, the researcher and interpreter, another opportunity to understand the experience of study abroad.

Table 4-1. Number of narratives by domain and level of development on the Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity

		<i>Initial Level of Development</i>	<i>Intermediate Level of Development</i>	<i>Mature Level of Development</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Mae	<i>Cognitive</i>	13	11	1	25
	<i>Interpersonal</i>	16	7	0	23
	<i>Intrapersonal</i>	5	4	0	9
	<i>Totals</i>	34	22	1	
Will	<i>Cognitive</i>	6	19	1	26
	<i>Interpersonal</i>	7	16	0	23
	<i>Intrapersonal</i>	5	4	1	10
	<i>Totals</i>	18	39	2	
<i>Combined</i>	<i>Totals</i>	52	61	3	116*

\* The total is 116 as not all narratives were substantive enough to be considered

Table 4-2. Number of narratives that included key components of Experiential Learning Theory processes

	Experiential Learning Theory			
	Concrete Experience	Abstract Conceptualization	Reflective Observation	Active Experimentation
Mae	81	38	14	1
Will	67	46	13	4

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Little attention is given to the student experience on a short term study abroad program despite short term programs becoming the second most popular type of study abroad program with 60.3% of students studying abroad for six weeks or fewer (IIE, 2014). With current efforts such as the Generation Study Abroad initiative in February 2014 sponsored by the United States Government to double the study abroad student population in fewer than five years (IIE, 2013) current trends show short term programs will continue to rise in popularity based on many of their positive qualities. If this trend is to continue, it is imperative that the industry gains a better understanding of the student experience, academic, personal, professional, and otherwise, on these short term programs. While the field of international education has little research focused on the personal experience on short term study abroad, educators and researchers have begun focusing more efforts and resources towards gaining a better understanding of the field. In the three years I have worked on this dissertation, I have seen a rise in research published focusing on study abroad.

In this final chapter, I begin by summarizing the importance of my study in relation to the current literature and the methods. Next, I present a synthesis of key findings from Mae and Will's journals and the understanding I derived from their narratives as they relate to my theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Finally, I discuss how my study works within the larger field of study abroad and contributes to larger field of research specifically focusing on the implications for higher education, recommendations for future research, and limitations.

## **Summary of My Study**

In this study I utilized qualitative research methodology to gain an understanding of the unique, individual experiences of first year students in this short term program. Believing that the phenomenon of study abroad shapes how students interact with the world, I utilized phenomenological hermeneutics to analyze the texts and create an interpretation of the phenomenon of study abroad. My research questions allowed me to be open to an infinite range of possibilities in how the social experience of study abroad is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Using subject driven data, where the participants determined their own path and used their own voice in creating the data, I focused on understanding their experience of a short term study abroad through their own words and in their own setting through interpretative inquiry (Creswell 2009).

The participants each kept daily reflective narrative journals throughout their participation on a 21 day study tour to China and Hong Kong. These journals were collected along with a demographic survey to gain a better understanding of the authors of the narratives. I utilized thematic and structural analysis to analyze the reflective journals to first choose rich narratives and summarize the data for my study.

## **Major Findings**

The journal narratives written by the two participants offered the opportunity to gain an understanding of the reflective thought processes a student experiences during a short term study abroad program in China. These journal narratives gave insight to both the overarching themes that multiple students experience and the personal experiences that affect study abroad students greatly. This study was guided by two research questions:

- What do students choose to write about in written narratives of their study abroad experiences?
- How do students connect their organized academic activities with their personal lives?

The great majority of the data collected and research conducted on study abroad is quantitative in nature. Most research is collected at the end or post-abroad experience and asks voluntary participants to complete a survey or assessment tool. To gain a better understanding of what study abroad students choose to focus on, there were no writing or topical requirements for the students, instead they were encouraged to write freely. By allowing open-ended narratives, the participants focused on the topics, themes, and experiences they felt most important.

### **Research Question 1**

I began my research with the goal of learning about what students choose to write about and focus on in their own personal journals. For this study to be authentic and valid, it was important that these journals were private and the participants felt safe and comfortable writing their daily thoughts and sharing their stories. While using a self-selecting criteria based convenience sampling method limited the participation in the study, I gained an in depth and intimate vantage point to their experiences on the program. Through their reflective journals I was able to learn what the participants chose to write about their experiences and gained insight to their experiences through their own words.

When I began to outline my major findings for the first research question, I realized that my data analysis naturally broke sub categories into cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal topics. The students' narratives often fell into one of the three categories and as I began to understand the journals and participants through

their own words, it was clear to see where a participant's level of intercultural maturity development based on their entry. The theory of intercultural maturity highlights that student's transition from one level to the next over time and that college offers many opportunities that challenge and help a student grow within the trajectory (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Knowing this, I did not expect the student participants to have achieved a mature level of intercultural maturity development.

In total, there were a combined 116 narratives that fell within the trajectory of intercultural maturity. With only 3 of these 116 narratives showing a mature level of intercultural maturity, one can conclude that a three week short term study abroad program is not enough to help first year students advance from the initial level of development to the mature level of development. Without a pre-survey or access to reflective journaling from before the program, it is impossible to draw conclusions on if the study tour was able to help the students advance in any way. Without any emphasis on intercultural maturity, it is hard to show that participation in a short term program without guidance on the topic will lead to any change in the level of intercultural maturity development. While intercultural maturation is an important skill as producing intercultural competent citizens is a top priority for the U.S. government, educational institutions, and human resources departments, more research needs to focus on the implications of students participating on a short term program abroad can leading to change to a student's cognitive, interpersonal, or intrapersonal level of intercultural maturity.

