To experience something greater than myself: An exploratory case study of the impact of a faculty-led short-term study abroad on college student identity

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"TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF:"
AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A FACULTY-LED
SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD ON COLLEGE STUDENT IDENTITY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
E. Ashleigh Schuller Lee
December 2014
“TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF:”

EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A FACULTY-LED
SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD ON COLLEGE STUDENT IDENTITY

by

E. Ashleigh Schuller Lee

Approved December 2014 by

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Dedication

To the loves of my life:

My wonderful husband, Dan. You are the wind in my sails. Your selfless devotion as a husband and father is beyond measure. I am so thankful for your support and love;

and

My beautiful daughter, Cate. You are my greatest gift and joy. The most special honor I will ever have is being your mommy. I love you with all of my heart.
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"TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF:"
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ABSTRACT

Study abroad opportunities in college are important ways for students to see the world during a formative time in their identity development (Jones & Abes, 2013; Moran, 2005). The focus of this study was to examine the impact of a faculty-led, immersive short-term study abroad to Florence, Italy, on college student identity development. I utilized the seminal work of Chickering and Reisser (1993) as my theoretical framework because this theory allowed for a focus on identity development situated in the larger development of the college student.

A qualitative research approach guided my study. All seven of the female participants were traditionally aged and either of sophomore or junior status. From the findings emerged themes of confidence, new identity, and increased peer support. The dissonance implicit in a short-term, immersive study abroad experience made it ripe for affinity groups to be created. This research found that affinity groups within the larger group developed because of the need by some of the students to find havens of safety within smaller groups of their classmates. Additionally, students developed varying levels of intercultural competency because of the short-term study abroad program.

The findings justify the importance of a short-term study abroad during a critical developmental phase in a college student’s life. Given the importance of the study
abroad experience to identity development and learning for students, institutions seeking
to internationalize their campuses should promote these opportunities for the broadest
array of students.

*Keywords*: short-term study abroad, college students, identity, development

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**E. ASHLEIGH SCHULLER LEE**

EDUCATIONAL POLICY, PLANNING, AND LEADERSHIP

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA
"TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF:"
AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A FACULTY-LED
SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD ON COLLEGE STUDENT IDENTITY
CHAPTER 1: THE RESEARCH FOCUS

Due to an increase in the growth of communication, travel, and commerce, world leaders, business leaders, and leaders of institutions of higher education are demanding heightened attention to intercultural preparedness for their student citizens (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Mapp, 2012; Pelletier, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Smith & Mitry, 2008; Wright & Clarke, 2010). As a result of these demands, a range of academic disciplines are focusing on global issues to help students increase their awareness of the global market and the world at-large (Hackney, Boggs, & Borozan, 2012; Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012). One way in which universities are meeting the demand for increased engagement in the global market is by encouraging study abroad programs to be the vehicle in which a college student can gain heightened levels of intercultural competency (Twombly et al., 2012, p. 2).

Intercultural competency, a term I adopted for use in my research, “is broadly defined as the ‘ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, to shift frames of reference appropriately and adapt behavior to cultural context’” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 249). Deardorff’s (2006) definition of intercultural competency has been widely adopted by international scholars. For purposes of my research study, intercultural competency is not to be confused with global competency. The terms will not be used interchangeably. Global competency “refers to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and
ability to work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community” (“Global Competency,” 2010, p. 1). Thus, global competence results from the action of cultural immersion that a college student experiences during a study abroad to arrive at varying levels of intercultural competence. Intercultural competency is an outcome that can occur from an international event—in my research, the event is a short-term study abroad experience (Deardorff, 2006). I would also argue that this is not the only way intercultural competency can occur. Through exposure to learning about another culture in a pre-departure meeting, for example, students can further develop their intercultural competency.

Because employers are demanding that employees have increased levels of intercultural competency, higher education institutions are seeking more opportunities for their students to travel abroad during college to enhance exposure to world cultures (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009; Franklin, 2010; Hackney et al., 2012; Institute of International Education, 2014; Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008; Pelletier, 2012). Study abroad opportunities in college are important ways in which the college student can see the world during a formative time in their identity development (Jones & Abes, 2013; Moran, 2005). This form of travel provides a means to apply the knowledge and skill of the classroom setting to another world society context. In turn, college students gain a greater sense of global competency and ultimately reach heightened levels of intercultural competency (Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009; Braskamp & Chickering, 2009; Deardorff, 2006; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Franklin, 2010; Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008).
A mature, interculturally competent person has arrived at achieving a balance between respecting themselves and the ability to be respectful and open-minded around anyone from another culture. Thus, a mature, interculturally competent person's identity involves the ability to understand what makes us different from other cultures. The brevity of college student's exposure to persons from other cultures in college translates to an ongoing maturing development of intercultural competence (Breuning, 2007). In order to achieve the attainment of intercultural competence, there must be a heightened awareness of the world at-large. One way to increase exposure is through a study abroad program that lends itself well to global snapshots of world culture at work and at play. In this respect, the study abroad program acts as a lever and context for identity development and in turn increases the intercultural competency in a student as well when students obtain an heightened ability to recognize and adapt to cultural differences. For some students, they may already have a sense about the world from coursework and study or from prior travel with their families or service-learning trips. Thus, there are varying levels of global and intercultural competency before the students leave for their study abroad. Irrespective of a student's class standing, I would argue that students' varying levels of competency are related to their different levels of identity development. Moreover, the increase in global competency attributed to the classroom experience can vary given the nature of the classroom teaching. In turn, the development of intercultural competency aspect may be affected as well because intercultural competency follows out of global competency. The figure below demonstrates the interrelatedness of identity development and intercultural competency with the short-term study abroad experience acting as a lever of change.
Because of the need for college students to acquire a wider global lens in the trajectory of their education, study abroad opportunities are increasing in popularity as students seek a global perspective in their college program experience (Dolby, 2008; France & Rogers, 2008; Kelly, 2010; Salisbury, An, & Pascarella, 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). Increased exposure to other cultures and the acquisition of intercultural competencies are needed for college students to remain competitive in the workplace. Pointedly, "289,408 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit in 2012/13, an increase of 2.1% over the previous year. U.S. student participation in study abroad has more than tripled over the past two decades" (Institute of International Education, 2014, p. 2).

As a way to increase future study abroad opportunities, the Institute of International Education launched a major project in 2014 called “Generation Study
Abroad" with a goal of doubling the number of students from the United States (hereafter U.S.) who study abroad by the year 2020 ("Generation Study Abroad," 2014; Institute of International Education, 2014).

Despite this national increase in participation in study abroad, there are still large gaps in the research regarding how students studying abroad change in identity and intercultural competence and why that change is important to their overall college development. Development in college is of note because research shows that identities change the most in a college context (Danielak, Gupta, & Elby, 2014; Franklin, 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013; Moran, 2005). Research shows that long-term study abroad programs have an impact on career choice in young professionals, overall student interest, identity, cultural maturity, as well as an overall increase in student exposure to world cultures and economies (Braskamp et al., 2009; Dolby, 2008; Ellwood, 2011; Franklin, 2010; Hackney et al., 2012; Salisbury et al., 2013). Yet, there is scant research on how a student changes in a short-term study abroad (Mapp, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Warner, 2009). Thus, we need to study more about how a college student views his or her change upon returning from a study abroad experience in order to capture the importance of a short-term study abroad for higher education institutions. If a student has experienced a short-term study abroad, I would argue that their identity has matured (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and thus they would present as having achieved a greater understanding of intercultural competency.

Colleges are increasingly identifying internationalization of campus as a strategic goal because of the changing global demands (France & Rogers, 2008; Institute of International Education, 2014; Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008, Twombly et al.,
Study abroad programs provide a cornerstone in accomplishing these objectives because historically study abroad programs have enabled college students to see more of the world and society (Braskamp et al., 2009; Hackney et al., 2012; Pelletier, 2012; Twombly et al., 2012). Study abroad in higher education is increasingly important because students gain invaluable global perspectives and unique cultural interactions that may not be commonplace at U.S. institutions (Coryell, 2013). Because study abroad is important, many institutions are moving towards incorporating a study abroad experience as a marker of a well-rounded, globally engaged student citizen (Institute of International Education, 2014).

The College of William and Mary (hereafter William and Mary) recognizes the importance of study abroad as a factor that helps meet the objectives of internationalization on campus and has inserted specific benchmarks in the university’s strategic plan that underscore the commitment to this objective (William and Mary Strategic Plan, 2014). Recently, William and Mary was recognized as having “the highest percentage of undergraduates who participate in study abroad programs compared to any other public university in the United States” (Hassell, 2013, n.p.). In fact, the university’s ranking is the result of 45.7 percent of William & Mary undergraduates participating in study abroad by their graduation date, according to the IIE’s Open Doors 2013 Report on International Educational Exchange, which measures the number of students who studied abroad in the 2011-2012 academic year, including the summer of 2012. (Hassell, 2013, n. p.) The number of undergraduates studying abroad at William and Mary is four times the national rate of participation and noteworthy for a public university.
The strategic goal for William and Mary to internationalize the campus has been operationalized with the objective to have at least 60% of its undergraduate students participate in a study abroad experience before they graduate in FY 2018 ("Global Perspectives"; William and Mary Strategic Plan, 2014). Because William and Mary is strategically focused on study abroad and already has high levels of student participation, my research on college student identity development in the context of short-term study abroad will help inform campus leaders on ways in which to provide support for students to help meet this strategic goal.

To that end, I sought to study William and Mary students in the context of a short-term study abroad. I chose not to focus on international service learning trips or long-term study abroad programs because the efficiency to the students of a short-term study abroad is of interest given the recent call to increase the number of students studying abroad (Institute of International Education, 2014). Obviously, students have multiple world locations to pick from to study abroad. Within the destinations for study abroad programs, Italy ranked as the second most popular location for U.S. students studying abroad (Open Doors Data, 2014). The top destination of choice was the United Kingdom (Open Doors Data, 2014). I would conjecture that England is the top choice given the English-speaking nature of the country. Because my study focuses on understanding college student identity development in the context of a short-term study abroad, I opted for the site destination of Italy versus the United Kingdom as Italy offers a location with more diverse cultural and language interactions, but one that remains popular with the majority of students studying abroad. In particular, William and Mary’s Florence, Italy,
study abroad program is the most popular among those offered at the university (M. DiPaola, personal communication, March 13, 2014; Reves Center, 2014).

While there are both long- and short-term study abroad opportunities, more students choose short-term study abroad experiences (Institute of International Education, 2014). In fact, more than half of study abroad experiences are short-term (Institute of International Education, 2014). Short-term study abroad programs provide students with the opportunity for global travel without the constraints of often complicated curriculum adjustments at their home university if they were to study an entire semester or year (Reynolds-Case, 2013; Smith & Mitry, 2008). Given the length and expense of long-term study abroad programs, students are turning to short-term study abroad programs as a more affordable and realistic option during college (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Edge, 2012; Institute of International Education, 2014; Kehl & Morris, 2007). Students can fit in short-term programs over college breaks or in the summer, and still be able to work or participate in college internships.

Despite its popularity, there is scant research on the value of short-term study abroad programs for college students (Blahusiak, 2012; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; O'Callaghan, 2006). Historically, the reputation of short-term programs has been akin to a vacation versus an academically enriching experience (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Mapp, 2012; Martinsen, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013). However, emerging research supports the notion that students change whether they embark on a short- or long-term study abroad experience (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Moreover, research shows that short-term study abroad experiences increase all areas of global and intercultural competency and
awareness (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Franklin, 2010). What remains unknown is the influence of this length of study abroad experience on student identity development.

Because the existing research, albeit scant, found that short-term study abroad opportunities are valuable in terms of cultural gains and the fact that they are a more prudent financial decision, it is critical to further explore the outcomes of these programs, in particular the change in identity that college students experience during their overseas study. For many years, critics have viewed the short-term study abroad as the “stepchild of study abroad” (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 12) so that detailed accounts of change that college students experience in that context remains unexplored. Researchers recognize the value of a study abroad experience on identity, but we know less about how the short-term study abroad experience changes identity in a college student (Blahusiak, 2012; O’Callaghan, 2006).

Problem Statement

College student identity shifts during the years on campus (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Jones & Abes, 2013; Kaufman & Feldman, 2004; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010; Moran, 2005). Student identity is defined as “ways of knowing and beliefs about what counts as knowing and learning . . . or sense of self as knowers and learners” (Danielak et al., 2014, p. 8). A number of experiences and factors influence how student identity changes over the college years (Dolby, 2008; Kaufman & Feldman, 2004). As indicated above, international experiences provide one means of influence on students during college. Previous research exists on long-term, semester or year-long study abroad programs (Salisbury et al., 2013). The main findings from long-term study abroad programs include an increase in global maturity and intercultural competency for students
Yet, what remains unknown is how the short-term study abroad impacts a college student's identity. Chickering and Reisser (1993) created a popular framework for student development based on a non-linear process encompassing seven areas of "identity formation" (p. 173). The seven areas that help inform the formation of identity for college students include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. All of these areas may or may not impact a college student studying abroad. At some point, there may even be intersections between the vectors and at other points there may be those who never reach one of these points. The lack of exploration and the paucity of literature on short-term study abroad programs proves timely given the focus on college internationalization for further study into this area of scholarship regarding the range of identity formation outlined in the various vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Donnelly-Smith, 2009).

