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Intercultural Pedagogy in Study Abroad: The Experience of White Female Graduate Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to understand how college counseling and student affairs graduate students make sense of their study abroad experience with cultural difference and how they describe their ability to work with diverse student populations as a result of studying abroad while engaging in intercultural pedagogy. The students in the present study described enhanced awareness of their own culture, became more mindful of cultural differences, and identified connecting with others as an important part of their intercultural development. Participants described the skill of reframing cultural difference as key to their future work as student affairs professionals.

Keywords: Study abroad, Graduate students, Student affairs

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education is an increasingly emphasized goal of many colleges and universities (Siaya & Hayward, 2003; Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Reasons for increased emphasis on internationalization stem from a myriad of economic, political, academic, and sociocultural forces (de Wit, 2002). In a survey of nonprofit universities, Knight (2006) summarized the principle motivations of universities to internationalize: to enhance research activities; to advance knowledge; and to increase the intercultural competence of the campus community.

Efforts to internationalize higher education include curricular changes, faculty initiatives to lead study abroad, and international research partnerships. In addition, there have been calls to action that include curriculum reform and intercultural competency development for students and faculty (Institute of International Education, 2013; Deardorff, 2006). Indeed, intercultural competence is needed to create global citizens and prepare students to work in an interconnected world.

Study abroad is one initiative universities are employing to try to internationalize their campuses (Knight, 2006) and it is gradually becoming accepted as an essential component of all academic majors to develop future global citizens (Bolen, 2007). In fact, some colleges and universities have set goals to have at least 25-50% of their undergraduate student population study abroad before graduating (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Although the percentage of students studying abroad remains low, study abroad is increasing in popularity, particularly with short-term study abroad (Institute of International Education, 2013).

Study Abroad and Intercultural Development

Research generally supports the idea that study abroad impacts intercultural development positively, as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Engle & Engle, 2004; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004; Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). The positive changes in intercultural development in the studies cited above result from both short-term and long-term study abroad programming. More recent research supports the use of intercultural pedagogy as a necessary component of a study abroad to positively impact students' intercultural development (Jackson, 2008; 2009; Pederson, 2009; 2010; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Despite what is known about the relationship between study abroad and intercultural development, little has been written about the intercultural development of graduate students studying abroad. Even less is known about the intercultural development of graduate students in student affairs program.

Graduate Student Study Abroad

There is substantial evidence to support positive undergraduate study abroad outcomes (Savicki, 2008; Deardorff, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Vande Berg, Page, & Lou, 2012); however, little is known about the graduate student study abroad experience, including "philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual foundations that should inform the design, facilitation, and assessment of these programs and experiences" (Dirkx et al., 2016, pg. 517). Interestingly, graduate student study abroad has been steadily increasing (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014) and evidence exists that international experiences enhance graduate student employability (Crossman & Clarke, 2009). Dirkx and colleagues (2014; 2016) presented an overview of the emerging trend of graduate student study abroad and how graduate study abroad is different from undergraduate experiences and why it is important to evaluate the outcomes of these programs.

Graduate students' study abroad experiences are typically more focused on the discipline which would require alternative designs, assessments, and considerations of the years of experience the graduate student brings to the study abroad (Dirkx et al., 2014).

Recent research supports positive cultural competency outcomes as a result of graduate student study abroad (Hulstrand, 2015; Sinclair, 2014). Moreover, several studies have described the complex phenomenon of graduate student study abroad experiences (Dirkx, Spohr, Tepper, & Tons, 2010; Dirkx, 2012; Dirkx & Sinclair, 2012; Dirkx, Janka Millar, Vizvary, & Sinclair, 2013; Dirkx, Janka Millar, Sinclair, & Buschman, 2013; Kernaghan & Dirkx, 2013). Collectively, these studies enhanced understanding of how study abroad impacts the student's framing of their discipline and how they view themselves situated within this reframing. However, due to the limited availability of research, specifically as it pertains to graduate student outcomes and experiences, a brief review of undergraduate research is pertinent.

To date, the Georgetown Consortium Project is the largest study to assess undergraduate U.S. student learning because of study abroad (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). The authors concluded that the single most important intervention regarding student intercultural learning was the presence of an intercultural facilitator (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). The authors argued their findings were rooted in the work of Sandford's Theory of Challenge and Support (1966). Cultural facilitators may support students struggling to adapt to cultural differences and challenge students appropriately when the natural tendency while abroad is to stick with what you know and what is safe (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Moreover, the authors concluded that the use of a cultural facilitator is especially critical for enhancing intercultural learning during short-term study abroad programs.

Short-term study abroad programs have been criticized for lacking sufficient cultural immersion (i.e. significant interaction with host culture members) in comparison to long-term study abroad programs (Dwyer, 2004). Since most study abroad experiences for graduate students are labeled short-term, understanding how to design these experiences becomes increasingly important. Many researchers have argued that cultural immersion does not equate automatically to the development of intercultural competence (Woolf, 2007; Vande Berg, 2007; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, Paige, 2009). Consequently, the debate between short-term and long-term study abroad has evolved to focus on intentional intercultural pedagogy and has led to outcomes research focused on maximizing study abroad in terms of intercultural development especially in short-term study abroad (Jackson, 2008, 2009; Pederson, 2009, 2010; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Furthermore, Dirkx and colleagues (2016) noted that few graduate students in their study could process challenging events from their study abroad experience on their own and advocate for the potential need of additional facilitation (i.e., intercultural pedagogy).