## **Research Question 2**

My second research question focused on searching for links in the participants' narratives between their planned experiences and their personal lives. As study tours

are different than exchange programs where students spend most of their days in unorganized, personal activities, study tours often have students participating in activities twelve hours each day – from breakfast until group dinners conclude. While there were many organized activities on the study program to China that included business visits, cultural tourism, social networking, and other group outings, both participants tied their personal explorations, social experiences, and emotions into the reflective journals.

Kolb's (1984) theory of Experiential Learning, in the simplest definition, states that experience is learning. This theory explains that when students are given the right opportunity to reflect they engage in a circular reflection cycle through active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation, and abstract conceptualization. Students continue this cycle as they process and perceive their experiences to grow and learn. Experiential Learning Theory can be applied to study abroad program design as it provides a strong framework and theoretical rationale for the learning opportunities students experience while abroad (Bennett, 2008).

The narratives show that students participating on short term study abroad programs attempt to make links between their organized experiences and their personal lives. Mae's journal narratives, which spent more time focusing on social and personal topics, rarely went past reflective observation. Will, who also discussed both the professional and social implications of his experiences, did not continue on the continuum to Abstract Conceptualization. Of the 23 structurally complete narratives analyzed for my research, 20 of the narratives included reflective observation. Only 7 of the narratives included active conceptualization, and each participant wrote a single

reflection each (of the reflections analyzed) that included a discussion on Active Experimentation.

Each thematically rich narrative contained examples of Concrete Experiences, often they would include these subtly within their review of the day's activities citing when emotions, experiences, or situations were new or a reinterpretation. Concrete Experiences are what the observations and reflections are based on. While experiencing and reflecting are the first half of the Experiential Learning continuum, without reflection that gives way to new concepts or ideas students are unable to process their learning experience fully. Abstract Conceptualization are reflections from the Concrete Experiences assimilated and distilled to create implications for action (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Four of Mae's 15 narratives include abstract conceptualization where her reflection gives rise to a new idea or an abstract concept. For Mae these conceptualizations were often when she reflected on a company business when she encountered an inspiring leader and received advice on successful business practices. In these narratives, Mae would write about the speaker and what they discussed (CE), next she would discuss the new idea the speaker brought to her attention (RO), and this reflection would lead to her discussing new ways she can emulate the behavior or grow the skills and capacity to be that type of leader (AC). Mae's narrative that included Active Experimentation was sparked by a visit to the St. Regis Hotel in Shenzhen, China. The St. Regis is a luxury hotel that the students toured thanks to a classmate's father who is on the executive board for Starwood Properties. Both Mae and Will discussed the opulence and grandeur of the experience but Mae's narrative continued past a reflection to the creation of new ideas and highlighted the drive to work hard to

pay for her own stay at the hotel one day, “Not some rich guy who wants to blow his money on me.” This narrative links her (not officially organized company visit) to her future life through the Experiential Learning Continuum.

Will’s reflections also reflect his professional lessons and included the link to how his experiences and reflection guided him into a modified or new thought. Two of Will’s eight narratives included Abstract Conceptualization, leaving just one that included the entire continuum to Active Experimentation where he applied his learning to the world around him to see the results. In this example, Will’s narrative discusses his observations and conceptualizations during the experience of ordering food in Guangdong, China. His narrative discusses that although they are in mainland China where the language is Mandarin, he seemed to notice most people preferred speaking Cantonese, the language of Guangdong and Hong Kong. In his narrative he ends with how he thanked his server in the local language, not *xie*, Mandarin to please the waitress.

In this example, Will processed through the continuum outside of reflective journaling and utilized his journal to record the process. Reflection does not always require participants reflect through journals. There are many other ways to reflect as they process through the Experiential Learning process. While these narratives only include a small part of the students’ constant and daily reflections, it is natural to assume they also experienced opportunities to travel through the continuum that they did not reflect upon in their journal. Knowing this, there is a further need for students to be guided and helped through experiential learning as there are many opportunities for students to reflect critically and strategically engage with their experiences.

An important factor of Experiential Learning Theory is that students connect their own motives to their learning experience, and they should participate in goal setting and other activities to gain an understanding of the learning experiences they may face (Dewey, 1938). While both students discussed learning goals in their journals, neither referenced any formal goal setting nor steps in how they were to achieve these goals. Without formal goals to refer to, a participant could discuss a goal once without referencing it ever again. While the reflective journaling process allows students to transform their experiences into knowledge through reflective observation and active experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) there was no framework set to aid students in this process and there were many instances in the journal narratives where students failed to critically analyze or reflect on their experiences.

Experiential Learning Theory framework provides an opportunity for students to connect their organized and academic activities on study abroad with their personal lives. My research shows that without guidance from faculty or mentors nor a framework to how reflective journaling can aid in experiential learning, students struggle to make more than simple connections between their organized activities and personal lives, and lack the depth in reflective observation and active experimentation needed to grow as an experiential learner (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

### **Implications for Higher Education**

While this study was an introductory qualitative study to learn about the individual student experience of two first year students abroad, it is clear that there is more research that needs to be done and there are gaps in the educational goals and structure provided for students studying abroad.

## **Support for Intercultural Learning**

Intercultural learning is an important and urgent educational priority (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002) and study abroad alone cannot guarantee students are moving along the trajectory. It is important that institutions that strive to create globally minded and intercultural competent citizens through study abroad integrate intentional guidance and learning for students abroad. Students struggle to move along the trajectory of intercultural maturity within their own reflective narratives as they do not have real time feedback or guidance on how to move along the trajectory.