Moreover, identity is at the heart of a college student's most burning questions to themselves, namely: Who am I? (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Dolby, 2008; Ellwood, 2011; Evans et al., 2010; Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Associates, 2011). Often, traveling abroad provides students with a different vantage point from which to view their experiences (Kelly, 2010). Simply put, identity development matters and it should be front and center to further the research on how short-term study abroad programs contribute to this development for college students while they study abroad. The figure below details my theoretical framework that is based on the Seven Vector model as espoused by Chickering and Reisser (1993).
The circular nature demonstrates that the model is non-linear and holistic in the sense that the college student can develop within only some of these vectors, all of these vectors, none at all (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Foundationally, the first three vectors of developing competence, managing emotions, and moving through autonomy toward interdependence are often seen in research as being developed among freshman and sophomore college students whereas the last vectors (four, five, six, and seven) are seen as more unique to juniors and seniors (Torres et al., 2003).

What remains unknown in this model is how a short-term study abroad advances identity development and in turn how intercultural competence contributes to this growth. The main focus of intercultural competence is that an individual changes the way he or she relates to the world culture (Deardorff, 2006). The problem of research for this study concerns how development of student identity is influenced by a short-term study abroad experience and how this in turn is related to a student’s intercultural competency.

Thus, the research questions address college student identity development and intercultural competence. Specifically, I focused on the population of students studying abroad, albeit not traveling abroad, for the first time as these students provide a unique sub-group and can create a deeper understanding of the motivations of why those students choose to study abroad (Stroud, 2010). The context in which my research questions were situated is a short-term study abroad through William and Mary to Florence, Italy. The rationale for this site selection is that the Florence, Italy, study abroad is the most popular study abroad program at William and Mary and is always highly attended (M. DiPaola, personal communication, March 13, 2014). Thus, the participants in this program provided a robust group to understand better how a short-term study abroad changes identity in a college student (Braskamp & Chickering, 2009).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my study was to better understand the influence on college student identity and intercultural competency as a result of an immersive short-term study abroad experience in Florence, Italy. I utilized an exploratory case study approach (Creswell, 2013) and the conceptual framework of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors of college student development.
Chickering and Reisser's theory (1993) provided the best approach because their theory is non-linear in fashion and clearly explains the different points of identity development that a college student may or may not experience. The non-linear progression of identity development is particularly important because every college student is at a different place along the identity development continuum. Their theory best fits the study abroad context because the literature suggests that student's identity is affected, in some way, while studying abroad and that a study abroad experience effectuates change in a college student (Ellwood, 2011). In contrast to the other college student development theorists such as Baxter Magolda’s (2009) self-authorship model, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) model does not require a longitudinal research design, and thus can be informative of a short-term experience such as a study abroad. All of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors can be labeled under the broad rubric of “identity formation” so I sought to understand which vectors a short-term study abroad most affected, if at all (p. 173).

**Research Questions**

The site location for my study was Florence, Italy. The research questions for this study include:

1. How does the William and Mary faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience in Florence, Italy, play a role in developing college student identity within three months of their return from the travel?
   a. Do some vectors from Chickering and Reisser’s Seven Vector model of college student development show up more than others?
b. Do Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors appear in similar ways among the students in the study sample?

2. How does a faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience influence a student's intercultural competency within three months of their return from the travel?

Conceptual Framework

Broadly, the conceptual framework of college student identity development theory guided my research (Evans et al., 2010). "The study of identity development, compared with other constructs, is a fairly recent phenomenon, and each theorist has built on the previous theories" (Torres et al., 2003, p. 9). The range of theories contributing to our understanding of college student identity can help college personnel, faculty, and college administrators to approach myriad college student issues with informed scholarship (Evans et al., 2010).

Identity development matters because all college students develop at different points and at different stages during their college experience (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). The experiences for college students vary and this influences the level and rate of identity change they experience (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). This study used Chickering and Reisser's (1993) model of student development theory because it encompasses a wide breadth of the different changes that a college student may experience while studying abroad. During the study, participants revealed the nature of the influence, if at all, that a short-term study abroad had on their identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Given the increased attention that study abroad programs have garnered, college communities need to be prepared to embrace that change when a college student returns from a study abroad experience. The results from this study can
help faculty, students, college professionals know how college students’ identity changes after returning from a short-term study abroad and thus help inform the kind of support networks that may be useful to best support student identity development (Berg et al., 2009).

Significance of the Problem

Scant research exists on the influence of short-term study abroad programs on college student identity development. It is important to address this gap in the research because there are greater numbers of college students studying abroad in this program design (Institute of International Education, 2014); yet, we do not know how this short-term experience in another country influences student development. Moreover, we do not know how students’ development affects their intercultural competency and specifically the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships. The Institute of International Education (2014) is launching a new campaign to help increase the number of college students who study abroad, which will result in even more students traveling abroad during their college years. The assumption of long-term study abroad programs contributing to student learning and development has long served as the rationale for increasing study abroad experiences writ large (Salisbury et al., 2013; Twombly et al., 2012). How and in what ways the benefits of study abroad accrue during short-term stays is important for students, faculty, and institutions to understand as this form of travel is on the increase for college students.

On a multitude of levels, higher education institutions, students, and faculty should care about what happens to a college student in terms of identity development in the context of a short-term study abroad because students with increased levels of
intercultural competency can better relate to other students from diverse backgrounds (Rourke & Kanuka, 2012). This heightened ability to relate to individuals from other cultures is increasingly important given the diversity of American society and the globalization of many jobs.

College leaders will benefit from learning what specifically is valuable to students and what is not during their short-term study abroad experience. If students do not find value in the experiences, they will not desire to engage or connect these experiences when they return from a short-term study abroad. More importantly, college leaders will want to understand how the study-abroad experience helps enhance the overall undergraduate learning experience as this can provide justification for increased funding of internationalization efforts and help meet study abroad participation goals. Faculty that lead the majority of short-term study abroad experiences (Donnelly-Smith, 2009) can draw direct connections with the experiences abroad to their own classes and thus enhance the classroom conversation and depth of learning (Sanchez, 2012). It is incumbent on faculty to develop best practices in terms of learning and curriculum (Donnelly-Smith, 2009), and understanding better how short-term study abroad influences the broader curriculum is valuable (Sanchez, 2012). Students in general should care about how identity development occurs when abroad because their worldviews may change if they encounter a student who has studied abroad on their college campus.

**Definition of Terms**

*Change* describes the differences that the student describes in how they see themselves and the world upon returning from the short-term study abroad.
Global competency “refers to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community” (“Global Competency,” 2010, para. 4).

Identity “involves growing awareness of competencies, emotions and values, confidence in standing alone and bonding with others, and moving beyond intolerance toward openness and self esteem” as well as the ways in which a college student relates to their academic environment and their own personal sense of self (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 173; Danielak et al., 2014; Moran, 2005).

Identity development is a full-bodied concept that can be unpacked in a variety of ways to include “growing awareness of competencies, emotions and values, confidence in standing alone and bonding with others…” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 173).

Intercultural competency “is broadly defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, to shift frames of reference appropriately and adapt behavior to cultural context” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 249). Operationalized, this term meant for my research study the number of times the student participants spoke or wrote about how they relate differently to other individuals who are different from them socially, racially, ethnically, and culturally.

Long-term study abroad is an overseas experience for a college student lasting “a semester or longer” (Hackney et al., 2012, p. 129).

Short-term study abroad is an overseas experience for a college student lasting eight weeks or less or a summer session (Institute of International Education, 2014;
Martinsen, 2010). For purposes of my study, the short-term study abroad is outside the
U.S. (Sobania & Braskamp, 2009).

Student development theory focuses on the developmental milestones and
challenges in a college student’s growth and regression (Evans et al., 2010).

Methods Overview

An exploratory case study qualitative research approach was employed for this
study (Creswell, 2013). The case study approach is appropriate for my study because the
study included a small sample of participants whose story remains untold. I sought a
deep understanding of identity development within this small group of college students.
The case-study approach fits with an in-depth, rich interview approach format (Creswell,
2013). Moreover, a case study approach is appropriate as the study was bounded by the
research site of one study abroad location namely Florence, Italy.

Data were triangulated to assure for rigor in data collection techniques (Creswell,
2013). I collected observational data pre-departure with the majority of students
attending the Florence, Italy, short-term study abroad program and conducted semi-
structured interviews post-departure with seven volunteer students. While the students
studied abroad in Florence, Italy, they were asked to journal, blog, or document their new
experiences in some way. Of those 26 students studying abroad this summer, 22 have
never studied abroad before (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 30, 2014).
The methodology is fully addressed in Chapter Three.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

I assumed in this study that a short-term study abroad has an impact on a college
student in some capacity. My research was delimited to undergraduate college students
from William and Mary studying abroad in Florence, Italy, in 2014. Because the participant number was small, I did not have a fully representative group of students based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status.

A limitation of this study was that the development of student development is an ongoing process and the data gathered during the research occurs at a specific time and location for the students. Speaking with the students directly upon return from their study abroad experience provided a limited snapshot of how the students have processed the study-abroad experience. They may continue to make more sense of their time abroad over time, which will not be captured in this study. Another limitation of this study is that the students attend a liberal arts college with a high study-abroad participation rate. Thus, the results of this study may not be generalizable to other institutional contexts.

**Summary**

As our economy grows more and more complex, demands have increased to produce globally minded college students who are ready to enter a diverse workforce (Deans, 2012; Hackney et al., 2012). A large body of literature exists on the important effects that a long-term study abroad has on a college student in terms of global competency (Dolby, 2008; France & Rogers, 2008; Hackney et al., 2012; Kehl & Morris, 2007; Kelly, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). However, scant research exists on the effects a short-term study abroad has on college students and its impact on their identity development (Blahusiak, 2012; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; O’Callaghan, 2006).
A goal of my study is to enlarge the body of research involving short-term study abroad programs and the development of college student identity. My study sought a deeper understanding of the developmental process that college students experience on a short-term study abroad to Italy. I now turn my attention to the exigent literature explored in Chapter Two. The literature review will include the following sections: foundational work of identity development theorists, study abroad definitions and assertions, and finally the importance of developing intercultural competency. Chapter Three will outline the methods used for the study, whereas Chapters Four and Five will present the portraits of the participants and the findings. Finally, Chapter Six will cover a discussion of the research and present study conclusions.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a substantial body of literature on college student development theory (Barber et al., 2013; Baxter Magolda, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 2010; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Kodama et al., 2002; Jones & Abes, 2013; Kim, 2012; Schuh et al., 2011) and study abroad (Berg et al., 2009; Berg, 2009; Braskamp et al., 2009; Brux & Fry, 2010; Edge, 2012; France & Rogers, 2008; Martinsen, 2010; McKeown, 2009; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010; Pelletier, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Rourke & Kanuka, 2012; Smith & Mitry, 2008; Stroud, 2010; Szekely & Krane, 1997; Tajes & Ortiz, 2010; Twombly et al., 2012; Walton, 2010) as separate bodies of knowledge and scholarship. However, there is a paucity of literature linking the two concepts (Blahusiak, 2012; O’Callaghan, 2006). Research on college student development theory focuses on areas that are of interest to my study: psychosocial theories and identity development. Identity is best understood in the context of psychosocial theory as it relates to intrapersonal development of a college student (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009). As noted, the study-abroad literature primarily attends to long-term study abroad and student outcomes. A gap exists in the connection of short-term study abroad and college student development, in particular regarding identity development. To address this issue, I sought to understand how a short-term study abroad influenced identity development for traditionally aged college students studying abroad.
This literature review covers the salient areas to address the research questions. To begin, I first review college student development theory and then attend to the sub-set of psychosocial theory and identity theory within this body of literature. Psychosocial theory, rooted in the work of Erik Erikson (1950, 1980), focuses on the different stages in a person's life as they explore their identity (Jones & Abes, 2013), whereas identity theory covers the specific ways in which a person forms his or her sense of self (Jones & Abes, 2013). For purposes of my literature review, I focus on the intersections of psychosocial development theory with identity as the theory relates to study abroad college students through the lens of the college student development theory model of Chickering and Reisser (1993).

College student development encompasses a broad range of topics, which are reviewed in the following section. Next, I present literature regarding study abroad, highlighting the gaps in the current research base. I focus in particular on short-term study abroad. Finally, I present literature on intercultural competency and how its development in a short-term study abroad context is important for college students looking ahead.

**College Student Development Theory**

My conceptual model highlights the intersection of student development theory, intercultural competency, and study abroad programs. Thus, it is critical to understand the theoretical underpinnings of college student development theory and the links between this broader framework and identity theory as these areas form the basis for my analysis of the participant data.
The overarching area of college student development theory provides the theoretical framework for my study given the focus of my research on changes in college students due to study abroad. College student development encompasses the areas of identity development and formation (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). In the 1960s, college student development theory emerged as researchers sought increased understanding regarding a holistic perspective of students (Jones & Abes, 2013). A number of “families” of theories (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 21) for purposes of research and study arose under the broad area of college student development. These areas of inquiry included: psychosocial development, cognitive-structural development, maturity models, typology theories, holistic development as espoused by Baxter Magolda (2009), and person-environment interaction models (as cited in Jones & Abes, 2013).

These above mentioned models were all concerned with college student development (Jones & Abes, 2013), but focused on different approaches to understand how students developed. Examples of each one abound, but one theorist stands out for each of them: psychosocial development as espoused by Erikson; cognitive-structural development as espoused by William Perry Jr.’s theory of intellectual and ethical development; Douglas Heath’s model of maturing; Roy Heath’s model of personality typologies; and finally John Holland’s theory of personality type and environment (as cited in Jones & Abes, 2013). Out of the range of college student development theories, I opted to focus on psychosocial theory because this theory informs and helps detail how individual personalities are formed (Evans et al., 2010). Within the psychosocial theories of development is the sub-set of identity theory. First, I will begin with an explanation and history of psychosocial theory.
Psychosocial development theory. The identity theory that I focused on is rooted within the area of psychosocial identity theory (Evans et al., 2010; Kodama et al., 2002; Schuh et al., 2011; Jones & Abes, 2013). Parker, Widick, and Knefelkamp (1978) described psychosocial theory as: "what students will be concerned about and what decisions will be primary" (p. xii). I chose this theory among others because the theory helps give life to the myriad challenges and decision points a college student faces and thus aids in effectively describing a short-term study abroad experience (Evans et al., 2010). Psychosocial theory is rooted in psychology and sociology and is the most appropriate theory to help make sense of the short-term study abroad experience for those students studying abroad because the theory is about discovering and accessing the real essence of a student experiencing life (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). Within the realm of psychosocial theory, Eric Erikson (1950, 1980) is the leading theorist whose work has been used as the foundation for several subsequent theorists (Jones & Abes, 2013).