Intercultural Competencies in Student Affairs

To further institutional missions to create global citizens and to prepare students for a global world, student affairs professionals should display intercultural competence. These professionals are positioned uniquely to reinforce the importance of intercultural competence through their interactions with students. Moreover, many opportunities for students to form their intercultural worldview are housed in student affairs, including service learning, cultural nights, student clubs and organizations, residential life programming, and leadership programs. Such opportunities for students are optimized when student affairs professionals possess intercultural competence (Osfield, 2008).

Herdlein (2004) assessed the perceptions of 50 chief student affairs officers about whether graduate programs are effectively preparing students for the college student personnel profession. Using the 1999 Directory of Graduate Preparation Programs in College Student Personnel, Herdlein's survey was sent to 81 institutions. Respondents, in an open-ended question, listed the need for additional classes in global issues and cross-cultural communication. Moreover, these professionals identified a greater need for future professionals to "write, listen, and converse with diverse populations" (p. 63). One of the more frequent traits mentioned by the respondents as critical for success in student affairs was the ability to work with diverse populations. Without the means and support of higher education to obtain competencies, student affairs professionals will not be able to directly impact students' intercultural development.

In 2015, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) released a joint publication on recommendations for professional competency areas for student affairs educators. The Social Justice and Inclusion competency domain includes several global competencies necessary for student affairs professionals. For example, one foundational outcome includes to "advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that impact people based on local, national, and global interconnections" (pg. 30).

Efforts to increase student affairs professionals' understanding of Social Justice and Inclusion competencies set forth by the ACPA/NASPA report do exist. For instance, the NASPA International Exchange Program exposes administrators to global practices of student affairs and services (NASPA, 2010a) and the ACPA includes a Global Commission for Global Dimensions of Student Development, who sponsored most recently a "Semester at Sea" for student affairs professionals (ACPA, 2010). The annual NASPA and ACPA conferences also

include international symposiums designed to develop and enhance global networks and opportunities within student affairs professions.

While such opportunities are all excellent ways for practicing student affairs professionals to develop global competencies, such efforts do not address the education of aspiring student affairs professionals. Some universities incorporate initiatives to internationalize their curricula (e.g., specific coursework, involvement in internal campus events) (Schulz, et al., 2007); however, study abroad remains the most commonly used method to enhance the intercultural competence of students (Lincoln Commission, 2005). A central question about study abroad is whether the study abroad per se will enhance competencies defined by ACPA/NASPA for the profession.

Indeed, study abroad opportunities for graduate students in student affairs programs are available through a variety of colleges and universities across the United States (ACPA, 2010; NASPA, 2010b). Using grounded theory analysis, Bresciani (2008) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature to identify global competencies of student affairs professionals. Many similarities can be drawn when comparing Bresciani's defined global competencies and those presented by ACPA/NASPA in the Social Justice and Inclusion competency domain. Having a distinct set of competencies for student affairs professionals allows for the development of a comprehensive plan to implement strategies to meet these competencies (Bresciani, 2008). Thus, assessing outcomes of study abroad to determine if student affairs graduate students are attaining global competencies is needed.

Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this study is to understand how graduate students engaged in intercultural pedagogy describe their study abroad experience and the impact of their experience

on their professional work with a diverse student body. If we do not strategically develop the intercultural competencies of future student affairs professionals who are positioned uniquely to aide in student development, colleges and universities will miss the opportunity to fully develop future global citizens in all disciplines. Furthermore, short-term study abroad programs that include pedagogy related to intercultural development may be a viable option for student affairs graduate students seeking to develop intercultural competence who are unable to participate in programs requiring extended stays. Intercultural pedagogy, for the purposes of this study, is defined as the method and practice of teaching and facilitating intercultural concepts. Moreover, intercultural competence is defined as the "ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways" (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422).

The study was designed to answer the following qualitative research questions:

1. How do graduate student study abroad participants engaged in intercultural pedagogy describe their experience studying abroad?

2. How do graduate student study abroad participants engaged in intercultural pedagogy describe the impact of their study abroad experience on their professional work with a diverse student body?

Theoretical Framework

Several theories informed the theoretical framework of the present study. These theories included Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984); Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support (1966); and, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1986; 1993), as it relates to the IDI (Hammer, 2007). How these theories were integrated into the study at hand is outlined in Figure 1. First, Bennett's DMIS was the theory underpinning the assessment of intercultural sensitivity development using the IDI. Bennett's DMIS illustrates the

developmental continuum of those that have experienced cultural differences and describes behaviors associated with each developmental level. There are five stages within the model, and one can move fluidly between stages of the model, with a monocultural mindset representing one end of the continuum and a global/intercultural mindset the other. The participant's group developmental level was used to guide the intercultural pedagogy before, during, and after study abroad. Moreover, Bennett's DMIS was used to develop appropriate interview probing questions unique to each participant's developmental level. [Insert Figure 1 Here]

Second, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) represents a model of the learning cycle within experiential education applied to this study abroad program. The cycle begins with a concrete experience, followed by observation and reflection, which then leads to forming abstract concepts, followed by the concepts being tested in new situations. This model informed the integration of the intercultural pedagogy development prior to, during, and post-sojourn. For example, while on the study abroad, participants experienced meeting individuals who identified as Xhosa and learning about their culture through a community visit; that experience was followed up by a debrief session and then participants could once again interact with their Xhosa e-pal partners to further enhance their understanding and their learning.