Institutions will need to prioritize intercultural learning and create frameworks for faculty to follow to enhance the student experience. By creating common goals, educating faculty and staff leaders, and providing resources for students to learn about and progress through the trajectory of intercultural maturity students will be able to gain a better understanding of how their experiences abroad can help develop them as a cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal globally-minded thinker. Actively focusing on intercultural learning will create an environment where students are an active part of their learning process and faculty and staff can provide the mentorship and guidance needed for students to reflect and grow.

## **Study Abroad Design**

Study abroad often promotes intercultural, academic, and professional learning opportunities without providing frameworks or help for the students to achieve these learning goals. My research shows that without the correct design, students will struggle developing important professional, academic, and personal skills that could be afforded to them via a study abroad experience. Study abroad cannot simply be reduced to the time a student is abroad and student support is vital during preparation and participant

return. Current research on experiential learning theory highlights the importance of goal setting as a part of the learning process. If students are studying abroad with the hopes to attain a skill or cognitive development but are not actively planning for or working towards the goal, they will undoubtedly struggle as my participants did.

### **Recommendations for Future Investigations**

The participants in this study linked their experience with personal relationships from home, discussions on their individual career paths, and how they fit into this ever-growing and changing world. The journals provided an opportunity to learn about the diversity in students' reflective thoughts and what students struggle with that is not addressed within the study abroad programming. With only two participants, my study uncovered many topics students struggle with, and further research is needed to gain an understanding of not only the trends in these reflective opportunities but a grander scope of topics study abroad students reflect on.

Both Mae and Will spent much of their reflective time discussing observations from the day trying to gain a better understanding of their experiences and how they relate to the world around them while grappling with the complexities and influences of being in a foreign environment. The data shows that students spent time thinking, discussing, writing, observing, reflecting, questioning, expounding, their experiences and thoughts - but there are no resources within the study tour program to help aid them. Other than finding mentors, participating in student directed discussions, or personal reflections - students really don't have much guidance on any topic outside the coursework. From Mae and Will's narrative journals, it can be concluded that neither student had the type of support they needed for their overall growth and experience while on their study tour. While their comprehension of the retail environment in China

evolved based on their coursework and assignments, based on their final grade; the framework for their personal growth.

Globalization and what it means to be a world citizen and how much potential for learning is wasted if structured/thoughtful debriefing isn't incorporated into programs. With the rise of study tours, it is important for the faculty and administrative staff designing programs to understand the holistic learning experiences students may encounter. While every student will have a unique, individual, deeply personalized experience, this study shows that there is a wide gap between the guided coursework and mentorship and the challenges and learning opportunities students face while abroad, even for a short time.

Not only would further research on the gaps between what is being offered and what is needed, but companies who provide study abroad services can benefit from this research by building programming to bridge the gap between faculty specialties and the support needed for students. Companies who offer logistical services to short term study abroad programs can provide on the ground learning opportunities to help facilitate the experiential learning process and guide student reflective understanding to create opportunities for students to maximize their overseas learning potential. Building on earlier scholars (Dewey 1938; Kolb & Fry, 1979; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) Yang et al. (2011) recommend students are facilitated in making connections before studying abroad utilizing previous' experiences. Setting challenging study abroad goals and reflecting on these goals help students make connections and understand a greater benefit from the experience.

As I analyzed my data, I often wanted to learn more about my participants' travel experiences. Both participants indicated they had traveled internationally before but always with family, this was their first time traveling alone, even Will's first time on a plane alone. Gaining a better understanding of their travel experiences, specifically reflective journals from their personal travel, would allow me to understand the how students process personal travel and organized educational travel differently. While this type of research would be difficult to obtain in qualitative research, it would help to understanding the overarching differences in student reflective and experiential learning between personal and educational travel.

As no two study abroad programs are created equal, it would be important to understand the difference and similarities of experiences between students on varying types of study abroad programs to learn about the common experiences that students face, and unique experiences for particular groups. Longitudinal research in this field is very important as many study abroad programs sell their programs based on life-long learning opportunities such as maturity, growth, and global competencies and yet most do not provide a support system for these types of growing environments.

### **Study Limitations**

This qualitative study focused two reflective journals written by students participating in a short term program and does not lead to strong conclusions. With a limited scope and a unique experience that pertains to the students experiencing this particular study abroad program, we are unable to generalize the experiences of my participants as they apply to short term study abroad programs as a whole. The research was limited and exploratory in nature, focusing on understanding the student reflective process as it pertained to the participants. This research will be helpful in

designing new research aimed to focus on reflection and study abroad and continue the conversation of the necessity for qualitative research in the most popular and continually growing study abroad sector, short term programs.

### **Conclusion**

Study abroad is seen as an important opportunity for undergraduate students to gain skills to help them become global citizens along with many other implicit and explicit goals. While research literature concerning study abroad is continue to grow, it is still lacking, specifically due to the great flexibility and many factors at play in regards to building programs. To sum it up, every program is unique and different, every experience is unique only to the individual experiencing it, and it is extremely difficult to produce research results that can be generalized.

My study adds to the knowledge about the student experience in a short term faculty led study abroad and shows that students engage in a multitude of academic, professional, and personal experiences that they work to find meaning in. Most importantly, my findings show how students are engaging and reflect with their planned and unplanned learning experiences and the many opportunities faculty and staff in study abroad can provide conceptual frameworks and led reflective discussions to enhance their experience abroad. The implications of this study provide a beginning limited framework of the many study abroad experiences students can reflect on and learn from, if given the right opportunity.