Within the realm of psychosocial theory, many other prominent theorists explored the ramifications of the constructs outlined by Erickson (1950, 1980) on college students and their development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Jones & Abes, 2013). Jones and Abes (2013) provided a summary list of these theorists which includes: Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser, Ruthellen Josselson, James Marcia, Marcia Baxter Magolda, Patricia King, Raechele Pope, Nevitt Sanford, and Vivian Cass to name several (p. 26). Each theorist described identity in a particular way and often built upon one another's scholarship. James Marcia, one theorist, utilized the work of Erikson (1950, 1980) and Chickering (1969) to establish his own conceptualization of identity (Evans et
Marcia (1966) found that identity is more likely to be characterized by the presence or absence of crisis or exploration and commitment to such areas as politics, religion, relationships, and career decision making" (as cited in Jones & Abes, 2013, pp. 30-31). Josselson (1996) developed her work based upon Erikson (1950, 1980), Chickering (1969), and Marcia (1966), but narrowed the focus to women and identity formation. Josselson (1996) sought to explore “Marcia’s four identity status[es] with a sample of women and developed new names for the statuses and descriptive detail for each” (as cited in Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 31). Women’s identity formation could be explained in these four areas (Jones & Abes, 2013; Marcia, 1966).

However, I opted not to use Marcia (1966) for my conceptual framework because he “did not specifically focus on students” (Evans et al., p. 62) and Josselson’s (1996) work focused on women and “the important role of relationships in women’s identity formation” specifically with women who were older students and beyond (Evans et al., 2010, p. 63). It is unclear if traditionally aged female college students would experience the same type of identity development found by Marcia (1966) or Josselson (1996).

Self-authorship seeks to understand individuals at all stages of life, not just college students, in the realm of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal (Barber, King, & Baxter Magolda, 2013). There are aspects of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory that run parallel to a self-authorship domain such as the developing competence vector that is best aligned with the cognitive domain of the self-authorship model (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Yet, the self-authorship model was too broad for my particular focus on identity development (Baxter Magolda, 2009). For example, the self-authorship model typically reaches its final phases for students after college and does not specifically apply
to my research focus of trying to explain and capture the change that may or may not occur within the realm of a short-term study abroad (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Baxter Magolda's (2009) work builds on longitudinal data spanning over 30 years, beginning with participants early on in their adult lives. Self-authorship, a term coined by Robert Kegan (1994), explores how an individual, not just a college student, might make important decisions without input from other important people in their lives in the area of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive domains (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Barber et al., 2013). Thus, the notion of self-authorship, although important, covers realms of thinking beyond the intrapersonal domain that my research study sought to explore. Moreover, Baxter Magolda's (2009) theory is inapplicable because there is not an opportunity for my current study to provide the level of coverage given the fact that the study abroad program is only four weeks. The psychosocial theorist who modified Erikson's (1950, 1980) foundational work that best fits my research study is Arthur Chickering (1969).

Arthur Chickering (1969) is a psychosocial theorist whose scholarship describes identity development. Chickering expanded on the concept of identity and focused his work to the participants involved in my study—college students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 2010). Chickering (1969) specifically focused on college students unlike Erikson, Marcia, Josselson, and Kegan (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). This narrower lifetime focus on identity development during college aligns best with the timeline of interest for my research participants, namely a short-term study abroad experience during college. Although Chickering (1969) focuses on the four years of college, he does so in a non-linear way that allows for prominence of various vectors during different times in the college years (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This fluidity
provides an opportunity to understand better which vectors of development are important
during and after a student’s short-term study abroad.

**Identity development theory.** Identity theory is defined in myriad ways (Jones
& Abes, 2013). Each discipline has a different way of describing and defining identity
(Jones & Abes, 2013):

Each field locates the study of identity within its own disciplinary lens, but they
share commitments to understanding the individual, his or her social context, the
influence of social groups, and various dimensions of identity (e.g., race,
ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation). (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009, p. 578)

The dimensions of identity that Torres et al. (2009) reference are taken from the model of
multiple dimensions of identity that Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) original published
in 2000. This model seeks to offer a figure that details the various ways that college
student identities are formed and challenged through areas such as race and gender within
the domains of interpersonal, cognitive, and intrapersonal domains (Abes et al., 2007).
The areas or “dimensions” of the model include race and gender and “cannot be fully
understood in isolation” (Abes et al., 2007, p. 3). Thus, this original model, and the
newly constructed model, includes the ways in which college student process the outside
world through filters of meaning-making. The multiple dimensions of identity model
builds on the research of Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (2009) and is a seminal
contribution to how we understand identity development theory (Abes et al., 2007).

While the model considers areas of development that include the interpersonal, cognitive,
and intrapersonal domains (Abes et al., 2007), my research focus narrowly on the
intrapersonal domain. I opted to constrain my focus to the intrapersonal domain because I sought to discover more about a college student’s identity.

As noted above, one of the first to write about identity development, and thus provide a foundation for other research, was Erik Erikson (1950, 1980). Erikson, “a psychologist trained in the psychoanalytic tradition of Sigmund Freud” developed stages, each with its own name, to describe the psychosocial development of an individual from infant years to senior years (as cited in Jones & Abes, 2013, pp. 28-29). “Erikson . . . defined identity as accrued confidence, the ability to maintain inner sameness, and one’s meaning to others, shaped by how individuals organize experiences within environments” (Kim, 2012, pp. 100-101). Furthermore, Kim (2012) suggested a way to look at Erikson’s (1950, 1980) definition of identity:

In establishing his identity development model, Erikson . . . emphasized the centrality of identity development throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

He viewed development as the overcoming of crises during adolescence and early adulthood, and noted the clash between identity and role confusion by defining

Identity Crisis as the most significant conflict in one’s lifetime. (p. 101, italics in original)

Because Erikson (1950, 1980) found identity development to be a central task for a young adult, his work provides alignment with the focus of my study.

Identity development as a sub-section of the psychosocial domain helps situate my research focus because I wanted to know how college students studying abroad for four weeks viewed their development and how they changed due to their international experience. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector Development model that I
employed for my research study is a psychosocial theory that explores identity formation among college students (Evans et al., 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013; Schuh et al., 2011).

Identity development within college student development theory encompasses a large body of literature (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Schuh et al., 2011). Identity development fits within the paradigm of psychosocial research specifically in the "intrapersonal dimension" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 577). The intrapersonal dimension represents the ways in which a college student makes sense of the world given their sense of self (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). This understanding then contributes to the student's identity development. Moreover, identity development rather than broad identity theory "is necessary if one is to understand college students and their experiences in higher education contexts" (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 19). Thus, identity development fits within the intrapersonal domain because college students constantly negotiate their sense of identity as it relates to the outside world under the auspice of psychosocial theory (Dolby, 2008; Evans et al., 2010; Kim, 2012; Kodama et al., 2002; Schuh et al., 2011).

Because identity theory fits under the broader research categories of college student development and psychosocial theory, identity development helps to narrow my research focus within the broader realm of college student development theory. Identity development is rooted in identity theory which is different depending on what discipline the research is grounded in (Jones & Abes, 2013). The discipline of education approaches identity theory in a particular way and since my study is focused on college students, this discipline was the most appropriate choice.
Chickering and Reisser’s model: Seven vectors. Arthur Chickering (1969) expanded on Erikson’s (1950, 1980) research with a specific focus on college students and identity development (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2011; Jones & Abes, 2013). “Arthur Chickering arguably contributed the foundational knowledge base on college student identity through his theory of the Seven Vectors of Development” (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 31). The model developed by Chickering and Reiss (1993) includes seven vectors:

- Developing competence
- Managing emotions
- Moving through autonomy toward interdependence
- Developing mature interpersonal relationships
- Establishing identity
- Developing purpose
- Developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993)

The vectors describe major highways for journeying toward individuation—the discovery and refinement of one’s unique way of being—and also toward communion with other individuals and groups, including the larger national and global society. (p. 35)

As briefly outlined in Chapter One, the seven vectors include: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Vector one is about growing in maturity. Maturity explains the growth in identity of a college student. Vector two details handling different emotional states within development. Emotional states may be a college student negotiating anger and happiness at the same time or in isolation. Vector three speaks to the transformation from a dependent to an independent young adult and is most closely aligned with self-authorship because this vector involves making decisions without outside influences such as parents (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Vector four discusses the growth of relationships from exposure to other people. This vector can change differently depending on whom the college student may be exposed to from a different
culture. Although Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model is non-linear, there is a pattern
to the vectors. “Chickering presents a typical pattern to the seven vectors, with the first
four vectors providing the foundation for the fifth vector, which then leads to the final
two vectors” (Kodama et al., 2002, p. 46). There is fluidity within the vectors.
“Movement along any one can occur at different rates and can interact with movement
along the others” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 34). Thus, students traveling abroad
may access one or more of these vectors more often than others.

Vector five, identity formation, could be argued as an outcome vector in which a
college student makes meaning because they have already moved through the first four
vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Torres et al., 2003). Vector six focuses on college
students finding new meaning in their lives through life experiences. This meaning can
be explained through different conceptualizations of how the college student may view
himself or herself. Finally, vector seven speaks to the moral side of identity development
discussing the ways in which a student discerns the truth. Integrity for a college student
entails making a decision that is in line with societal expectations of right and wrong. All
vectors can continue to develop later in a college student’s life. As argued by Torres and
colleagues: (2003):

Typically, traditional-aged college students explore the first three vectors in their
first few years of college, while upperclass students wrestle with vectors four,
five, and possibly six. Individuals continue to work through the later vectors
throughout their life and may revisit issues within a vector as they develop.

(p. 13)
The focus of my research on study abroad resulted in participants being sophomores or juniors. Thus, it was anticipated that the students would identify more of the latter vectors versus the first three.

The theoretical model used in this study is based on identity development as this provides critical understanding regarding how students are developing their intercultural competency within a study abroad program. The next section outlines the literature on study abroad and focuses on how these programs help foster growth in intercultural competency which is then discussed last.

**Study Abroad Programs**

With the call to globalize and internationalize the college experience, students on university campuses around the nation find that study abroad programming directly helps in achieving the goal of increasing opportunities for intercultural competency due to the opportunity for students of relating to others from diverse backgrounds (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Lucas, 2009; Mapp, 2012; Pelletier, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Smith & Mitry, 2008; Twombly et al., 2012). “Although this commitment to academic internationalization varies from college to college, study abroad consistently appears as a primary means of developing global and intercultural competence among American students” (Twombly et al., 2012, p. 1). The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (hereafter CIGE, a project of the American Council on Education) outlined specific domains to increase internationalization on college campuses, including: articulated institutional commitment; administrative structure and staffing; curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes; faculty policies and practices; student mobility; and collaboration and partnerships (CIGE, 2014). Study abroad programs fit within the
student mobility target area and the area that focuses on curriculum and its associated learning outcomes (CIGE, 2014). The commitment to internationalization has been decades long, yet historically focused more on long-term study abroad opportunities versus short-term.

**History of study abroad programs.** Study abroad programs are not a new phenomenon. Study abroad programs have been around for decades serving college students and began in the early 1920s as an exchange of American students in France (Lucas, 2009; Twombly et al., 2012; Walton, 2010). After the first exchanges in France, students began traveling abroad to other locations (Institute of International Education, 2014; Twombly et al., 2012; Walton, 2010). The aura of the study abroad has changed in its perception with the public as being a “culturally elite ‘finishing school’” to now helping a university prepare its student leaders for a “globally interconnected future” (Twombly et al., 2012, p. 2; Walton, 2010). The need these programs now fill for both the student and larger world is noteworthy given the increased call for internationalization on college campuses (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; France & Rogers, 2008; Franklin, 2010; Kelly, 2010; McKeown, 2009; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010; Twombly et al., 2012; Wright & Clarke, 2010).

Moreover, the U.S. government has a vested interest (Lincoln Commission’s Report, 2005; Pelletier, 2012; Redden, 2014) in preparing its young college students for a life outside of the country and ensuring “that the United States remains a vital and stable society” (Twombly et al., 2012, p. 2). To that end, Congress deemed the year 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad” and the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad fellowship began in 2004 (Dolby, 2008, p. 55). The significance of the funding was that
the fellowship gave national priority to the study abroad as an important mission. The focused attention placed on study abroad programs in the last decade helped to increase its importance on a national scale and suggests that colleges and universities should be looking more broadly at their own study abroad programs and how they could better serve and attract college students. For example, “U.S. student participation in study abroad has more than tripled over the past two decades” and is on the rise (Institute of International Education, 2014, p. 2; Open Doors Data, 2014). Additionally, the biggest growth area was in the short-term study abroad from 2011 to 2013 (albeit only by 1.4%) (Institute of International Education, 2014, p. 2).