Lastly, Sandford's Theory of Challenge and Support (1966) informed the design of guided reflection sessions to facilitate intercultural learning. Sandford stated that students need to feel challenged and supported for growth to occur within a developmental process. The developmental process, in this case, was the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986). Based on the stage in which each the individual or group was, and the purposes of the guided reflection for that day, a determination was made of whether to take an approach of challenge or support. For example, after visiting a township, a guided reflection session was

conducted to explore whether the participants should have taken pictures. In this reflection session, the discussion was designed to challenge the participants to critically think about why they did or did not choose to take photos, and if this could result in harm based on what intentions they had with the photos upon their return to the U.S.

Research Methods

The phenomenon of interest in the present study is participant intercultural development. More specifically, the focus is the lived experience of intercultural development. Through phenomenological qualitative research, researchers can attempt to understand the multiple dimensions of intercultural development that may occur within the study abroad experience (Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). A phenomenological inquiry was used to describe the lived experiences of the participants. Phenomenological inquiry seeks to understand how people make sense of their experiences and arrive at shared meaning (Patton, 2002).

One of the authors of the study served as the cultural facilitator for intercultural development. The other served as the faculty member in charge of the study abroad. The cultural facilitator conducted observations and recorded them in a research journal for data collection during formal activities (i.e. interactions with host country campus constituents) and informal activities (i.e., engaging with host country peers). In addition, the facilitator conducted semi-structured interviews post-sojourn. As such, the facilitator drew upon the experience to assist with the interpretation of the study abroad as described by the participants in their interviews. All participants were asked the questions represented in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1]

Participants

A total of nine graduate students in a college counseling and student affairs masters program in the United States self-selected to participate in a short-term study abroad program to South Africa. All participants were female, and all were interviewed. All nine participants identified as Caucasian and five of the nine had studied abroad previously. Moreover, all participants used federal student loan monies to pay for the study abroad cost beyond the course credits.

Description of Study Abroad and Data Collection

The study abroad was approximately two weeks and included visiting the cities of Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town, South Africa. Before any didactic education and sojourn, all nine participants completed the IDI (Table 2).

[Insert Table 2]

After the re-entry session, but before the interviews were conducted, all nine participants completed the IDI for the second time. Institution Review Board permission was granted prior to all data collection. All the participants participated in assignments prior to sojourning, including reading about the country and cultures of South Africa and viewing documentaries. In addition, the standard "what to pack" and "do's and don'ts" orientation was conducted. A second orientation was conducted specific to intercultural communication and development. A discussion occurred regarding the participants' level of intercultural development based on the group's score on the IDI (Group Score in Minimization) (Hammer, 2007; 2011). Participants played the intercultural clash game BARNGA (Thiagarajan, 2006), participated in activities such as cultural mapping (Cohen et al., 2005) and developed their own personal and professional study abroad goals using their IDI report as a guide. The study abroad course objectives included:

- To support the learning of intercultural knowledge;

- To provide individual feedback to the participant to help promote a deeper understanding of experiences in South Africa;

- To help understand the value of the intercultural knowledge and skill-set potentially acquired overseas;

- To assist in finding ways their new intercultural knowledge and skill-set can be utilized within the student affairs profession; and

- To promote reflection on how to incorporate new perspective(s) and skill-sets into life back home.

Formal assignments for the course included meeting with the cultural facilitator for their 30-minute one-on-one intercultural feedback session, which included reviewing the participant's IDI score. Students were randomly matched with Afrikaans, Xhosa, and Zulu students that were enrolled in a student affairs program and conducted several activities in the Maximizing Study Abroad book (Paige, et al., 2002) by email. In addition, the South African students and U.S. participants conducted a "This is My Culture" presentation exchange to encourage both groups of participants to reflect on their own cultures and nationalities, which is a recommended activity for those in the Minimization stage (Hammer, 2007).

While abroad, the participants engaged in the historical city, campus, and apartheid museum tours, educational seminars about the history of student affairs in South Africa and the history of South African cultures, and safaris. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to meet their e-pal partners in both formal and informal settings. For example, the participants attended a formal welcoming dinner on campus, but also enjoyed evenings together with their personal e-pal partners. One participant attended a traditional Xhosa wedding ceremony and three others had dinner at their Afrikaans student's home. Participants also spent two days with student affairs professionals on campus at the University in South Africa, learning about their

area of interest within the student affairs profession. Participants had the opportunity to meet locals in a township tavern and watch a local tavern choir performance. The participant group was formally invited by one of their tour guides to meet his community and family. The tour guide organized a choir performance by the township community choir and facilitated games between his township family members and the study participants. Lastly, participants participated in two guided reflection sessions and informal facilitation of their cultural experiences throughout the study abroad. The role of the cultural facilitator was to ensure that the participants would not retreat from the study abroad experience if too overwhelmed, or to challenge a participant who was naturally inclined to stay within his or her comfort zone (Engle & Engle, 2003; Vande Berg, 2009), based on Sandford's Theory of Challenge and Support (Sandford, 1966). We looked for general signs of retreat, such as reduced participation in activities, or signs of being overwhelmed, such as agitation or irritability, or by simply asking if the student felt overwhelmed.