APPENDIX A  
IRB PROTOCOL

## UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research

### Protocol Submission Form

*This form must be typed. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.*

<b>Title of Protocol:</b>	<b>Student Narratives on a Short Term Study Abroad to China</b>		
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Hannah Morris		<b>UFID #:</b>
<b>Degree / Title:</b>	Ph.D. Student	<b>Mailing Address:</b> (If on campus include PO Box address):	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Department:</b>	Higher Education		<b>Telephone #:</b>
<b>Co-Investigator(s):</b>	None	<b>UFID#:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Supervisor (If PI is student):</b>	Hyunjoo Oh		<b>UFID#:</b>
<b>Degree / Title:</b>	Ph.D./Professor	<b>Mailing Address:</b> (If on campus include PO Box address):	<b>Email :</b>
<b>Department:</b>	Marketing		<b>Telephone #:</b>
<b>Date of Proposed Research:</b>	<b>May 1, 2013 –April 30, 2014</b>		
<b>Source of Funding</b> (A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):	Unfunded		
<b>Scientific Purpose of the Study:</b>			
The focus of this study will be to explore how college students make sense of their experiences during a short term study abroad.			
<b>Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language:</b> (Explain what will be done with or to the research participant.)			

Data will be gathered through a multi-step process. In the first step, the investigators will invite students to participate in the study and provide them with the informed consent documentation and study information. Next, the PI will contact the students with a demographic background information survey. These questions will relate to the students' undergraduate and graduate major, gender, race/ethnicity, age, past study abroad and travel experiences. Next, the PI will email the participating students a link to the assessment tool that they will complete online.

During the tour, observational data will be collected as students participate in the study tour including behavior during presentations, interactions during cultural activities, and interactions with their fellow classmates. Students will be asked to utilize reflective journals focusing on personal and professional experiences on the tour. These journals will be collected by the PI after the tour is complete.

After the tour is completed, the last round of data collection will involve audio taped 45-60 minute face to face interviews with the participating students. The interview protocol will include questions related to their travel experiences, views on foreign travel, academic experiences and perspectives on the effects of study abroad, their views on the study tour, and how they imagine the study tour will impact their future education and career choice. At the end of the term, the PI will email the participating students a link to the assessment tool that they will complete online as the post-assessment and asked to complete the same demographic background information survey.

The digital files and any other files related to the analysis of the data will be stored in the PI's secure drive as well as in a USB drive (the USB drive will be file in the researcher's office securely). Results will be written in the form of academic papers for conference presentations and publications.

**Describe Potential Benefits:**

There are no direct benefits for the participants except that the participants have an opportunity to express their evaluation and opinions about the program. The participants are not compensated.

**Describe Potential Risks:** *(If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)*

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation. Participants' identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Breach of confidentiality with the survey tool, Qualtrics is the only potential risk. All interview data will be de-identified and will be summarized so that individual student results cannot be identified. Participants' identity will be assigned a code number. The list connecting identities to this number will be kept in a locked file and when the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Names of participants will not be used in any report.

**Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited:**

Those who participate in the programs (students registered for a new course-international retailing in China and the study tour aboard, and industry professionals participated in workshops) will be recruited before and after participating in the program.

<b>Maximum Number of Participants (to be approached with consent)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Age Range of Participants:</b>	<b>18 year old and above</b>	<b>Amount of Compensation/course credit:</b>	<b>None</b>
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## APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT

Project title: International Retail Education and Training - China Retail Study

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: This study aims to understand your experience in the China retail study tour.

What you will be asked to do in this study: You will be asked to rate your opinion on international retailing and doing business in China, and you will be also asked to answer some brief questions with respect to retailing in China.

Time required: About 20 minutes

Risks: We do not anticipate any discomfort arising out of this survey. However, you are free to withdraw from further participation at any stage of this survey.

Benefits/Compensation: There are no direct benefits to you for participating.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent required by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Whom to contact when you have questions about the study:

Hyunjoo Oh, Research Director

Whom to contact about your rights in the study: UFIRB Office, P.O. Box 1 12250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 3261 1-2250; ph (352) 392-0433.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above.

If you agree to participate in the procedure, please continue by clicking the button below.

APPENDIX C  
NARRATIVE INVENTORY

Narrative	IM	Level	C E	R E	A C	A E
<p>When we landed in Hong Kong, I thought the airport was really nice. We were dying to go out the first night we got there since we knew company visits would start on Monday and we probably wouldn't be able to stay out late. The fact that there are no open container laws was something I had never experienced before. D and K wanted the three of us to separate from the group since the boys were cockblocking. They wanted men to buy us drinks because they didn't want to spend any more money. I said I'd go along with them, but didn't know what I was getting myself into. We got super wasted with these ex-pats from the US. They were cool and all but I wasn't going to hook up with anyone, I have a boyfriend. And I've always lived by the philosophy that you don't do to others what you don't want to be done to you. Well, around 1am I stopped drinking because I realized I needed to get K and D back to OUR hotel. They were making out with some ex-pats who wanted to take them home but I somehow convinced them that we needed to go back to Mongkok. I also directed the ex-pats to the ATM because they were too drunk to realize that they were going to pay for the taxi back. The taxi drive was nothing but AWKWARD because they were all making out with each other. But I was just happy that I was getting them to the hotel. When we got there S heard us come in and flipped out. I tried to convince him to not go to D's room but that was a FAIL. He apparently walked in on all four of them doing God knows what. Whatever, he needs to get over Dani. Because she's way beyond over him. I didn't hear about this until morning.</p>	Int ra pe rs on al	Initial	X	X		
<p>Ocean Park: Paul has the confidence and pride in something he did that I hope to have in my career one day. He really simplified the steps he took to take Ocean Park out of its status quo. The points he emphasized the most were that sales are EVERYTHING. As a businesswoman you must work for the customer. One must also be willing to change. CHANGE IS KEY. A company must be willing to adapt and change in order to stay on top. Ocean Park was beautiful! The park was so well kept and each area was unique and set a different ambiance. The animals were precious. A bunch of Chinese people took pictures with us. I felt like a nameless celebrity.</p>	Int ra pe rs on al	Interme diate	X	X	X	
<p>The Ocean Park visit was also phenomenal. Paul P spoke to us about how he essentially single-handedly turned the park around from huge losses to huge gains over the course of a few years. The key point he emphasized was the necessity of embracing change and the importance of giving people a specific reason to want, or even better, to need, to patronize your product to be successful. After all, it's all about the consumers, who are all people. After the presentation, we had a few hours to explore Ocean Park itself. While there were plenty of roller coasters, the emphasis on education was apparent from the many animal exhibits; the penguins were especially fun to see.</p>	C og nit iv e	Interme diate	X	X		
<p>Fossil: the Japanese man was hilarious! He didn't give a lot of insight on the company though. This was the 2nd time a company used Starbucks as an example of great branding (Ocean Park was the first).</p>	Int er pe rs on al	Initial	X			