**National focus of study abroad on college campuses.** Study abroad programs offer a way for college students to travel the world during their four-year experience on campus. Yet, given the number of college students who attend community colleges and not four-year institutions, my research focus on a four-year university addresses only a sub-set of the entire college student population. College students study abroad for a variety of reasons (Sanchez, 2012; Stroud, 2012). Smith and Mitry (2008) commented on the various reasons that students study abroad:

> It has been reported that the most important reason for which students select to participate in study-abroad programs are: to improve their career prospects; to improve their cultural understanding; to study the subject matter not offered in their home institution; and finally simply to join friends who enroll or make new friends. (p. 240)

What remains unknown is how the experience itself influences student identity development. Just as there are many motivations for students to study abroad, there are
equally diverse ways in which students are influenced by the experience. This information can aid college administrators and leaders in thinking about ways in which access to study abroad programs should be addressed.

**Inclusivity and study abroad programs.** Because the study abroad program has a reputation for being elite, a challenge to increase inclusivity in study abroad programs remains. Minority students, first-generation students, students with disabilities, male students, as well as science majors are typically underrepresented in study abroad programs (Brux & Fry, 2010; Lucas, 2009; Paus & Robinson, 2008; Stroud, 2010; Szekely & Krane, 1997; Twill & Guzzo, 2012). For example, at the university Sanchez (2012) studied, only a small percentage of its first-generation college attendees participated in a study abroad program. The Sanchez study (2012) exposed the need for study abroad programs to not just address the desires of those students from higher socioeconomic classes to travel, but also the needs of those from lower socioeconomic standing. Many students believe that study abroad opportunities are only for the wealthy (Redden, 2014).

Thus, because my site university is highly selective, there is a correlation of enrolling those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds which provide the larger population for those enrolling in study abroad programs. Several questions that emerge for this population include: First, do the students who attend a short-term study abroad engage in a greater number of diverse campus activities once they return because of a heightened awareness of intercultural competency? An assumption here is that students from higher socioeconomic populations have more exposure to diverse settings in their youth because of greater travel opportunities and this exposure would continue in a study
abroad. Second, how do the student participants view themselves in the world-at-large upon their return? The latter question relates directly to the identity formation aspect of my research focus and could be reflected along the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

**Study abroad and identity development.** Often when college students embark on study abroad programs, they wrestle with important concepts such as identity because they are in a period of dissonance given their location in another country (Dolby, 2008; Jewett, 2010; Kaufman & Feldman, 2004; Warner, 2009). This disruption to everyday routines provides an opportunity for identity development (Ellwood, 2011) especially for those students travelling abroad for the first time. Study abroad programs effectuate change in a college student in varying levels (Ellwood, 2011). Ellwood (2011) described the link between study abroad and transformative identity development in her ethnographic study: “Study abroad . . . is commonly viewed as providing an opportunity for transformation since it allows the student to widen perceptions, challenge norms and rework personal characteristics and attitudes” (p. 960).

Thus, Ellwood’s (2011) study relates to identity development because she helps to explain the different ways in which college students may view themselves upon return from a study abroad experience. Yet, Ellwood’s (2011) study focused on only four participants experiencing a study abroad in an Australian program. Australia is less often a destination for American study abroad students, ranking eighth as a preferred site (*Open Doors Data*, 2014). Similar to my study, Ellwood (2011) utilized a small number of participants, yet was still able to provide a connection between study abroad and identity with college students. This contribution to the literature provides an important counter to
a critique that a small participant size is not appropriate for a big-scale concept such as identity. I replicated the type of qualitative approach utilized in other studies to capture in-depth analysis from the participants (Blahusiak, 2012; Ellwood, 2011; O’Callaghan, 2006). One study (Braskamp & Chickering, 2009) investigated study abroad and college student development, but focused on only four of the vectors and utilized a quantitative approach.

Qualitative work on identity development and study abroad was conducted by O’Callaghan (2006) and Blahusiak (2012). As I have argued, O’Callaghan (2006) also acknowledged the scant research that exists on the lack of knowledge about study abroad programs and college student development. Her study looked at students studying abroad to English-speaking countries and included men and women (O’Callaghan, 2006). My study differed because I only had female participants and focused on a short-term study abroad program setting in a non-English speaking country, namely Italy. Furthermore, the program investigated in O’Callaghan’s (2006) research was not faculty-led (O’Callaghan, 2006). Her findings detailed growth of at least one vector for each of the participants (initially the participants numbered eight, but the final data was based on six) (O’Callaghan, 2006). Also, as I will outline in Chapter Five, my study found a broader range of engagement with all the vectors for my participants (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

As with O’Callaghan’s (2006) study, Blahusiak (2012) used a qualitative design to study a program that was not faculty-led. This study included four semi-structured interviews in which all the participants were White, whereas my study utilized 14-semi structured interviews and included two minority students (Blahusiak, 2012; Creswell,
2013). Further, the site of investigation for Blahusiak (2012) was on community college students’ experiences on a semester-long study abroad program. Blahusiak’s (2012) top findings were that the participants grew intellectually and emotionally. What remains unknown is if Blahusiak’s (2012) findings apply to participants at a four-year public university. I now turn to the context of study abroad program type.

Types of study abroad programs. Within the literature, there are a few different ways to describe a study abroad program (Twombly et al., 2012). Study abroad programs can be “summer, semester, or year-long” experiences outside of the country as well as interim break programs and spring break programs for both “undergraduate or graduate college students” (Tajes & Ortiz, 2010, p. 17). For purposes of clarifying my research study, I differentiate between the range and types of programs. The two types of programs that are important to distinguish for purposes of my research are long-term and short-term study abroad programs. I will first address long-term study abroad programs.

A long-term study abroad is defined as any study abroad longer than eight weeks. This form of study abroad has been around for years (Twombly et al., 2012; Walton, 2010). The positive effects of long-term study abroad programs are well documented (Braskamp et al., 2009; France & Rogers, 2008; Franklin, 2010; Wright & Clarke, 2010). This long tenure of operations provided opportunities to study the student outcomes from study abroad. The effects of study abroad opportunities have been linked to a heightened sense of intercultural competency and career enhancement (Franklin, 2010).

Because a focus of the business curriculum is on dealing with partners and clients around the world, many articles on study abroad and intercultural competency tend to focus in on the business context and not as much on the educational context that my study
explored (Franklin, 2010; Orahood, Woolf, & Kruze, 2008; Wright & Clarke, 2010). I believe this area of attention is due to the fact that businesses desire their employees to have cultural awareness when they deal with partners and clients in other countries. For example, in Wright and Clarke’s (2010) study, marketing business undergraduates’ worldviews were looked at both quantitatively and qualitatively in the long-term study abroad context. They found empirically that study abroad programs do help in improving the global mindedness of business students. But, there is scant research in this literature base on interdisciplinary studies and short-term study abroad contexts. Because the various studies focused primarily on the business context, there is little known about study abroad connecting to the wider disciplines or of liberal arts. Thus, there is an increased importance to my study that focuses on college undergraduates who are studying abroad in the non-business educational context for eight weeks or less.

For purposes of my research, a short-term study abroad is defined as eight weeks or less (Institute of International Education, 2014). As noted above, the effects of a long-term study abroad have been well researched (Braskamp et al., 2009; France & Rogers, 2008; Franklin, 2010; Wright & Clarke, 2010); however, little research exists on a short-term study abroad as it relates to college student development in the context of identity development (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Coryell, 2013; Cunningham, Caldwell, & Geltner, 2011; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Mapp, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Smith & Mitry, 2008). Short-term study abroad programs are time-saving in nature and cost-effective ways for college students to gain a greater sense of the world and its myriad dimensions (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Coryell, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Yet, the
short time required for this form of study abroad still results in influencing students and changing how they see the world.

The impact of a short-term study abroad may depend, however, on the environment in which a student studies such as whether a student studies abroad in a developing country or not (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011). In Castañeda and Zirger’s (2011) research study, an ethnographic methodology was used and the students traveled abroad on a short-term study abroad to a developing nation. The study addressed social capital in the context of short-term study abroad experiences and not specifically identity development (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011). The study “revealed that students capitalized on abundant networks via the host family, the community, and the service location to achieve their stated goals of language and culture development” (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011, p. 544). Thus, we can be clear that even a short time abroad requires students to access a range of resources (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011) and this use of social capital may in turn influence the students’ identity development.

Short-term study abroad programs are seen in the research as offering a unique experience to a college student without the onerous task of spending an entire semester away from their home institution (Castañeda & Zirger, 2011; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Edge, 2012; Institute of International Education, 2014; Kehl & Morris, 2007).

Even though short-term SAPs [study abroad programs] . . . tend to have a set of discipline-specific objectives, their biggest achievements are those associated with the changes in the mind-set of participating students, their attitude toward
different cultures, and their eagerness to learn more about others and themselves.

(Tajes & Ortiz, 2010, p. 17)

Tajes and Ortiz (2010) based their conclusion on their quantitative study that assessed student learning while on a short-term study abroad program to Spain. They used a learning “framework” called “SLEPT” which stands for social, legal, economic, political, and technological (Tajes & Ortiz, 2010, p. 19). The study focused on understanding better how the various points of their framework influenced student learning. This change in mindset applies to the establishing identity vector in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model and also connects to the concept of intercultural competency.

Even though short-term study abroad programs are shorter in duration than the long-term programs, they remain important in helping to counter negative attitudes towards other students from different cultures (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Coryell, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Smith & Mitry, 2008). Students may see themselves in different ways because of a short-term study abroad experience. The next section details literature in the area of intercultural competency.

**Intercultural Competency**

Intercultural competency is an important topic on college campuses today because campus leaders want their college graduates to be more globally minded to compete in the job market (Braskamp et al., 2009; Braskamp & Chickering, 2009; Deardorff, 2006; Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008; Kehl & Morris, 2007; King, Perez, & Shim, 2013; Wright & Clarke, 2010). Study abroad programs are one way that a university can develop the intercultural competency of its student body (CIGE, 2014; Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008).
Short-term study abroad programs intentionally designed to help increase intercultural competence in a college student through exposure to new cultures are beneficial to college student development as well as enabling that college student to be a well-rounded adult interacting in a larger world community (Berg, 2009; Cunningham et al., 2011; Orahood et al., 2008). Because short-term study abroad programs help students develop intercultural competence, it is important that researchers define what intercultural competence means and what it looks like. As previously noted, Deardorff (2006) describes intercultural competency "as the 'ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, to shift frames of reference appropriately and adapt behavior to cultural context’" (p. 249). On the university campus, the need to work towards intercultural competence for its students is important work especially when students have returned from a short-term study abroad program and need to process their exposure to another culture. This work ties into identity development because relating with other students from various cultures can affect the individual student's views of himself or herself and thus change his or her identity. Developing mature interpersonal relationships, an espoused vector, is foundational for identity development in a college student (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

One link between college student identity development and intercultural competency may best be understood utilizing another important construct—intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). This model attempts to marry the seminal work of Kegan (1994) on holistic development to include his definition of self-authorship and the three domains of interpersonal, cognitive, and intrapersonal similar to the ones used in the model of multiple dimensions on identity that was discussed earlier in this
chapter (Abes et al., 2007; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Because the model draws on the work of Kegan (1994), the model is applicable although not specific to college students unlike Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector model. Within the three domains, the model espouses that there are varying levels of intercultural maturity that may develop over time in a person because of different contexts and human interactions (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). I chose not to use the construct of intercultural maturity due to the fact that it encompasses domains that I do not consider in my research namely the cognitive and interpersonal domains (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) and because the model is not illustrating the unique sub-set of the college student population.

My focus is much narrower as I look to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model to inform the individual student’s intrapersonal domain that is identity development (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). For example, I situate the definition of intercultural competency utilizing Deardorff’s (2006) definition as my guide within the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Thus, although the intercultural maturity model is helpful, the model does not provide the sharper focus that my research study entails which is identity development in the context of a short-term study abroad (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The intercultural maturity model does not detail the specific ways in which identity formation is affected by intercultural competencies for a college student. My study, on the other hand, helps to shape the argument that as global and intercultural competencies form in college students, their identity development takes flight. While my study considers only the interaction of the intrapersonal domain and intercultural competency, it is important to note the broad scope of intercultural competency.
Universities focus on intercultural competency. Despite the confusion in terminology among the terms internationalization, global competency, and intercultural competency, universities are striving to achieve some form of the three through myriad ways: study abroad programs and exchanges, through the admissions process by attracting diverse students, and further through revising mission statements to reflect diverse ways of thinking and knowing (Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008). For purposes of my research study, one focus is on the influence of intercultural competency on identity development. It is important to note that intercultural competency can occur due to increases in global competencies. For example, the more knowledge a student gains in the classroom about other cultures may increase their general awareness about themselves and the ability to adapt within different cultures while studying abroad. In order for a student to be curious about other cultures, their curiosity must be peaked prior to departure on the program (at least for optimal development). Global competencies are often a critical building block for the formation of intercultural competency.

William and Mary’s strategic plan helps illustrate this recent push towards internationalization of the campus and also the different ways that global and intercultural competencies are addressed within its plan. William and Mary has included one goal in its strategic planning for FY 2014-2018 that captures the call to internationalization: “to broaden our international reach” (William and Mary Strategic Plan, 2014, p. 1). Moreover, William and Mary also focuses on “foster[ing] stronger global perspectives and connections” (William and Mary Strategic Plan, 2014, p. 3). Thus, the international perspective seen here in mentioning connections is a call for an increase in the acceptance among students of diverse cultures and gaining greater levels of intercultural competency.
National level focuses on intercultural competency. On a national level, the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship program is leading the way to increase intercultural competency by establishing as one of the commission’s goals a value of global competency by stating that they want to “[c]reate a more globally informed American citizenry” (Lincoln Commission’s Report, 2005). Many argue that the study abroad experience truly provides a heightened sense of both global competency and intercultural competency, however difficult to define, to college students today because of the exposure to various world markets (Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008; Kehl & Morris, 2007; Salisbury et al., 2013). Study abroad experiences provide a tangible way in which college students may achieve heighten levels of intercultural competency.