Other opportunities existed for informal reflection. For example, participants would often ask questions about things they didn't understand. At that time, the cultural facilitator or faculty person could ask probing questions or provide further information to help process cultural differences. For example, one question that was asked was, "Why do the townships have so much garbage everywhere?" Probing questions for this participant included, "Do you know how often garbage is picked up in neighborhoods near the University?" and "Do you know how often garbage is picked up in the townships?" and "Why might there be a difference?".

Upon return, the participants participated in a re-entry program. The program included a debriefing of the entire experience, a review of personal and professional goals, a discussion about translating the experience to student affairs practice, résumé and interview skills, and a

plan for intercultural development. The re-entry program was required and all participants

attended. Participants were asked to participate in interviews conducted after the re-entry

program; they had prior knowledge that they would be asked at the end to reflect upon their

experiences during the interview. This knowledge was important to maintaining the

transparency of the research. Participants were asked to participate in a one-hour, face-to-face

interview. All participants signed an informed consent prior to the interview and consented to a

digital recording. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by a contracted professional

transcriber.

The interview questions were designed to elicit personal reflections of the study abroad

experience in general and how it related to their intercultural development and future work as

student affairs professionals working with a diverse student body. In addition, a few questions

pertained to their perceptions and experiences participating in the intercultural development

pedagogy that was provided prior to, during, and after the study abroad. The interview process

included semi-structured, open-ended questions and probing questions specific to the

participant's level of intercultural development as measured by the IDI.

Before beginning, the interviewer reviewed the definition of cultural and the difference

between objective (emic) and subjective culture (etic) as the interview questions about culture

are referencing subjective culture. Emic was defined as understanding cultural specific

phenomena and etic was defined as cultural phenomena that may apply to more than one culture

(Berry, 1990). In clarifying the definition, the participants were able to distinguish between

those experiences with objective culture versus subjective culture. Culture was defined as "the

set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of a society or a social

group. Culture encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, behaviors, and beliefs" (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011).

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

A basic interpretive qualitative data analysis was conducted on the interview data. The WEFT QDA software, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, was used to assist in the coding of the data. The analysis of the data was initially inductive and comparative. Data-driven open coding and, later, axial coding were used to identify emergent themes to be compared across the individual participant interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Merriam, 2009). Lastly, a deductive process was used to look for data that fit into the categories created.

Issues of trustworthiness were of concern, and addressed, in the present study. Several strategies were utilized including member checking, peer review, and rich, thick descriptions of the participants' study abroad experience. Member checking was utilized to enhance the credibility, to ensure that "participants recognize[d] their experience in your interpretation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). Participants were sent a summary of the qualitative findings and were asked to comment on whether they felt the themes identified represented their experience. All participants affirmed the themes as representative of their experience. To address dependability of the data, the faculty member leading the study abroad reviewed the data analyses and themes to assess the data trustworthiness. Rich, thick description was provided to address concerns of transferability.

Findings

Four themes consistent with the participants' description of their experience studying abroad while engaged in intercultural pedagogy were identified: 1) American sunglasses view; 2) Cultural mindfulness; 3) Openness, connecting, and understanding the other; and 4) Skill of

reframing culture. Below are descriptions from the study participants as related to the four themes identified for research question one.

American Sunglasses View

The American sunglasses view is a term used by a participant to describe the experience of seeing the world or another culture from an American perspective, which can make things shaded, cloudy, or unclear, as a pair of sunglasses would. In other words, applying an American view to understand another culture can create difficulty in accepting a culture for what they are or being open to the possibility of that culture. Sara (pseudonym, as are all other names mentioned in the study) described her first experience of realizing her American sunglasses were a strong part of her perception of the world after visiting a township in South Africa. The township included small dwellings called "shanties" that had no indoor plumbing or electricity and identified as a Zulu community. The community was generally very crowded and impoverished. Students often commented on all the garbage throughout the direct roads and fields within the community. For example, Kaila commented directly regarding the conditions of the townships.

> How can people live like this? And I'm like, don't they want something more? And, you know, that was something I was really surprised by, that I would react that way, that I had that part of me. We all want bigger and better things, don't we? Maybe that's me coming from my perspective and that's something that I didn't know that I had that strongly until I saw something that was really opposite from what I'm used to.

Dawn expressed her feelings in the Zulu community as described above in South Africa, realizing that her view of wanting bigger and better may not be held by everyone.

…there were moments where I was just like, Oh my gosh, I'm resorting back to…this
isn't right, this isn't American but, no, it shouldn't be, because we're not in America. I
think it's again, that piece of just recognizing that they're coming from somewhere else,
that your views, my views, cannot be assumed as their way of approaching things.

Dawn was beginning the process of recognizing she is placing a cultural lens on all her
interpretations of the "other". Emily illustrated how her ability to now see different viewpoints
or ways of living that are also "right" ways has allowed her to realize even in America, there are
different paths that she can take and she doesn't always have to conform to way that many
Americans think—those with their glasses on.