<p>The British woman, in my opinion, was the best presenter. She admitted to the flaws in the original marketing strategy and said how fossil learned from their mistakes and went from there. It was interesting to hear from someone who worked in visual merchandising. I've always admired windows in stores, like the Saks on Fifth Ave in New York! A few years ago they even shot a whole catalogue with the models standing in the windows, it was really cool. I never realized how much work went into designing the lay out of the stores. This part of the presentation was very informative.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>In the evening, we said goodbye to Hong Kong as we drove on our bus to Shenzhen. On the way, we passed a massive port full of shipping cargo crates, reaffirming the large-scale manufacturing and export hub Shenzhen is known for. Because Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region and not a part of Mainland China, we had to get off the bus, go through passport control and customs, and get back on a different bus on the other side of the "Shenzhen Bay Port."</p> <p>After several nights at the Metropark Hotel, we were all happy to arrive at the five-star Shangri-La. Some of us had a quick dinner at a nearby Chinese restaurant, where we had to point to order. It was the first time I had fried sweat potato on a stick, which was something I knew I could eat and communicate to our waitress. Although we were in Mainland China, we were still in the South, so many people spoke Cantonese (vs. Mandarin). We learned this as our waitress seemed to be much happier when we said thank you in Cantonese than the more common Mandarin xie xie that we had been taught.</p> <p>After stopping to get some additional bottled water for a few RMB to use for brushing teeth at one of the many 7-Elevens (in fact, it was shocking at how many there were throughout Hong Kong), we went to the explore the pool and play some ping pong before heading back up to the room.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>The St. Regis? HOLY SHIT. I've never seen a hotel like that, and I doubt I will for a while. Definitely reminded me that I need to continue working hard and never feel discouraged. Hard work pays off. I want to stay at that hotel because I could pay for it. Not some rich guy who wants to blow his money on me. After seeing the hotel I went out with Austin and Sean. I finally had a lychee martini- such a bitch drink. But it was nice sitting outside and having a drink. Better than 7/11</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>Before dinner, toured Umbra's ANBO factory about 1.5 hours outside of Shenzhen in a Special Export Zone. Very happy that got to see actual Chinese factory where actually manufacture, assemble, and package products from start to finish. One of favorite things did so far, very eye-opening, this is what hear about factories producing all "Made In China" goods, so was amazing to see what it's actually like. Once again, though at the other end of spectrum...from compete luxury to hourly wage labor in a factory, it was as if it were out of a movie. The factory was essentially a huge warehouse-like building with all different machines...not the most modern, although you could tell it was very efficient...no AC. Workers were already off when we were there, but could tell employ many cheap Chinese laborers as factory workers. Got tour from General Manager of factory. Explained about all machines, used example of picture frames to show how create the products from start to finish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subcontractors produce parts, based on Umbra designs, and then ship to this factory for assembly (e.g. making screws, metal hooks, plastic for frames, boxes for packaging, etc.)</li> <li>• Complete product production and assembly at this factory using both machines and human labor, inspect for quality control throughout process.</li> <li>• Makes you think of where products come from that see on shelves...never really think about it...will be hard to look at a picture frame on a shelf at Target or Wal-Mart the same!</li> </ul>	<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factory located in a Special Export Zone, so products exported overseas from here get special tax breaks from the Chinese government, providing an incentive for companies to bring their business to China.</li> <li>• 3-D printer: So cool. Allows designers to create plastic models of new products before production begins.</li> <li>• Workers live in dorms right next to factory</li> <li>• Experimenting with more automation to compare to same labor done with more workers to determine what is a) most efficient and b) most cost-effective</li> <li>• Can tell Umbra knows what they're doing. MASSIVE factory and warehouse. All Umbra products worldwide originate here.</li> </ul>					
<p>Earlier, company visit to Wal-Mart. Very thorough presentation. For sake of time, instead of focusing on details of presentation, will just mention that during the presentation break was walking around the office and ran into the Wal-Mart China CEO. Was a very nice guy...Wes and John were with me and he stopped to talk with us. He initially didn't know who we were and why we were there...Wes thinks he may have thought we were Proctor and Gamble representatives. He said that he has only been here a little over a year, and he ended up telling us about some crazy issues that he has to deal with such as weird store incidents and deaths of customers in stores that apparently occurs more than you would think. On a broader level, it was really cool to see a variety of different elements at work in synergy in the Wal-Mart office: expats working hand in hand with locals, the sourcing and merchandising team, the marketing team, and the branding directors, etc. Wal-Mart's "no worry" campaign and the red and yellow in their stores that they use to market it reaffirmed the high importance of adapting to local culture. The practical, directly applicable advice at the end of the presentation was great.</p> <p>After the visit, we toured one of the 9 Sam's Clubs in China that is apparently one of the biggest in the entire world. After seeing it, that was no surprise: it was enormous. The seafood and fresh food section was especially fascinating, and can be summed up with an elderly lady walking up to a large fish tank with a large net on a pole and scooping out a fish of at least several pounds and a foot in length out and then placing it in her wagon, alive and flopping. It was quite a site to see. Overall, the store was very nice, and it caters to middle-class consumers that have cars and above average incomes. Must go to sleep...more soon!</p>	C o g n i t i v e	Interme diate	X	X	
<p>THE SCENE: 5/16, 1:36 AM, Shenzhen Shangri-La</p> <p>Just got in bed after arguably the most exciting day yet. It has been difficult to be as detailed as I would like in the journals, as each day is so packed and by the time we get back to the room it is so late and we are so tired, not to mention having to get up early to do it all again the next day!</p> <p>Returned about an hour ago from the 100th floor of the tallest building in Shenzhen and the 3rd largest building in all of China, the St. Regis Shenzhen. It was absolutely stunning--never seen anything like it. It was literally like out of a movie, which seems to be the theme of the day. We experienced two extremes, almost one right after the other, and each seemed so surreal yet so close to what you would imagine based on movie stereotypes but never got to see in person that it seemed as if it were out of a movie. But back to the 100th floor for now.</p> <p>A's father, who is a VP at Starwood, was able to arrange a private tour for us (Me, A, S, K, D, C, H) of the hotel with the Guest Services Manager Jimmy. He took us up to the hotel-guests-only 90th floor lounge at the top of the building, which had an unbelievable view of Shenzhen at night in all directions. It's crazy that Shenzhen is only 30 years old and that in just 30 years it transformed from a fisherman's village of about 1,000 people to a Tier-1 megacity of 11 million. Simply stunning. The building/hotel itself was amazing too. Everything modern, pristine, and perfect; the epitome of luxury. From the 90th floor, we took</p>	C o g n i t i v e	Initial	X	X	