Term of choice within my research frame. The terms intercultural competency and global competency are often used interchangeably yet have different meanings among scholars and policymakers (Jurgens & Robbins-O’Connell, 2008). For purposes of my research, I focused on intercultural competency and the ways in which it informs identity development within the context of a short-term study abroad. I opted for this focus because intercultural competency is broader in this respect and because it can help explain the different mindsets the study abroad students may have when they return. The main research on intercultural competency is cast in terms of a greater sensitivity and awareness of other cultures and thus intercultural competency is a broader and more inclusive term (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, the term intercultural competency may help me best describe the ways in which the college students studying abroad relate to other cultures.
A student may self-describe as globally competent in the classroom, yet be interculturally incompetent in the workforce because intercultural competence is relative to how students interact with others beyond the classroom. Likewise, students may describe their study abroad experience in ways that get at the essence of both of these terms. However, before students can figure out what intercultural competency means or how it helps form their own definition of the term, they must be willing to maintain an open mind to the ways in which the study abroad experience changed them or did not. Thus, the Seven Vector Model may help to explain the outcome of intercultural competence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The seven vectors (Developing competence; Managing emotions; Moving through autonomy toward interdependence; Developing mature interpersonal relationships; Establishing identity; Developing purpose; Developing integrity) are influenced in myriad ways by the short-term study abroad and the intersection with intercultural competency (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). My study will hopefully reveal more about the varying levels in which these concepts affect the seven vectors.

Conclusions

For my research study, I sought to better understand the influence on college student identity and intercultural competence as a result of an immersive short-term study abroad experience in Florence, Italy. My literature helped me to build the foundational pieces of my research focus and its findings: college student development theory, psychosocial theory, identity development, and intercultural competence. The connection between a short-term study abroad, intercultural competence, and identity formation in college students is important to make given the national priorities of increased
internationalization. Ultimately, my research study has helped to build the case for the importance of a short-term study abroad to a college student as a means to see the world in a different way without a vast amount of time, money, or disruption to the four-year college experience. I also hope that my research study has helped to make the case that a short-term study abroad experience can change a student in a meaningful way and thus open more doors for an increase in students studying abroad. The next chapter outlines the methods used for this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I detail the research design and justify the use of a qualitative research approach using a case study design. This chapter reviews the research design used to conduct my study. Moreover, the methodology examines why I made these specific research design decisions and why they are instructive to my overall research outcome.

Research Design

The majority of the research in my literature review on study abroad took a quantitative approach (Braskamp et al., 2009; Franklin, 2010; Martinsen, 2010; Wright & Clarke, 2010). Some of this research focused on the variables of oral skills, long-term career impact, and global learning and found that abroad programs do have an impact on students. Other research utilized a qualitative approach (Dolby, 2008; Ellwood, 2011; Jewett, 2010; Wright & Clarke, 2010). This qualitative focused research investigated identity and study abroad and found that identity did change within the study abroad context. In particular, Dolby (2008) researched the differences in global and national identity between Australian and American undergraduate students using a qualitative research design. She found that the American undergraduate students negotiated more of a national identity than the Australian undergraduates (Dolby, 2008). Because my research sought to understand issues of identity development, a qualitative design approach, such as that employed by Dolby (2008), was appropriate. Instead of a focus on
global and national identity, my research instead focused on college student identity
development that occurred on a short-term study abroad. A qualitative method served as
the best option for data collection on identity for this study.

**Qualitative research design.** This research used a qualitative design.

"Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical
frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning
individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). A
qualitative method provided the best approach because it allowed me to be immersed in
my data, which meant I worked with student participants one-on-one (Creswell, 2013).
In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research is nonpositivistic and draws on
realities constructed by the participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Associates, 2002).
Qualitative research shares the following characteristics: "characterized by the search for
meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection
and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and a richly descriptive end product"
(Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6). My study shared these characteristics because I
sought an understanding of the ways in which study abroad college students ascribe
meaning to their short-term study abroad experience and build a changed identity because
of that experience. The participants' voices painted a picture in a descriptive way as to
how a short-term study abroad affected the study abroad college student. The qualitative
research design allows researchers to gather rich detail from the stories of the participants
(Creswell, 2013).

**Case study design.** Among the several approaches within qualitative design
(Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Associates, 2002), I employed a case study design. "Case[s]
that can be bounded or described within certain parameters, such as a specific time and place” (Creswell, 2013, p. 98); this bounded nature aligned with the focus on my specific study of the study abroad course in Italy.

Case studies have been defined in a variety of ways (Yin, 2014). One consistent definition exists: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Thus, the bounded case for my research was the study abroad program set in the context of Florence, Italy. My case study was bounded by the time of the study abroad (four weeks) and the environmental context (Florence, Italy) (Creswell, 2013). Within this case, I could study multiple cases (Creswell, 2013). Thus, although my case study sought to understand the small group of students within the context of a short-term study abroad program to Florence, Italy, I sought individual and in-depth analysis from the individual students’ perspective.

While I explored in-depth each individual student case, I also conducted a cross-case analysis among the individual cases. However, a limitation of my cross-case analysis approach resulted because all my participants were female and all but one of the student participants were in their junior year at the college. Moreover, my study had only two minority students (one student of whom was an international student) and only one student majored in the hard sciences. Nonetheless, I was still able to conduct a cross-case analysis comparing race differences, programs of study, and differences with the students who had traveled abroad before and those who had not traveled abroad before.
Interpretive Framework

There are several interpretive frameworks that help situate the researcher in his or her qualitative research study (Creswell, 2013). There are postpositivistic, constructivist, and interpretive frameworks that a researcher can choose from when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). My research is grounded in the social constructivism framework (Creswell, 2013).

Social constructivism is the basis of my interpretive framework and lens (Creswell, 2013). “In social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell, p. 24, italics in original). Because I utilized the case study approach, the social constructivist framework allowed an open exploration of what the participants found given the conceptual framework of college student identity development theory. “In terms of practice, the questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of the situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons” (Creswell, p. 25). Because I utilized a semi-structured interview approach, the participants were able through telling their stories to construct their own meaning from the experience. Within social constructivism, I let the data from the participants speak and left the questions as non-prescriptive as possible (Creswell, 2013). The social constructivist perspective lends itself well to a case study research approach which I will discuss next.

Case Selection

William and Mary has enjoyed the recent accolade of being the top public university to send its undergraduates on a study abroad program (Hassell, 2013). Moreover, the number of undergraduates studying abroad is four times the national rate
of participation and noteworthy for a public university. Thus, the selection of the university for the focus of this research can help inform other institutions of higher education as they seek to expand their study abroad opportunities. William and Mary sponsors several study abroad programs through the Reves Center for International Studies. One of the study abroad programs is a short-term study abroad to Florence, Italy. All students must apply to take part in the program. For this study abroad experience, a faculty advisor leads one course and generally conducts pre-departure meetings with the students (Reves Center, 2014). Students can be either rising juniors or seniors although rising sophomores have been allowed in the program (Reves Center, 2014).

The Florence, Italy, study abroad program is popular and typically enrolls approximately 30 college students that attend the program every summer (M. DiPaola, personal communication, March 13, 2014). In fact, from 2009 to 2014, the number of attendees has ranged from 19 to 41 students (Reves Center, 2014). The summer 2014 study abroad enrolled a total of 26 students. The faculty leader, Professor Van der Veen, was an associate professor of government at William and Mary. He conducted four pre-departure meetings (M. Van der Veen, personal email communication, March 21, 2014).

The study abroad program description for Florence, Italy, is detailed as follows on the William and Mary website:

Students will earn 8 credits during this intensive month-long program in Florence, home of Dante and Michelangelo. All students will take an Italian language course, a Renaissance Art History course, and a special topics seminar. They will live with Italian host families and participate in weekend excursions to Venice,
Cinque Terre, and the Chianti region. No previous Italian required. (Reves Center, 2014)

Of the enrolled students (26), a full 85% (22) travelled abroad for the first time. This first time experience created a level of disruption for the students that held the potential for further development of their identity.

The population for this study included the entire group of students who attended the summer 2014 Florence, Italy, study abroad program. Thus, all participants from the population were traditionally-aged, undergraduate college students at William and Mary. This target population of college students is appropriate because historically study abroad programs have involved undergraduate students and my conceptual framework was grounded in college student identity development theory (Twombly et al., 2012). I opted to include all the students on the study abroad as potential participants.

I was able to go in-depth with the participants given the small number who volunteered for the study, which supports a key feature of a case study research design of conducting in-depth interaction within the bounded case and with participants (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). While there is not a specific number prescribed for case study research, the research lends itself well to a smaller group of students (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). In the end, I gathered data from seven female student participants. These student participants were the only ones who volunteered for my study and confirmed interview meetings once they returned to campus.

Recapitulation of Research Questions

The site location for my study was Florence, Italy. The research questions for this study include:
1. How does the William and Mary faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience in Florence, Italy, play a role in developing college student identity within three months of their return from the travel?
   a. Do some vectors from Chickering and Reisser’s Seven Vector model of college student development show up more than others?
   b. Do Chickering and Reisser’s seven vectors appear in similar ways among the students in the study sample?
2. How does a faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience influence a student’s intercultural competency within three months of their return from the travel?

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The instrumentation and data collection sections of the methodology chapter detail the ways in which I obtained the rich, intimate data from my research participants. According to Creswell (2013), “The data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials” (p. 100). This range of data collection allowed for a triangulation of my research data (Yin, 2014). Moreover, I detailed the myriad data collection points and methods of data collection to ensure reliability and validity of my research study (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

Pre-departure meetings. Prior to their departure, I attended the four required pre-departure meetings led by Professor Van der Veen. The introductory email note that was sent to the faculty advisor for the Florence, Italy, study abroad is included as Appendix A. There were very few questions asked of Professor Van der Veen during the pre-departure meetings. The format of the pre-departure meetings were lecture style with
invitations from the professor for questions from the group. The professor also encouraged the students in the class to email him with any additional questions. He had set up a blackboard site for all the students in the study abroad program. This system served as a portal for them to submit their paper assignment at the end of the course. There was also limited interaction among the students in the pre-departure meetings for the class as not all of them were able to attend the pre-departure meetings or some needed to come early or leave late. There was limited interaction with me although I did interact with one of the future participants out in the hallway prior to walking into the pre-departure meetings. I did not know at the time that she would be a participant and we made small talk about life in general. The pre-departure meetings focused solely on the Berlusconi-era Italy along with a main text to support the material and video clips that discussed the ways in which women were viewed during this era.

I acted as a “nonparticipant/observer as participant” because I was not interacting with the larger group of study abroad students other than handing out my demographics questionnaire and explaining my presence (Creswell, 2013, p. 167, italics in original). Here, “observation is one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research” (Creswell, p. 166). In this case, I was able to observe the group of students who I would describe as shy, nervous, and reluctant to ask questions of the professor. The students also appeared preoccupied with their current course load as one student described her very hectic spring semester schedule to me in the hallway.

Participant selection. Once I received EDIRC approval from William and Mary, I sent an email to the students registered for the summer 2014 study abroad to Florence, Italy, asking for students to participate in my study. The email was sent after I had
visited all of the pre-departure classes and introduced myself and the concept of my study to the students. Thus, the students knew who I was when I sent the initial email. This email was sent in May 2014. I used the email distribution list of the faculty advisor, Professor Van der Veen, as this included all students on the study abroad. The email distribution list was comprised of the students' William and Mary email accounts. In recognition of the time and effort for the student participants, I gave each student in the study a $40 Aromas or College Bookstore gift card at the end of the second interview. Prior to the interviews, the participants knew they would be compensated, but did not know how much the compensation would be at the end.

For my study, 10 students initially responded prior to their departure to Florence indicating they would participate and one student declined participation due to academic constraints. Once the student participants returned from Florence, however, only seven of those original 10 participants positively responded to my follow-up emails (see Appendix B). Of the three students that did not respond from the original 10 students, one was a male student and the other two were female students. Right before the interviews began, I received an email from a male participant who was not in the original 10 students. However, he never returned my emails to set up an alternate date for our first interview at Swem library. Thus, I was left with seven female student participants for my study.

**Demographic questionnaire.** I used a demographic questionnaire to collect data on the population of students in the course. This questionnaire queried students to learn if they have studied or traveled abroad before and to document their race, ethnicity, and major (See Appendix C). This questionnaire was passed out to 22 students during the
final pre-departure meeting in mid-April 2014 who planned to attend the short-term Florence, Italy, 2014, study abroad. The other remaining students were not in attendance at the time that I passed out the questionnaires. I did not email the absent students questionnaires because I knew that if they positively responded to my requests for study volunteers, that I could ensure they received the questionnaire at that time of contact. At each pre-departure meeting, I set out to take notes of any observations that I saw involving interactions with the students and the professor. I was left with nothing substantial as there was extremely low interaction between the students and the professor. The students did not interact much with each other. While I noticed small interactions occurring in the hallway waiting for the pre-departure meetings to take place and polite conversation inside the classroom waiting for the professor to begin, overall there was little conversation. While in the classroom setting, the student’s body language indicated they were withdrawn as some students appeared distracted by technology.

The classroom experience was divided between the professor explaining travel tips and placing a map of Florence for the students to visualize where the train stations were located. The other half of the classroom experience involved talking about Berlusconi-era Italian history to include a video on Berlusconi Italy. Based upon my observations, there was little interaction among the students and the professor when he was providing study abroad tips and suggestions to them and while we watched the video. The video appeared out-of-date as Berlusconi is no longer in power in Italy.