Yeah, it opens your eyes to things that you wouldn't consider before. You definitely live
in a bubble in America, I feel. I guess I shouldn't speak for everybody, because my
bubble is definitely privileged so that makes it easier for my bubble to exist.

Cultural Mindfulness

The second theme of cultural mindfulness conveys a new awareness of culture in and of
itself. Understanding cultural similarity and difference challenged viewpoints about other
cultures or the participant's own culture. This cultural mindfulness is different from the
American sunglasses view because it demonstrated the skill of beginning to view another culture
from that culture's perspective, and just simply recognizing the biased view one always has
when only viewing things from one's own cultural perspective. The mindfulness the participants
described may or may not have changed their behavior, but it appeared to impact them. Sara
describes her increased awareness of culture and how it has impacted her view of American
values.

Culture is such a much broader term than ethnicity, race, but even, you know the tribal communities and there are so many different things that can comprise a culture as opposed to just the things we think of here, which is usually race. It made me a lot more aware of how much of an American I am. We can't all just pick ourselves up by our bootstraps and work hard enough and achieve. Some people just don't have opportunities to do that and aren't presented with those.

Sara had difficulty understanding that perhaps the township residents did not want what she wanted, or that not everyone wants to be American. She continued to have difficulty removing her American sunglasses. She recognized that she has only taken an American perspective in the past and was trying to adapt a more complex perspective. Kaila illustrated her cultural awareness awakening to those differences she had not seen previously that she hoped to embrace more in the future.

Oh, we're all the same, we're all great, we're all equal, we're all the same people and that is kind of how my point of view and framework has been. I haven't noticed those differences and I have been really kind of blind to it, I guess, a little bit. I know I have realized it but I just have always been, like, oh, we're great, we're all, you know, we're all in this together type of thing. But, really, in all actuality, there are so many differences that are important for us to notice and that I had been ignoring in the past before I went on this trip…there are cultures that really believe in collectivism and are not like it's all on you like Americans are…everyone is just out for themselves.

Kaila appeared to make broad sweeping generalizations about American culture, but was starting to understand cultural difference as just as important as sameness. Dawn described how the study abroad experience made her more aware of her culture, or American culture.

> You can be told a million times about something but it's until you experience it, you really see it, and realize it. I think its realizing that I do come from somewhere and there are certain things that I do because I am a white, 20-something, college student living in the Midwest that I maybe assume everyone does, but they don't.

Dawn's description of herself as a white, 20-something, college student is an indicator that she was beginning to recognize she too has a culture and there are important differences between cultures that one should be aware of. Americans in the stage of Minimization (Bennett, 1986) often have difficulty describing their own culture. In other words, those in the stage of Minimization often overemphasize similarity.

Openness, Connecting, and Understanding the Other

The third theme of openness, connecting, and understanding the other describes participant experiences that had the greatest impact on them. The quality of openness was described as a quality needed when learning about another culture. Connecting with and seeking to understand the other was described by the participants as having made the greatest impact on their intercultural development. Intercultural development was identified at orientation as one of the goals of the study abroad.

After visiting the townships, Sara tried to understand and describe how South African township residents might feel when tourists visit their communities.

I just kept putting myself in their position. Maybe some of them are very used to it, but, I couldn't imagine someone driving through my neighborhood and taking pictures. I couldn't imagine it, you know? For me, it would feel demeaning or I'd feel like some kind of animal, and I think that was the most challenging part for me. Maybe that's me coming from my perspective and that's something that I didn't know that I had that strongly until I saw something that was really opposite from what I'm used to.

Emily explained how the study abroad experience has helped her to be more open and has strengthened her confidence in creating an opportunity to enhance her understanding of others.

I do feel that I have, I want to say, become more sensitive but also more brave, because I know before I was in my bubble and I didn't want to reach out to people because they were different from me. I didn't know what they were going to think of me. Now I'm more like, this is who I am. If you don't want to accept it, that's fine, but can you teach me about you because I can still listen. I'm still interested in trying to figure out who you are, your culture and why it is you're thinking about this issue this way.

Emily continued to explain how her understanding of empathy has changed and how she realized she previously was not seeking to understand as much as she thought. Emily discussed how, before studying abroad, she would get really upset when international students would talk in circles. After the study abroad, she described how she was reconsidering this difference.

I would have been more task-oriented, more, well, it doesn't matter what you have to say, this is just how it is. I feel like after I studied abroad, I gained empathy. Now I want to

try and get the full sense of who someone is before I just start assuming. I thought I was doing that before I left, but it wasn't the same way.

Finally, Avery also explained how the study abroad experience has changed her desire to connect with others.

I feel like now, going to a different country and seeing a different culture and even having those experiences with students in a different culture, I feel like I'm going to want to get to know the person a little bit more. You know what I mean? I feel like I'm going to want to make that relationship and that connection even that much stronger. That's sounds sad. Not that I wouldn't have wanted to before, but I feel like I am really going to want to get to know them more.

Skill of Reframing Culture

Participants described the impact of their study abroad experience as having changed their interactions with students based on their new skill of reframing culture. Some participants described the skill of reframing culture as checking in with themselves regarding their biases, beliefs, assumptions, and/or values. Others described the skill of reframing culture to better understand and develop relationships with a diverse body of students with whom they work. Angie described how future interactions with African students will change based on her ability to now reframe the interaction.