<p>another elevator up to the 100th floor bar and club, where the view was even more amazing, if possible. Could see that were standing RIGHT under the distinctly-shaped pointed top of the building that looks so distant and so high from the ground.</p> <p>Jimmy then took us to see what a standard hotel room was like... The most incredible standard room I have ever seen... It was simply something else, beyond words, and the fact that I was so tired probably made it that much more amazing. Again, total luxury: Touchpad AND wireless iPad to control EVERYTHING in the room, which is 100% automated. Not to mention the automated toilet with a TV. But it got better—next we went to Presidential Suite. I don't think anything I say can adequately describe it, so I won't attempt to. Even the toilet has a magnificent view of the city. In Jimmy's words, something is either luxury or it's not. Use the bathrooms to judge. Got to look through mega-binoculars at city...could actually see people up close from 86 stories high. An absolutely amazing hotel and building--hope to be back soon. Also toured the hotel's Italian restaurant before Jimmy talked to us a little more about Shenzhen and gave us all St. Regis leather wallets. Then came back to Shangri-La and got ready for bed.</p>						
<p>Brownshoe: Brownshoe was the company I presented in class before leaving to China. I was a bit nervous to present the gift today, but the presenter was so down to earth and so personable that I didn't mind. Mr. Chang presented from a very western point of view. The reason for this may because he studied in the United States and has experienced another economy and another government. In 1995, Brownshoe bought out the company of the building it currently uses and became the outsourcing office in China for Brownshoe. Brownshoe partnered with Hongguo in order to have retail presence in China. Mr. Chang said that the Chinese government has made it so easy for foreign companies to come into China. Mr. Chang spent a lot of time criticizing China's transportation system. He believes that China needs to develop more high-speed trains and stop relying on planes. Mr. Chang argued that this would be a more efficient method of traveling. He said high-speed railways would be for commercial use but to always have industrial trains near by. But he said that transporting cargo by boat is still the cheapest way. After further criticizing the Chinese government, he said from a political perspective all big companies are located in the south because it's the farthest province from Beijing (political capital). He concluded the presentation with saying that China has the home court advantage in manipulating the government. "The law says one thing, and the government executes another". The fact that Mr. Chang was from Taiwan prevented him from being blinded by Mao's ideologies. When the Q&amp;A session broke out, a student asked if Brownshoe had experienced difficulty in dealing with factory workers making fake shoes on the side and selling them in mart.</p>	C o g n i t i v e	Interme diate	X	X	X	X
<p>Mr. Chang said no because the outsourcing office is separate from the factory but then he decided to take us to where he buys all of his wives fake designer bags!! I honestly thought it was crazy that Chang was taking us to buy illegal handbags, but once again, this showed how un-Chinese he was. We bought some really great handbags and wallets. If it wasn't for Mr. Chang I don't think we would have found such good quality fake handbags. Although we missed lunch and were late to our next company meeting I think purchases were definitely worth it.</p> <p>Although I was helping everyone in the group pick out stuff I felt severely judged by everyone. I feel like they think I'm this materialistic snob. But I know a lot about fashion because it interests me.</p>	C o g n i t i v e	Interme diate	X	X		