Semi-structured interviews. Interviews served as the main data collection source. I used a semi-structured interview design (Creswell, 2013). The interviews took place only after the participants returned from their study abroad experience. I conducted
two interviews with each participant. The first occurred with the participants within the first week of academic classes commencing and the second interview occurred during the last week of September and the first week of October 2014. During the second interview, I asked the participants to bring an artifact from their study abroad which I photographed and asked questions about. All transcriptions were recorded and then transcribed by a professional company, Rev©.

The rationale for the delay in timing of the second interview was because I wanted to allow the participants more time to absorb and reflect on their study abroad experience and have the interactions of colleagues, staff, and professors. Because they interacted with other students on campus and professional colleagues, the students reflected differently on their study abroad experience during the second interview. The first interview allowed the students to become more comfortable with exchanging information with me. Additionally, the semi-structured interview protocol allowed the freedom to adjust questions depending on the participant’s response. Prior to conducting any interviews, I passed out a consent form (Appendix D) to all student participants that alerted them to the use of a tape recording device for their interviews, asking them to bring artifacts to their interview and providing them with an opt-out clause. I had all participants re-sign their consent form right before the first interview as a way to ensure all understood what they had previously signed in April.

The interview protocol in its first version was field tested during Spring 2014. According to Yin (2009), pilot testing the interview questions provides an opportunity to “refine data collection plans and develop relevant lines of questions” (p. 165). Four students who had studied abroad in Florence, Italy, in 2013, participated in the field test.
The semi-structured interview protocol utilized for those four students is located in Appendix E. The feedback from this initial piloting indicated that the questions were too broad as they focused on how students changed due to study abroad. Thus, I opted to redesign the field-tested protocol to align with the conceptual framework of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors to enhance the focus on changes in identity development.

I was led to this change because I was not hearing specific mention of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of development and I was concerned this was because of the way in which my questions were being asked. The questions were more about the general change they had experienced in summer 2013 and not the specific ways in which their identity had changed along the Seven Vector model. The re-designed interview protocol is reflected in Appendix F.

The new interview instrument was designed around the seminal themes of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Seven Vector model of college student development as well as the other major themes of my theoretical framework, including intercultural competency and internationalization. Both of the latter themes dovetail with the identity development framework as it relates to study abroad programs. Appendix G details a sampling of the types of questions that I introduced to the student participants upon their return from the Florence, Italy, summer 2014 study abroad program. Each question was aligned with a specific vector from the conceptual framework model and allowed me the ability to get at the type of change that has occurred within the identity development framework.

Selection of semi-structured interviews as a method was important because it allowed me to capture personal and intimate details from the participant’s stories
A deep analysis of the each individual's story is indicative of a case study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Yin, 2014). Each one-on-one interview session with the participants allowed me to focus solely on that individual participant and gather as much data that I could in two interview sessions.

The interview protocol engaged the student participants with question prompts derived from the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and intercultural competency, but still allowed room for the participants to clarify the questions with me during the interviews. Because the interviews occurred over two time frames, I was able to follow-up with questions in the second interview with questions from the first one. Participants felt more comfortable during the second interview given the fact that we were not meeting for the first time. Moreover, the student participants were able to follow-up with any additional thoughts or concerns from the first interview. All of the participants were asked the same questions except for several follow-up questions that I developed from the first interview. These questions are detailed in Appendix H.

**Journal data.** As an aspect of triangulating my data set, I requested that the participants keep a journal either in hard copy or on a blog site during their four-week study abroad program that I could have access to. I included journal prompts to help stimulate their thinking prior to them leaving for their study abroad. The journal prompts were originally sent to the entire group of Florence study abroad students. These prompts were electronically sent to the participants along with the consent form. These journal prompts are outlined in Appendix I. Prompts were based on the broader themes of change in development that were asked in my original semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix F). Upon return from the study abroad, I asked that the participants provide
me with copies of their journal entries or access to their blog site. All participants kept a journal. One participant wrote a hard copy journal and another participant answered my prompt questions in addition to keeping an online blog. Otherwise, the participants produced electronic responses to my journal prompts. Some turned in their journal prompts in advance of our first meeting together and some turned in their journal prompts before or after the first interview. Not all of the participants answered the journal prompts and instead wrote about personal reflections and day-to-day activities.

Given the varied nature of my data collection points, I was able to glean a wide swath of impressions about and from the study abroad case study experience in terms of identity development. These impressions also helped me know more about levels of intercultural competency based on Deardorff’s (2006) definition in the sense of how the students related to other students before and after they have experienced a study abroad. As stated previously, I observed little interaction between the students and the professors and between the students in general during the pre-departure meetings. They were not asking questions of one another that alerted me to developing levels of intercultural competency occurring because of these pre-study abroad meetings.

Data Analysis

I used my theoretical framework of college student development theory for analysis of the data collected in this research study. I addressed the social problem that short-term study abroad programs and their connections to college student identity development are worthy of continued research (Braskamp et al., 2009; Coryell, 2013; Hackney et al., 2012; Pelletier, 2012; Twombly et al., 2012). The focus of my analysis was whether there was movement or expression of the seven vector developmental theory
model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) if at all in the interview transcripts. My coding schema was based upon the seven vector model and also included a sub-code for intercultural competence and global competence under one of the vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In addition to combing through each individual transcript for clues as to whether there was an expression of the seven vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), I added artifact analysis and journal analysis to add depth.

Artifact analysis was included in my consent form and thus my student participants were asked to voluntarily bring artifacts to the second interview meeting. The artifact could be a souvenir such as a ticket stub or a photograph that they took while in Florence. The artifact served as another interview prompt for me to engage the participant in rich dialogue about their study abroad experience and any change they may have felt in themselves. The artifact was coded with a letter code assigned to each of the vectors of college student identity development theory. For example, if the participant discussed the ways in which the picture showed how they became more independent, then the picture was coded to reflect that specific vector of independence reflected in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory. Each vector was assigned a letter code by me a priori (Appendix J).

As the interviews were a large part of my data analysis, I used the company known as Rev© to transcribe the interviews. The company charged $1/per minute to transcribe, had a 48-hour turnaround time, had received previous accolades by major companies, and ensures the utmost confidentiality by delivering the completed document as a word file to the researcher’s email address. The transcriptionist had signed a confidentiality agreement prior to working with the company and viewing any of the
files. After I successfully complete my dissertation defense, the files that Rev© stores will be deleted by my written request. I discussed with the participants that they were free to see a copy of the Rev© confidentiality agreement upon request. Each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym or one was chosen by me for her to also add an additional layer of security.

Once the transcriptions were completed, they were sent to the participating students for member checking. Only a few of the students responded with comments which dealt with minor spelling errors that the transcription company missed. Not all of the participants responded back to me. I had informed them in the consent form and during the interviews that if I did not hear back from them within a week of them receiving the transcript, the assumption was that the transcript was acceptable. Next, the transcripts were prepared for analysis. I conducted coding by hand versus using a computerized program. Each transcript was reviewed several times as a way to ensure that I captured the essence of the interview analysis. Any statements that linked with the seven vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) were given a code in the margins. Some of the statements were then collected under each vector for further analysis. As another layer of analysis, I sent an outline of the emergent themes that surfaced from the data collection to an outside expert reviewer. The expert reviewer was a staff member at the college who was versed in global education.

**Coding.** After the memoing was complete, I coded the data and artifacts based upon the seven vectors of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) college student development theory. I asked two peer reviewers to go through a transcription each and code where the seven vectors are mentioned. I provided them with a code sheet that is attached as
Appendix J. I also ensured that they signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure the utmost quality and rigor to my study. The confidentiality agreement is reflected as Appendix K. The peer examination helped with the triangulation of data and ensured a more reliable coding process. One of the peer examiners was also utilizing a college student development theory in her research and this proved useful as although it is a different theory than the one I was using, college student development theory was being examined. Peer examination provided useful and invaluable feedback on my coding techniques and helped ensure reliability of the coding. After the peer reviews reviewed the transcripts, I debriefed with them. I debriefed over the phone with one peer reviewer and in person with the other peer reviewer. From these meetings emerged a common consensus and alignment in my coding schema. There were queries made during the open dialogue that allowed me to refine my thinking about the vectors. For example, one peer reviewer saw varying levels of development within each vector as she coded. While I did not anticipate this prior to providing the code sheet to the peer reviewers, the point was important because it made me think more about the development within each vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) itself more complexly.

The analysis allowed for specific codes to be determined a priori (see Appendix J) and then I examined those codes for themes. The themes allowed me to see whether or not the vectors in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model were mentioned and to what degree, if at all. The data were then organized around the themes that developed out of the coding process. As previously noted, each vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) was assigned a different combination of letters to eliminate confusion. Once the codes were analyzed for how and in what ways the participants discussed the various codes, I was
able to deduce how identity formation around the seven vectors had changed. Even though I anticipated that there could be one vector not mentioned by the participants during the interviews, this was not found. Additionally, I postulated that there could be one vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) that was mentioned by all participants and several times during each interview session. Thus, I ensured that during the coding process I did a thorough in-case analysis with each individual student’s interview and with each student’s journal entries as well as the one student who had an additional online blog site.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is “the convergence of data collection from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding” (Yin, 2014, p. 241). Thus, triangulation helps with validity of my research (Merriam & Associates, 2002). One form of triangulation is when “the researcher collects data through a combination of interviews, observations, and document analysis” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 25). Thus, my one-on-one interviews were compared to the journal document analysis that I conducted. Because my research design was embedded into a shorter time frame, as opposed to a longitudinal one, triangulation was important in order to capture as much in as little time as possible.

**Memoing.** Memoing is an important aspect of data analysis (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) explains the process: “The theory emerges with help from the process of memoing, in which the researcher writes down ideas about the evolving theory throughout the process of open, axial, and selective coding” (p. 89). Once the transcriptions were completed, I sat down with each interview transcription and took notes in the margin of the transcription. My journal was an aspect of my data collection.
The journal was used to collect my thoughts as a researcher at the beginning of my study. This process ensured reliability on my part. Additionally, I wrote down any follow-up questions from the first interview transcription that I asked during the second interview. After this, I began to parse my data utilizing the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). I hand-coded by taking significant quotations from the interview transcriptions and placed them each on a poster board under the heading of one of the vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Each participant was assigned a different color which made the process of deciding which quotations best supported each individual vector more efficient.

**Reliability.** Reliability in qualitative research “refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 27). Member checking, peer review, and an expert review helped address reliability for my research. “[R]eliability lies in others’ concurring that given the data collected, the results make sense—they are consistent and dependable” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 27).

Memos utilized the same letter coding scheme that will help me group notes taken from the transcriptions. Thus, each vector was assigned a different code (Appendix J). I used an “audit trail” to help ensure reliability within my research (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 27, italics in original). This ensured that I captured the way in which I went about my research and the decisions as well as their rationales for future researchers to utilize. The audit trail that I utilized was a researcher as an instrument online journal. In that journal, I kept notes of the various decisions and actions that I took during my research.
Unless the students shared their transcription with other individuals or did not keep their virus software updated, then there may be issues with trustworthiness and confidence in the data. I tried to mitigate these concerns by asking the student participants in the consent form to not share their transcriptions with any other individuals. Additionally, I reviewed my research findings with the outside expert reviewer. I wanted to ensure my research findings made sense to someone who worked in the field of study abroad. My findings in short were not surprising to the expert reviewer, Theresa Johansson, assistant director of global studies in the Reves Center at William and Mary. Ms. Johansson had directed five Florence study abroad programs in the past and co-directed one study abroad Florence program (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014). The vast majority of the programs were led in her capacity as Adjunct Professor in the Italian department at William and Mary (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014). The expert analysis added another opportunity to validate my research findings.

I recognized my biases before I entered this research study. For example, I studied abroad before and this experience could have affected the way in which I viewed the study abroad experience for my participants. Obviously, since I studied abroad, I believed that a study abroad is a worthwhile experience to have while in college. In hindsight, I wish that I had studied abroad in a more immersive environment such as Italy. Instead, I studied abroad in Cambridge, England, during the summer as a rising senior. Since having that experience and others in life, I do believe that intercultural competency is desirable because I am more patient with individuals from other cultures.
Human Participants and Ethical Considerations

I abided by all ethical considerations mandated by William and Mary's EDIRC (Human subjects form specific to the School of Education) and maintained the highest ethical standards within my research and did not compromise or taint any data. All participants were asked to read and sign the consent form that was approved by the EDIRC prior to engaging me as the researcher. Additionally, I sought and received EDIRC approval for the pilot project before I observed any of the pre-departure meetings with those student participants.

The data were protected with the utmost security. All data to include the computers on which the data resides and any additional technology such as the audio recorder and thumb drives were kept in a secure location in my home office. Only I had access to this data. Data security was addressed in the consent document that the participants read and signed before the data was collected. All data will be destroyed following the successful completion of my doctoral dissertation defense.

Conclusions

Since I sought an in-depth understanding of seven participants' experience on a college-sponsored short-term study abroad to Florence, Italy, which occurred within a bounded setting, a case study qualitative approach provided the ideal method for my study (Creswell, 2013). My conclusions were based on the data that I collected in Spring, Summer, and Fall 2014 academic semesters. Typically, as discussed in my literature review, fewer males and minority students attend study abroad programs ("Who Studies Abroad," 2012; Lucas, 2009; Paus & Robinson, 2008; Stroud, 2010). The literature noted that race and gender may influence the experience too, so I attended to this during
the data analysis ("Who Studies Abroad," 2012). Further analysis is detailed in the crosswalk table (Appendix L) that links the extant literature with the seven vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

All conclusions were based on the extensive data collection and analysis techniques that I described above. The conclusions were applicable to college students studying abroad and college practitioners who support those students studying abroad. The transcription service ensured the integrity and timeliness of the data. As is appropriate in a case study approach, I made "naturalistic generalizations from analyzing the data" for college practitioners, leaders, and students alike (Creswell, 2013, p. 200). These generalizations were directed specifically at how to encourage more students to study abroad and what further ways that college communities, including the college, can support students after they return from a study abroad.
CHAPTER 4: PORTRAITS OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

This chapter outlines the participants in my study and describes a range of important characteristics for each. My case study explored the impact of a short-term study abroad on college student identity development. The portraits are presented from data collected through 14 one-on-one interviews with the participants. All of the participants were female undergraduate students at the college. Even though the overall group on the study-abroad to Florence included men, the majority who responded to my requests for volunteers were women. The female student participants were either of sophomore or junior status at the college.