…if they're from, say South Africa or an African country and they came and they talked to me and they were late, I wouldn't be offended by it. Before the trip I would have found myself maybe a little bit more frustrated, whereas now after the trip, particularly if it was someone of African descent, I'd understand that they're from a culture where they

don't worry about time the way that we do here in America, and so I wouldn't be upset. I'd at least give that person the benefit of the doubt, knowing that they come from a culture that's different from my own.

While Angie seemed to be lumping all cultures together, which is a monolithic view, she is taking the first step in increasing her understanding of a cultural interaction. Avery described the skill of reframing as being comfortable working with difference.

I think just recognizing the differences and being able to work with that instead of feeling uncomfortable with it. Feeling more comfortable with it and working with it instead of shying away from it is key.

Avery seemed to recognize that the discomfort will not go away, but it is something she must embrace to move forward. Rebecca explained her ability to reframe cultural situations as "something different" and began to demonstrate an understanding of how these differences may or may not impact her relationships with these students.

I know it was like two weeks after I got back from South Africa I had one of those days where it's just like it clicked. When I'm working with my students or with my clients, I do kind of notice when they're talking I am recognizing that's something different than how I view it instead of just brushing it off. And then I think well maybe I should think about that or how that difference is going to affect our relationship or the work that we're doing.

Rebecca seemed to stay very neutral in her use of recognizing "something different." It was not wrong, but just different, which seems to represent the ability to reframe a situation. Teresa also conveyed the sentiment of pausing and being aware of what you may have thought

before, and how to stop and reframe concepts to be congruent with what her understanding was about culture in the moment.

> Now I stop for a second and think that's what I thought before. I need to stop how I thought before because this is what I know now,"

Angie took it a step further and described the skill of reframing culture as beginning to adapt to an intercultural mindset.

> It just helps me balance it. Like it would create space between a reaction and my response, so I would be able to create space between those things, so I could take a minute, remind myself to take a minute and recognize that their frame of reference and their operations may be different from my own.

Synthesis of Themes and Other Findings

The themes identified all included strategies that are utilized to move from a monocultural mindset to an intercultural mindset, as previously defined in the DMIS by Bennett (1986). Thus, it begs the question of whether the themes that emerged were a result of the participants being exposed to the DMIS and the Intercultural Development Continuum through participating in the IDI, the intercultural development pedagogy, and the 30-minute feedback session that included a development plan for intercultural growth.

It is possible that teaching participants the language of culture and intercultural development gave them a common ground or platform from which to better articulate a complex experience, such as intercultural development. For example, during the orientation session, participants participated in a cultural mapping activity from the Maximizing Study Abroad book (Paige et al. 2002), in which they learned about individualism vs. collectivism, and polychronic

time vs. monochronic time as it pertains to culture. During most of the interviews, without prompt, participants often used these exact words to describe their experiences. Perhaps it was a deeper understanding of the language prior to sojourning that increased their awareness of their experience, or perhaps their intercultural experiences enhanced their ability to fully understand intercultural concepts and language; thus they could better articulate their development.

Discussion

Little is known about the study abroad experience of graduate students in general. The focus of the interviews was to understand the study abroad experience of graduate students that included intercultural pedagogy before, during, and after the sojourn. Through the description of the participant's experience, it is clear the study abroad intercultural pedagogy had an impact on how they processed the experience. The themes of American sunglasses view, cultural mindfulness, openness, connecting, and understanding, and skill of reframing culture are all interrelated as they are all strategies used for intercultural development. For example, common strategies used to move from a monocultural worldview to an intercultural worldview are learning more about one's own culture, becoming aware of culture difference and similarity, and developing relationships with persons from another culture (Hammer, 2007). The findings from this study are especially interesting since while sojourning, the cultural facilitator had no formal discussion with the students about how to specifically enhance intercultural competence using these strategies. Indeed, most participants described not remembering what stage they were in on the IDI while abroad and verbally indicated in their interviews they didn't think too much about it.

An additional purpose of our study was to begin to understand how a study abroad experience that included intentional intercultural pedagogy translated to the participant's work

with diverse students as current and future student affairs practitioners. The ACPA/NASPA (2015) competency profile for the student affairs profession stresses the importance of intercultural connections to reinforce the importance of global interconnectedness through their daily interactions with students. In this regard, we were interested in how the study abroad participants actualized this sentiment.

Even though we conducted the interviews one-month post-sojourn, participants described instances where they recognized how their behavior had changed. This was unexpected, as we anticipated most of the participants would describe how their future actions may change, not current actions. The detail in which participants described how their thoughts, assumptions, and behavior had changed was nuanced. It was clear that the behavior change they described may have impacted students they worked with, as suggested in the ACPA/NASPA competency profile report (ACPA/NASPA, 2015).

There was overlap between our results and previously reported literature of undergraduate students. For example, our results seem to align with students describing their study abroad experiences regarding acquiring some understanding of cultural sameness and difference (Lewin, 2009; Savicki, 2008). Additionally, there appeared to be similarities of discomfort between the participants in our study after visiting the townships and those graduate students in the Dirkx et al. (2016) study who visited orphanages in Botswana. In both studies, participants were challenged by these situations and described some form of discomfort. To our knowledge, our study is the first to demonstrate graduate students' ability to describe how they changed their workplace behavior as a result of their participation in study abroad.