<p>Brown Shoe Company Visit: Very nice building, only \$2 million dollars, which is cheap for such a building! Toured sourcing facility and got to see full-scale factory with over 500 blue-collar workers (who live in dorms there) to produce samples of shoes before the designs go to mass production. Though not AS shocking as yesterday after already having been to one factory, amazing to see: people working with masks, molds, complex machines, different color yarns, rooms and rooms of designer shoe samples, and the whole building had the smell of new leather. We then had a presentation by the VP of Talent, Harlan, who is from Taiwan and spent time studying in US. Diction throughout presentation seemed like wanted to prove that he was a true "American." For example, referred to "we" when talking about US, tried specifically to use comparisons of distances in China to states/flying times in US, etc. Very informative overall. Elucidated challenges and reality of corruption in Chinese government, especially in local governments. Also provided insight into sourcing and how despite increasing labor costs over the last few years, over 97 percent of the world's sourcing is done out of China, simply because they make it so easy and efficient with everything in one place.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>Knockoff store: Super sketchy. Drove to a local smaller-scale shopping mall, walked through it, got to a room with two elevators, rode up elevators to dimly lit hallway, and then entered a special room with tinted doors... Had every knockoff product of every brand that could imagine. Isles and isles full of handbags, wallets, watches, belts, etc. of all major top brands. As a group, we bought a lot: The store probably made thousands of dollars on our purchases! Even there, had to bargain. Go to 1/3 of price, then can bargain from there. Got Chanel coin purse as gift for 170 RMB from original price of 785 RMB! Again, like out of a movie to see this operation in full action.</p>	<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>We got super wasted at the airport...but it made the time go by fast and the flight was so smooth. I passed out before we took off and woke up because Victoria told me we landed. I didn't want to go out when we landed in Shanghai I was way too tired. So when we got to the hotel, which was really nice) I ordered room service and unpacked. It was nice hanging out with Victoria for once. She's been my roommate this entire trip and I haven't really hung out with her.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Initial</p>	<p>X</p>			
<p>We went to Cloud Nine, which was a bar that Gary had recommended to us back in Shanghai. It's a shame that Austin got sick but it was about time it happened. I'm glad Dr. Oh didn't get upset with him. Kristen, Sean, and I decided to take a cab back from because Dani wanted to stay with Austin and there were 5 other people taking care of him. While we were in the taxi, Dani then called Sean and asked where we were and then bitched at him for leaving her and told us to fuck off...when we got to the hotel she just looked at us and went upstairs. Sean, Kristen, and I went to buy Austin crackers and we stayed in his room until he fell asleep.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>			
<p>I hope Dani is over about last night. I don't even know why she was upset, she told us to leave. She didn't bring it up all day so I wasn't going to say anything. She also needs to grow up a little bit. For example, if she has to sit next to Julie then so be it. I feel like she expects people to accommodate to her. Like she didn't even thank Hannah for moving so that Dani could have a seat in the upper row at the show we went to.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Initial</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>I had a good talk with Hannah on the boat ride. It's nice to hear about UF from a perspective of someone who wasn't Greek. I was sort of surprised that the people I usually hang out with wanted to get off the boat before it left dock. They were arguing that because they paid for it they have the right to get off the boat. But their only reason for getting off the boat was to get alcohol...they're almost like fiends. And the fact that they had to ask if it was douchey for them to get off the boat before it left dock should have been enough to tell them that it was. My dress came out nice. I was kind of</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		

<p>disappointed that my mom didn't like it since I unfortunately live to impress her. But it's fine. Hopefully it looks good with the final alterations.</p>					
<p>Lunch was terrible. I had to eat Subway. I don't even eat Subway at home! I walked with Kristen and Dani and we went into the mall down to the food court level. Well, as always, they just walked into the first place they saw. I really didn't want to eat at that place but they could care less and told me to go eat somewhere else. I was kind of scared to go along so I didn't wander too far. But I know if one of them didn't like the restaurant we would have left immediately. But they just continue to prove ZTA's stereotypes as the trip progresses. Whatever. Maybe I'm just being selfish. So I ended up at Subway, I bought a sandwich. And went back to where they were eating but there wasn't a seat for me (surprise). I just walked back to Outback and ate in the lobby area between the chocolate store and Outback. Luckily I found a table to lean on and eat. I only took a few bites and threw it away. I didn't really have an appetite. I know I'm not their "person of choice" because I don't talk like them, I don't look like them, and I'm not skinny like them, but they can at least let me tag along until the trip ends. It's almost over anyways.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Initial</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>So this morning my boyfriend messaged me at 8:40am and asked me if I was awake. I obviously was awake- I woke up at 8:10. I just hadn't sent him a message because I wanted to get dressed and get to breakfast and then message him when I was there. And if I have to take time to text him while I get ready it would just take me longer. Especially because he's the type of person who needs to receive instant replies. Like if I take longer than 5 minutes to answer he blows up. Well anyways, when I told him I was awake, he asked me why I hadn't messaged him yet. I liked and said I woke up at 8:30. Then he said that my whats app said I was "last seen at 8:10" which was true. I told him that when I snoozed my alarm I had seen the messages but was still half asleep and thought it would be okay to answer when I was completely awake. Well then he went on this rant about if I don't want to talk to him to just say so and he's sick of waiting around like a puppy for me to message him. And then he said to enjoy the rest of my trip, to message him when I get home IF I want to see him and to just dump him right there and then (through whats app). Well dumping him has been an interest of mine for a while already. I just haven't had the heart to do it. And I definitely wasn't going to do it through whats app. After about 7-10 messages from him I finally answered and said that no one told him to "wait around like a puppy" for my texts and that he was being ridiculous. I told him that I loved him and that I would talk to him later. I guess he has an epiphany and he just started apologizing for blowing up on me and for everything he said. But I told him I was leaving the hotel and was going to lose wifi but that I accepted his apology and I was still upset with him. We left the hotel shortly after so I have no way of communicating with him now.</p>	<p>Interpersonal</p>	<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>We jumped on a train to Yiwu. I liked the train much more than the plane because you can actually see the countryside of China. It's so sad. Yiwu was definitely the poorest place we had been so far. And it was such a pain to travel with our luggage. Yiwu should have been a day trip out of Shanghai and we should have gone back to Shanghai that night. Then taken a high-speed train from Shanghai to Beijing. Or, just take Yiwu out of the entire equation. The commodity market was neat but once again we just walked around for several hours at a time. And we couldn't buy anything because we needed to buy everything in bulk. It was a hot mess.</p>	<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Initial</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	