Their backgrounds and Italian language experiences were varied: one student was an international student, another student had previously lived in Italy for several years with her family, and another student was a neuroscience major curious to know more about her Italian heritage. Below, I provide a brief portrait of each student to help describe each participant. Table 1 provides a summary of demographic variables and identifies what artifact each brought to the final interview meeting. Each participant is assigned a code to enable the reader to more readily identify the participant and her unique characteristics in the following chapters. The codes first include identification of the class year (S=Sophomore; J=Junior) and then major (M=Marketing; H=History; AH=Art History; P=Psychology; N=Neuroscience). The next portion of the code indicates if the student had traveled abroad before (N=No; Y=Yes) and if they knew Italian (N=No; Y=Yes). In the case of Annie and Emily, a final code is listed to indicate
their international student status (Annie=I) or their past experience of living in Italy
(Emily=lt). The individual portraits are described first with a general summary of the
participant’s characteristics, post-study abroad reflections, and finally the artifact that
they chose to share with me that represented the change they experienced.

Table 1

*Profiles of Student Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>SH-YN-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ticket/ map</td>
<td>JP-NN-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abby</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>JN-YN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pseudonym*
Lindsey (JM-NY)

Lindsey is a junior, double major at the college. She had never traveled abroad and identified herself as from the country. She offered a myriad of reasons that she wanted to study abroad in Italy. The first two reasons were because of the Italian food and the beauty of Italy in general. Unlike some of the other participants, Lindsey had taken introductory Italian language courses at the college prior to attending the study abroad program. Thus, she was placed in a non-beginner Italian language course during the study abroad program.

Lindsey expressed gratitude for the opportunity to study abroad recognizing that not every student is afforded this experience. She was extremely excited about the opportunity to study abroad as she had never been outside North America. Her family helped support her study abroad experience both emotionally and financially. She was the only participant who kept a hand-written journal of her study abroad participation. The journal not only contained reflections, but also included a list of her favorite gelato flavors, how much money she spent while abroad, and places she would recommend to eat in Italy.

The artifact that she chose to share with me was a pair of black and white pants. The pants were part of the summer Italian fashion for women and were of a lightweight fabric. She said of the pants: “I think these pants really sparked a courage in me and the ability to take things on and to be flexible and to be comfortable . . . because prior to this trip, I never would have done that [exploring unknown streets in Florence] . . . .” Lindsey said that the pants represented the newfound independence she felt: “It’s just cool to be able to discover new things on my own and to know that somebody else wasn’t leading
me. I was the one doing that.” Thus, for Lindsey, the pants represented more than the pieces of fabric cobbled together. She reflected, “I think, even when I wear them, it gives me that spunk and that ‘I can do it’ attitude about it.” The pants represented a symbol of independence and self-confidence that Lindsey felt she acquired on the study abroad.

The pants created a conversation-starter about the study abroad with other students when Lindsey returned to campus. Lindsey noted that she might be more hesitant to bring up and talk about the study abroad because she felt guilty that not every student can study abroad. When someone commented on her pants, however, Lindsey felt there was an opening in which she could share more about the study abroad with others.

**Annie (SH-YN-I)**

Annie is an international student from China. Thus, prior to this study abroad she was already technically studying abroad given her enrollment status at college. Her major is History. Although she had never traveled to Italy prior to attending the study abroad program, she had previously visited a Middle Eastern country. Annie was curious to know more about the Italian language and culture. Her parents attempted to study abroad but never finalized their plans, making her the first in her family to study abroad.

The study abroad was an experience of self-discovery for Annie, both about herself and her home culture. In finding more out about the Italian culture, she discovered how often she chose her homeland’s cuisine over anything else to eat in Florence. Upon returning from Italy, she said, “After I came from Italy, I feel to try have more confidence in any other countries [sic]. Now, I’m going to eat Italian restaurants and try something new [sic].” After returning from the study abroad, she said that she
felt she identified more with being Asian while in Italy than with being an Asian studying abroad as an international student at the college in the U.S.

She maintained little contact with her family and friends back home and never struggled with homesickness because she returned to her home country in late summer 2014. Throughout the study abroad, she experienced a deepening sense of the world through other international students whom she met on the study abroad. Thus, the short-term program provided Annie more of a feeling of otherness than her study in the U.S. as an international student. Rarely has research been conducted on the role of study abroad for international students enrolled in U.S. universities. Also, Annie was careful to point out that the study abroad was a study abroad and not a trip abroad. Annie felt that inherent in the notion of a trip abroad is the fact that the visitor is of tourist status and not someone living in the culture of that place. Thus, the four-week study abroad class allowed Annie to be more than a visitor.

The artifact that Annie chose was the Italian movie, “Cinema Paradiso.” She attempted to watch the movie three years ago, but quickly lost interest because she did not understand the language. Upon being given an assignment in her Italian language course, she decided to renew her interest in the movie. She found that she could relate to the movie now that she had experienced and lived in Italy. When Annie watched the movie before she studied abroad to Italy, she did not feel this personal connection. Annie categorized the fact that she completed watching an Italian movie as “one of my accomplishments.”
Anne (JAH-YN)

Anne is a junior and is majoring in Art History at the college. She traveled to Italy a week before the study abroad began with her Mom and Dad and her Mom’s best friend, her husband, and daughters. Her other trip abroad was in high school. Despite her previous travels, she had never been to Florence, Italy, before this study abroad.

Anne experienced a profound friendship while studying abroad. She felt that she and another student on the study abroad were “destined” to meet. In fact, she and the friend wondered why they had not met on campus before the study abroad. Anne identified two groups that formed within the larger study abroad group: one was a subgroup that went out during the evenings and the other group did not go out much in the evenings. Anne considered herself part of the sub-group that went out in the evenings. Her newfound friend shared many similarities with her.

Anne also developed a closer connection with her host mom than many of the other participants exhibited. Anne, unlike the other participants, spoke about a specific conversation she had with her host mom that deepened their relationship. This conversation and Anne’s newfound friendship with another student resulted in enhanced relationship-building. These opportunities resulted in greater growth for her along the Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships vector.

Anne also experienced a re-commitment to her major. Anne became more confident during the study abroad in her major of Art History—so much so that she is now re-thinking her proposed double major and just plans on doing Art History. She is certain that she can combine her interests in business into Art History. During her Art History class in Italy when she and her other colleagues were at the Duomo, she was
recognized by the professor as someone who was knowledgeable about the material. Anne quoted her professor as saying, “You could literally teach this class.” This recognition gave Anne a sense of accomplishment and level of expertise. She commented that she had not felt so sure of herself since high school. The competitive nature of the college environment meant that Anne felt less sure of her abilities. But in going away and having her knowledge publically recognized by her Italian professor, Anne now felt more self-assured.

The artifact that Anne chose to share with me was a postcard. The postcard has a picture of Michelangelo on the front with the mountains of Florence in the background. Anne also pointed out that you can see over the Arno to the Duomo and even the bronze statue of David in the postcard. Apparently, the location on the postcard is one of the highest points in Florence. Even though she bought the postcard for a class assignment, the postcard reminds her of two important aspects to her development. First, she is more confident. After all, she bought the postcard in a coffee shop that she and some of the other students were avoiding because they were unsure of the etiquette. Second, the postcard reminds her of a time when most of the group was together in a way that they were not throughout the study abroad. “This was a night that everybody bonded together.” Anne reflected that they celebrated a birthday that evening and they “weren’t being Americans.” This sense of community and being out of her American comfort zone was important to Anne.

**Madeline (JP-NN-M)**

Madeline is a junior majoring in Psychology at the college, and a minority student. The study abroad was the first time that she had left the country. Madeline did
not have any prior Italian language skills and was part of the larger group of students who
took beginner Italian while studying abroad.

She is proud of her Roman Catholic religion and defines herself first by her
religion. She traveled after the program was over in Europe for another week. She never
thought that she would be able to go abroad because her former boyfriend kept her from
pursuing that dream because they were inseparable and never did much apart. When they
broke up before her junior year, she decided to pursue studying abroad. Through
financial support of the college and her family, she was able to realize her dream of going
abroad. She felt the experience gave her a newfound confidence and courage—and even
a deeper respect for her mother. Her mother was an immigrant to the U.S. and did not
know any English when she came over. Madeline experienced similar struggles with
learning Italian as her mother did with learning English. She stated of her new
confidence: “I know that I’ll probably have higher self-esteem or encourage myself more
when I’m presented with a challenge . . . .” Additionally, she mentioned that she
“learned that I used to hang out with a lot of people who were just like me.” Here, she
was referring to her peers from her church group back in the U.S. During the study
abroad, she met many people who were different than her and this promoted much self-
reflection.

The artifact she chose to share with me was a ticket stub, but there was another
artifact that she did not bring but wished she had brought. The artifact she brought was
of the airplane boarding pass when she came back to the U.S. She stated she knew she
“was ready to come home” at that time. She added that she was “not really afraid to be
alone” when she returned from Florence and that is why she chose the post-study abroad
boarding pass. The second artifact, and the one she wished she had found to show me, was the map she got in Florence. She received the map the day she arrived at the first hotel in Florence. The map has her handwritten notes on it and was small enough that she could place it in her palm so that other people would not think she was a tourist with a big map. "I didn’t want to be spotted immediately." Thus, Madeline thought that instead of her color, the map would make her stand out as a tourist. The map represents the new confidence and fearlessness that she has discovered in herself because the map was given to her in the beginning of the study abroad and was with her throughout the journey and beyond.

Emily (JP-YY-It)

Emily is a junior, majoring in psychology at the college. She had lived in Italy for eight years with her military family when she was young before traveling to study abroad to Florence. She still has distant family in Italy now. Her spoken Italian skills were far superior to the other participants although she struggled with written Italian. She was placed in an advanced Italian course during the study abroad.

Because Emily’s Italian skills were far advanced from her colleagues, she became the unofficial translator for many of the participants on the study abroad when they attended their weekend excursions and for day-to-day shopping. At first, she hoped to travel to Italy without being noticed in the sense of her stronger language skills. However, this hope quickly dissipated when she found herself translating for other students in the hotel lobby the first day of the study abroad.

She felt that some of the best experiences were when she got to go off-the-beaten trail and explore the countryside. Some of the exploration was on foot and other times
the exploration came through the group weekend excursions when they took a bus. Some of the places that she explored were the very same places that her mother had seen many years before. Her mother was Italian, moved to the U.S. when she was four, and then had lived in Italy with Emily's dad for eight years.

The artifact that she chose to share was a black Italian lace bracelet. The bracelet was purchased on the island of Burano near Venice and was hand-made. The bracelet represented to Emily a growing sense of competence and a development of relationships. After she purchased the bracelet, she remembered that those individuals on the excursion with her split into groups and some became separated from others. Because of the confusion, some of them in her group ended up traveling in the wrong direction. Even though Emily and her group eventually made it to their destination, she learned a lot about different people's personalities and how to use a map to her advantage. She learned that the quietest person in the group is usually the right person to listen to instead of the louder people.

Abby (JN-YN)

Abby is a neuroscience major and a junior at the college. She has aspirations of pursuing a profession in medicine and desires to be a doctor someday. When she was younger, Abby traveled abroad with her family to Italy but had never studied abroad before. She remembers little about her previous trip abroad as she was very young. She desired to study abroad in Italy to discover more about her Italian roots. Her roots were not from the Florence area, but different areas of Italy.

The study abroad was rich with experiences in developing a greater sense of confidence. In fact, because she feels more confident after the study abroad, she even
cooks for herself now. Abby also mentioned being able to more fully appreciate other people’s personalities. For example, someone who is more go-with-the-flow can be just as much fun to be around as someone just like herself which is Type-A. As well, she found the study abroad helped her avoid being so Type-A. In that sense, she feels she is more flexible and patient with other people now and also willing to try more spontaneous things. She felt these new skills will serve her well in a medical profession.

Abby chose Florentine inspired stationary as her artifact to share with me. The stationary represents the new confidence she found in herself because she bought the stationary at a market near the end of the study abroad by herself. “It was near the end of the trip, and so this was the first time that I went shopping by myself.” At first, she only bought stationary for her friends. Then she decided to buy some extra stationary because she said that someone else might ask her about her study abroad and she would have something to give them that represents the experience. The mere fact that she bought the stationary also reminded her of the “big step” that it was to buy something for another person who meant a lot to her.

Teresa (JP-NN)

Teresa is a psychology major and a junior at the college. Teresa did not have previous Italian language experience and had never traveled abroad. While she was studying abroad in Italy, her sister was studying abroad in northern Eurasia.

She struggled with her religious identity of Episcopalian while on the study abroad program and had difficulties with fitting into the different groups that formed during the group’s time in Florence. She had difficulty fitting in because she was not Roman Catholic. Because she was not Roman Catholic, she questioned her own religious
identity more given the focus on Catholicism in Italy. At times, she felt as if she did not fit into the Italian culture and this feeling created dissonance within her, although she eventually resolved it. She was exhausted by all of the traveling and things to do on the study abroad program and wished her time had been more relaxing. Teresa gained a new perspective on life and feeling as if she could redefine what would make a successful career for herself. After returning from Italy, she felt she was more apt to genuinely listen to people from other cultures than before she studied in Italy.