Limitations

One limitation of our study was the relatively uniform nature of the participants' demography. All participants identified as female, Caucasian, and from the Midwest. A more diverse sample may have resulted in the construction of different themes and there is a possibility of selection bias. That is, those who chose to participate in study abroad may already have had a strong interest in topics related to intercultural concepts or development. Also, it is important to note that all students were college counseling and student development masters students. A study abroad experience for students who choose counseling as a career may be quite different for undergraduate students and other majors.

Second, the concepts of intercultural competence and study abroad are complex. There are numerous definitions of intercultural competence and different types of study abroad. The interview questions did not explore all facets of intercultural development, competence, or components of the study abroad experience. Moreover, due to the complex nature of study abroad and intercultural development, the change in participants' perceptions may have derived from other variables not included as part of the study.

Third, we did not incorporate any white privilege, systems of power, or racial awareness theory and pedagogy. In addition, no interview questions addressed the concepts of white privilege, power, or race; although, some participants did discuss these concepts. Formally addressing white privilege and including it in the theoretical framework may have an impact on one's intercultural development.

Conclusions and Implications

As the emphasis increases for producing student affairs graduates with intercultural competence, it is important for higher education professionals to understand how to maximize study abroad by including intercultural pedagogy and how graduate students describe their

experience and then relate this experience to their work with students. Unexpected findings included participants using cultural and intercultural development language to articulate their experience. Through the participant's descriptions, it is clear some intercultural development did occur and the study abroad experience may have positively impacted the graduate student's interactions with a diverse student body.

Implications for Theory

An important concept in this study was combining three theories to enhance intercultural learning during study abroad, to create a comprehensive framework (Figure 1). Again, the participants' group developmental level based on the DMIS (Bennett, 1986; 1993) was used to guide the pre-sojourn orientation and intercultural pedagogy while abroad (Figure 1). As such, activities were designed specific to those in the stage of Minimization such as the cultural mapping activity conducted an orientation designed to explore attributes of one's own culture. Some activities were purposeful in design to reflect Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) (see example under Theoretical Framework).

One of the authors served as the cultural facilitator on the study abroad and was there to provide challenge or support as needed by each participant (Sanford, 1966). While moving through the stages of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), the cultural facilitator paid attention to signs of being overwhelmed or retreating, and sometimes asked the students how they were feeling to determine appropriate levels of challenge and support. Lastly, the individual's IDI stage informed the decision of whether to use challenge or support while abroad and informed the types of probing questions used during the interviews to elicit deeper reflections. For example, Rebecca was a participant who was in the IDI stage of Denial pre-sojourn. Based on this information and an understanding of the challenges of someone in this stage (per the IDI

training required to be a qualified administrator of the inventory), the cultural facilitator could provide support and challenge at appropriate times. Rebecca was often apprehensive about visiting the townships and had many concerns about her safety. Rebecca indicated her concerns about her safety at the airport in South Africa.

> I can't believe they just let me walk through [security station] with my water bottle and shoes. This country is crazy…they have no idea what it means to keep people safe…these third-world countries don't really know how to do things right. My dad would have freaked out about this and told them how to do it right.

Providing support to this participant through reflection, addressing her safety concerns, and talking to her about personal goals of the study abroad was important for her to then engage in the experience. Challenging this participant too much during this time may have caused her to further retreat from the experience. Post-sojourn, this participant moved into the cusp of Minimization. As such, the interviewer could point out differences in her thoughts and beliefs that she was sharing, based on conversations had during her 30-minute IDI feedback session prior to sojourning. If the student had stayed in the stage of Denial, as measured by the IDI post-sojourn, the interviewer would not have used this technique.

Implications for Practice

The intended audience for this study includes study abroad practitioners and policy makers, student and academic affairs administrators, and the intercultural development community. The findings in the present study may be of great use for these professionals. Faculty in college counseling programs designing study abroad to enhance their students' intercultural competence as future student affairs professionals may pay special attention to the results of this study.

The results of this study provide readers with an understanding of the lived experience graduate students have while studying abroad with an intercultural development focus. Practitioners may pay attention to the participant's description of experiences that connected with them the most and their descriptions of how their work with students has changed because of studying abroad. These data provide insight as to how graduate students develop or enhance intercultural competence and how they process and interpret challenging experiences of cultural difference. With an enhanced understanding, study abroad administrators can design experiences that maximize intercultural development.