<p>Knew a lot about it from doing presentation, but seeing it in person was crazy. SO BIG. Started in just 1 of the 5 districts of one part of the market and that in itself seemed never-ending with store after store of everything could possibly imagine...sensory overload! Toys of every shape and size and purpose...every child's dreamland! Even found Israeli flag party hats! And fake flowers, shopping bags, ceramics and crafts, locks and door handles, food, etc., etc.! Gives a whole new meaning to "made in China."</p> <p>Not so surprising that majority of made in China products in US come through here! Huge potential to buy so many goods at wholesale prices and sell for much higher in US. And 70,000 stores to choose from all in one place...something for everyone and makes entire process very efficient. Absolutely amazing and almost overwhelming to see. Took forever to navigate from District 1 to a certain gate in District 2...shows just how big is. Went with John and Lauren to walk around and explore after guide Wendy introduced market with a video and some shops as a group. Lot of fun to go around together with them. Missed Yiwu history museum...while would have liked to see, not a big deal...can't do everything! Imported Goods Market in District 5 that went to after was nowhere near as exciting.</p>	C o g n i t i v e	Interme diate	X	X		
<p>Earlier in the trip we had told Peter that we wanted to do Yoga in China since his wife is a yoga instructor. He told us about this free class that his wife's studio was offering. Kristen and I went because Dani was too tired. It felt so good to workout! The class was great. One of my favorite things I've done in China so far. After the class, Kristen and I went to the Pearl Market. We asked Peter for directions and we got there perfectly fine. We went because we needed to find gifts for people that we still hadn't bought. I bought some teacups for one of my grandmothers; some paper cuts that I can give out as small gifts, a necklace for my grandmother, and a bracelet for my aunt. It was so easy to negotiate. Kristen and I noticed that if you stick around and don't argue just negotiate patiently they are more willing to drop prices. We ate dinner at a small restaurant in the mall across from the hotel. We then headed back to the hotel. We were really tired.</p>	Int er p e r s o n al	Initial	X	X		

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hannah Marie Morris was born in Florida. Spending her childhood as an Army Brat, she lived in Port Saint Lucie, Florida; Gainesville, Florida; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma; before her family settled in Glendale, Wisconsin. She is the oldest of four children and enjoys traveling to see geological wonders and eating spicy food.

Study abroad and intercultural education have always been important to Hannah. Her family hosted its first exchange student at her insistence in her freshman year of high school and hosted a second her junior year. When her high school trip to France was canceled, Hannah and eight classmates came together to design their own, student run program to visit their exchange student friends at Lycée Jean Monnet in Cognac, France.

Upon attending college at the University of Florida, Hannah became a student leader in the Phi Beta Delta honor society for international scholars and the NaviGators mentorship program for incoming exchange students. As a leader in these organizations, she designed and implemented programming to aid the exchange student acclimation process to the University of Florida's campus. Through these roles she learned the importance of intercultural support and the role of intentional programming in aiding student learning and the overall experience.

While an undergraduate student studying marketing, Hannah studied French and business at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Rouen, a leading French business school in Normandy, France. As a student in the Master of Arts in International Business graduate program she studied managerial economics, operations management, and the musics of Africa at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Both of these semester study abroad opportunities fed her desire to promote

international and intercultural education and she began her career working in the Warrington College of Business Administration at the University of Florida with the graduate programs in international business and management.

While working with the graduate programs in International Business and Management, Hannah worked with incoming exchange students and incoming international students while co-leading short term study programs to Europe. Bringing students to Budapest, Hungary; Prague, Czech Republic, Berlin, Germany; and Barcelona, Spain; Hannah continued to enjoy helping students learn about themselves as they were interconnected to the world around them while studying abroad. In the spring of 2013 she co-led a three week program to Hong Kong and China and realized that it was time her career became more international.

As a guest lecturer in professional and intercultural communications at Sichuan University for students from the United States studying abroad at the Chengdu American Center for Study Abroad, Hannah continued to expand her experience with students abroad and for two semesters she enjoyed mentoring students abroad, traveling throughout China, learning Sichuanese, and eating Sichuan spicy food. After a year in China she became the On-Site Coordinator for Babson College's BRIC program leading a group of 26 undergraduate students for three months in China, Russia, and India while teaching them in an experiential intercultural development course. Hannah has committed her career to providing opportunities for intercultural learning for others and has become a mentor to many students looking to gain competencies in intercultural skills.

As an academic, Hannah has published and presented at international conferences around the world. She has been part of a team that created the Sub-Saharan Business Environment Report (SABER) as a guide to educate business professionals looking to learn more about the top 20 Sub-Saharan African economies. The SABER report was published through the University of Florida and University of South Carolina's Department of Education Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) centers. She has also presented at conferences on improving new international students' transitions and tailoring diverse student populations based on her professional and academic work. She often gives guest lectures on intercultural communications and business etiquette for students, campus community members, and even the Chinese Communist Party of Sichuan Province.