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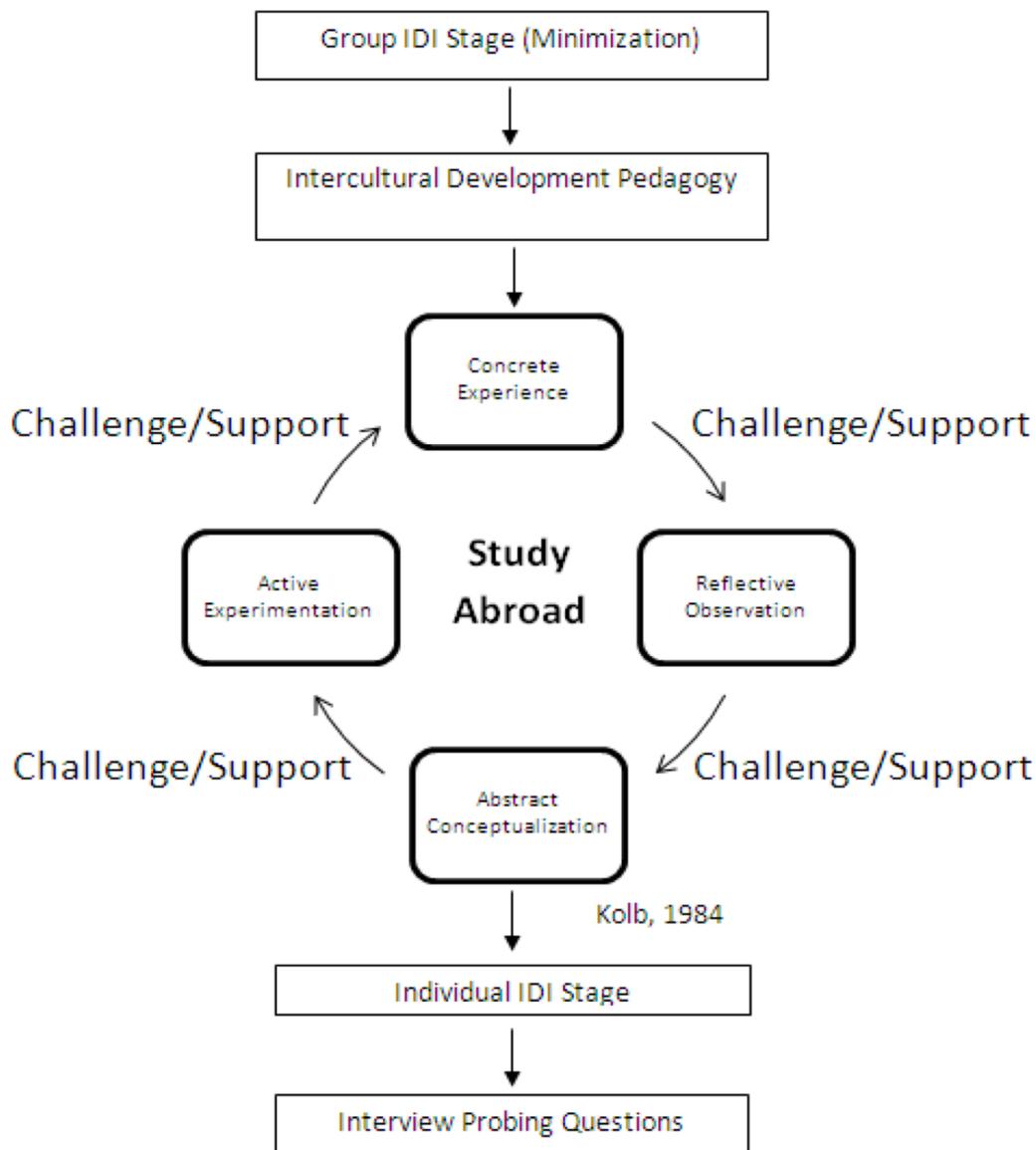
Figure 1. Study Abroad Intercultural Development Theoretical Framework
[1]Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
[2]Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support
[3]Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

Table 1

Interview Questions Post-Sojourn

General Questions About the Experience

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1. Describe how your study abroad experience has influenced your view of the world?
    > Probe: What were the highlights of your experience?
    > Probe: What were the lowlights of your experience?
2. How would you describe the effect of your experience of cultural difference while studying abroad on your cultural knowledge and/or beliefs?
3. How has your study abroad experience impact your ability to identify cultural differences?
    > Probe: How has your study abroad experience impact your ability to identify cultural similarities?
4. Provide examples on how has the study abroad experience have helped you become aware of your own culture?

Questions Pertaining to Intercultural Development and Future Work as a Student

Affairs Professional

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5. Provide examples of your intercultural development as a result of studying abroad?
    > Probe: What were the benefits of understanding your intercultural development level as measured by the IDI before studying abroad?
    > Probe: What were the drawbacks?
6. Describe with examples your ability to communicate with those that may be different from you as a result of participating in this study abroad?
7. Describe with examples your ability to work with a diverse student body in your work or future work as a student affairs professional as a result of participating in the study abroad?

Questions Pertaining to Perceptions of Intercultural Development

Pedagogy

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8. Describe the activities that you feel contributed most to your learning and understanding of culture.
9. What activities do you feel contributed most to your intercultural development prior to studying abroad?
   Probe: During the study abroad?
   Probe: After studying abroad?

Question Pertaining to Final Thoughts

10. Is there anything else you would like share that we may have not talked about today?

Table 2

IDI Scores pre and post sojourn

PARTICIPANT NAME (PSEUDONYM)	IDI COMPOSITE SCORE PRIOR TO SOJOURN	IDI COMPOSITE SCORE POST SOJOURN
SARA	85.39	96.17
JODI	107.44	123.03
TERESA	93.13	90.07
REBECCA	84.90	101.90
DAWN	80.82	82.87
AVERY	95.37	112.14
KAILA	88.62	92.40
ANGIE	94.33	94.19
EMILY	96.77	92.17