Teresa brought a terra cotta ring as her artifact. The ring was hand painted and purchased in Florence. Teresa describes the ring as “unique” because of the idyllic Italian scene on the ring and that the ring represents “the whole experience.” She said that the ring additionally represents the organic changes that she has made in diet and lifestyle due to the ring’s scene. She also felt the ring allowed her to get back in touch with her old self. “I feel like this is the type of thing that I really would have appreciated when I was younger and I feel like I steered away from that to getting whatever was cool, or in at the time. I’ve sort of moved back towards pieces that I really like.” Instead of worrying about other’s opinions of style, Teresa found confidence in her own style. Teresa commented on how she guards the ring because of what it embodies:

Everything that happened is with me, but still very separate and I almost feel a little bit protective of it. That’s how I feel when I’m wearing that. I look down and it reminds me but it’s all kind of condensed in there and it’s a little bit separate.

The ring for Teresa has also become a conversation piece. The ring allows Teresa to engage other people in her study abroad experience, as when she is asked about the
ring, it opens the door and gives her permission to talk about the study abroad program with others. When she thought about how and when she discussed her study abroad experience with others, she said, “That’s [when asked about the ring] how we started talking about it [study abroad].” Even after a couple of months on campus, Teresa still feels what she described in her journal: the goal of the study abroad program was “to experience something greater than myself.”

**Summary**

The portraits of the individual participants create a context for understanding the emerging themes from this research study. As is evident in the student descriptions, each student experienced the study abroad program differently. Yet, as the themes outlined in the next chapter highlight, there were several areas that cut across the individual experiences. In the interviews, the participants shared detailed accounts of their four-week journey to include accounts about special artifacts that helped to illuminate their newfound post-study abroad identity to me. All of these data were used to explore higher-level emergent themes. These emergent themes will be discussed in the next chapter. One of the themes was new confidence. As Lindsey stated:

> I think it [the study abroad] gave me greater courage to try new things. In terms of new experiences, I think I’m more ready for them. If, down the road, I take more trips . . . I can think back to this one and say, I value the things that I learned on this trip. I think that they’re going to carry me through the rest of my life.

The following chapter reviews the emerging themes from this research. The participants noted three areas of identity development: confidence, leaving to find self, and developing community.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

With the research questions as guideposts, I set out to discover whether there was interaction between identity development and intercultural competence. My research questions were intentionally broad and centered around Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector model of development. Because the interviews were designed in a semi-structured way, I was able to gain additional insight through important follow-on questions.

I chose the term identity in my dissertation title because identity and its formation is the broad descriptor for all of the seven vectors within Chickering and Reisser’s model (1993). As stated in Chapter Two, the vectors are evidence of development that can occur together or separately for a college student during their identity formation (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The college student is in the driver’s seat as to which vectors receive the most or least importance in their daily lives. In addition to the college years, all of the vectors can be further developed later in life as well (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Even though one of the vectors is called establishing identity, this vector does not encompass all of the growth that the broader description of identity formation captures.

Through the in-depth analysis and coding schema, I did find a link between identity development and intercultural competence. Intercultural competence emerged in particular under the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships. The vector of relationships deals explicitly with a key element of intercultural competency, namely
awareness and appreciation of individuals from different cultures. When students have a heightened ability to relate to others, this trait also includes relating to others from different cultures. What became apparent, however, was that the ability to relate to different cultures occurred at varying levels—from low to high prevalence.

A vast amount of identity development occurs when a student studies abroad and the rate of identity development is greater when an individual articulates an understanding of intercultural competence. Many of the participants commented that they had a greater appreciation for international students and those from other cultures; yet, in some ways their American bubble was simply relocated to Florence, Italy. Of the participants whose reflection was deeper in terms of interview, artifact, and journal data, there was a greater prevalence of intercultural competence as described in the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships.

There were four themes that emerged from my research. The first one was the identification of two vectors as most prevalent from the theoretical model. Thus, not only did prevalence vary within each vector (as noted for developing mature interpersonal relationships), prevalence varied among the vectors. The second theme was that the participants found a new confidence, similar to what they remembered feeling in high school when they thought they were invincible. The third theme focused on the notion that the participants had to leave the U.S. on a study abroad program in order to discover something new about their identity. The fourth theme focused on a new community that the participants discovered while studying abroad, albeit in discovering the new community came challenges of trust and support. Each theme is first presented separately, with quotations from my interviews with the student participants as well as
information gleaned through reading the individual participant’s journal entries and supported by what they said regarding their artifact of choice.

**Vector Prominence**

My research data showed evidence of development for participants among Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors, though some vectors were more prominent than other vectors. As espoused by Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory, the application of vectors for the students was holistic and non-linear. Pointedly, two vectors emerged as most prevalent, namely developing competence and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Given that my research study participants were of either sophomore or junior status, it was interesting to note that developing competence is typically solidified in the freshman or sophomore years and developing mature interpersonal relationships is solidified more in the latter years (Torres et al., 2003). Thus, for the latter vector, the participants showed early movement. As stated above, those participants who engaged in deeper reflections appeared to have higher numbers associated with the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships: Lindsey (JM-NY), Anne (JAH-YN), Madeline (JP-NN-M), Abby (JN-YN), and Teresa (JP-NN). Two participants, Emily (JP-YY-It) and Annie (SH-YN-I), engaged in scant reflections. Coincidentally, these were the two participants who had either lived abroad for several years or who was studying abroad as an international student prior to attending the study abroad program.

For purposes of my research, deep reflection was defined as the depth in which the student participants described their stories and development to me, whereas scant reflection was defined as superficial information that did not show questioning of assumptions or perspectives in the reflections. Thus, the quality of the reflective process
versus the length of reflection was important. So, the reason that Annie (SH-YN-I) and Emily (JP-YY-It) may not have engaged in richer descriptions might be that they had already developed this way given their previous experiences. When I completed my coding, the vectors as they related to the participants’ stories through their journals, interviews, and artifact analysis, could easily be ranked into three areas: high, middle, and low prevalence. The data analysis supported the expression of the vectors in this fashion. Table 2 below details how the coding of each vector corresponded to each participant’s data and then a cumulative total of each vector is placed in the last row.

Table 2

*Participant Coding Within the Seven Vector Model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>MIR</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>DI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-Annie</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Madeline</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Abby</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two vectors were clearly the most noted by the participants: developing competence (DC) and developing mature interpersonal relationships (MIR). Four other vectors establishing identity (EI), developing purpose (DP), managing emotions (ME), and moving from autonomy toward interdependence (AI) were mentioned often by participants. One vector, establishing integrity (EI), was noted less frequently by all of
the participants. Each of these areas is discussed further by the level of engagement the students exhibited.

**High prevalence.** The vectors that emerged as having high prevalence were developing competence and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Many of the participants talked about not only increasing their confidence by living abroad and having to do things on their own, but they expressed a competence in their coursework as well. Lindsey (JM-NY) stated: "It [the study abroad experience] has just given me confidence which I sometimes tend to lack . . . ." Several other examples will be discussed later in this chapter under the finding theme of confidence. The vector of competency tied in directly with feeling of enhanced confidence for the participants.

Another area of high prevalence was developing relationships with other colleagues on the study abroad program. Anne (JAH-YN) discussed forming a deep friendship with another student on the study abroad program. More about her friendship will be discussed later in the chapter in the area of community. In terms of confidence that developed into competence, Madeline (JP-NN-M) stated, "I was just more confident because I could speak Spanish and I could speak French [on learning Italian]. Granted, my accents weren’t always right because of the Spanish, but I was just more confident." Because confidence was also expressed through developing other relationships while studying abroad, it was not surprising that these two vectors emerged as the top two. Madeline (JP-NN-M) commented in her journal:

I learned [through the study abroad experience] that I used to hang out with a lot of people who were just like me. I hung out with a lot of Christians, and I felt
uncomfortable around people who had different values than me. I felt uncomfortable because I felt like the outsider and am actually very self-conscious. Madeline (JP-NN-M) reflected on how the study abroad program had broadened her view of how to meet other students who did not share the same Christian value system. These heightened levels of confidence in relating to people and the developing of mature interpersonal relationships within the larger group allowed the students a foundation upon which to develop a deeper sense of self and the ability to trust others.

**Middle prevalence.** The vectors that emerged as having a middle-level prevalence were establishing identity, developing purpose, moving from autonomy toward interdependence, and managing emotions. Establishing identity and developing purpose were at the top of the middle prevalence range. Teresa (JP-NN) commented on her struggle over identity in this way:

I felt like I needed to not stick out and I needed to blend in. I felt like I needed to dress Italian. I felt like I needed to act Italian to the point where I felt like I needed my identity to be Italian. Then I just ran into a source of conflict and sadness almost, I guess when I realized, ‘You’ll never be Italian. That’s not your identity. You’re not Italian.’ As much as I would try not to stand out as much, I’ll never truly fit in [to the Italian culture]. I think where I realized the point that I had gone too far and sort of internalized the Italian identity was when I was upset and conflicted that I wasn’t Italian. I was upset at a point that I wasn’t ethnically Italian which I feel like is too far. I feel like there’s a problem there because I’m not Italian and I shouldn’t be upset that I’m not a different ethnicity.
Teresa (JP-NN) decided that her personal American identity was more important to maintain than conforming to a new Italian identity.

Other participants talked about discovering a love for language and deciding that a particular course was not suited to their personal interests. Other themes within this level of prevalence were making the connections with host families and relying on the support of other students during the study abroad period as well as re-committing to a major area of study. Teresa (JP-NN) stated: “I wouldn’t say that anything as far as academics and the direction I’m going is different because of the program.” The vector of moving from autonomy towards interdependence was described in terms of relying on other students in the group for security and knowledge. Additionally, this vector was expressed through making connections with people who were not family, but who quickly became a home-away-from-home. Anne (JAH-YN) stated about her host mom:

She [host mom] hugged me afterwards [at the end of a small but deep conversation mostly in English near the end of the study abroad] and was so thankful that I was there to talk to her. For the rest of the trip, I felt like our dynamic had shifted a little bit, in a good way, that I had somehow connected with her closer.

Because the participants delved into making these new connections, they learned more about what personalities best aligned with theirs due to the close proximity of their connections within the small group of 26 William and Mary students. The participants talked about how different personalities on the study abroad program were significant in establishing smaller groups within the larger group, and how that in turn affected their
emotional state and knowledge of their own identity formation. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal:

I am starting to get very frustrated with the different personalities in our small group of friends here. Everyone has a very strong opinion about what we should do or which way to go and it made the trip very stressful after I had been having such a wonderful experience there.

The tension that Teresa (JP-NN) felt made her think more about the people that she was connecting with while studying abroad and how those interactions shaped her experience. In general, Teresa (JP-NN) struggled with managing her emotions (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) as the following comment illustrates:

It seemed unnecessary to just go through everything I had just been through [on talking with boyfriend about different experiences within the study abroad]. Then it started piling up and there was just too much to tell him [her boyfriend] and I think I just wanted to talk normally. I just wanted that normalcy. . . . [B]ut I feel sometimes a little bit hesitant to even think about it [the study abroad experience] or go into it because it's just so much all together, and so I kind of push it to the side a little bit to avoid being consumed and thinking about all of those experiences all at once.

Clearly, Teresa (JP-NN) and some of the other participants exhibited more within the vector of managing emotions (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) because there were areas of identity that felt unsettled. These areas that were unsettled were tested in the different context of Italy.
Low prevalence. The vector that stood out as having low prevalence was establishing integrity. Because the participants were not placed in situations that prompted this vector to be readily exposed or challenged, there was little movement in this area. The environmental context of Florence was relatively safe for the participants although there was a general awareness among many of the participants that they had to ensure they maintained their safety because they were female. If the participants had been presented with a scenario such as being asked to do something they found reprehensible, then there may have been more growth within this vector.

A challenge to identity that was spoken about was alcohol use, but only one participant really expressed a concern for the safety of the other students as it related to alcohol. In Italy, the drinking age is 18. Therefore, there were no legal issues regarding the ability to drink that may have been present in the U.S. Yet, aspects of integrity may have been pushed because of different laws and approaches for the two countries. Because the participants remained intact with their larger William and Mary support network, unique challenges to integrity did not readily surface with interactions in country. What did surface with a very high degree was the developing competence vector. This one stood out because the participants talked at length about their newfound confidence while studying abroad. I now turn to the second theme of my findings.

Building Confidence

Confidence can be expressed in a variety of ways in college students. Sometimes confidence can be through words, through actions, or through the reflection of a final grade in a class. For the study abroad participants, confidence was best expressed through a feeling that they felt stronger than when they left for Florence and thought that
they could surmount any challenge ahead because of their experiences abroad. The participants felt a newfound confidence that they had not felt since high school in academics, living in an uncertain territory, and life tasks. They noted an ability to use a map instead of a GPS device as one example.

Confidence building was supported through the environmental context of Florence because it represented a less competitive place than William and Mary and because they were taking on daily tasks without adults supervising them. Even though when the participants were at William and Mary they were not supervised by adults, the study abroad program allowed a different type of distance from family ties. Madeline (JP-NN-M) said:

> It was definitely special. I loved it, and I am so glad that I went abroad. I know I felt a change of confidence when I returned back to the States. I felt more independent and accomplished, like I did something big... I know that I’ll probably have higher self-esteem or encourage myself more when I’m presented with a challenge....

Being in Florence provided Madeline (JP-NN-M) the opportunity to develop her self-confidence because she completed a study abroad program. This evidence supports the vector of developing competence. As the vector most noted by the participants, developing competency, all the students noted a range of experiences that helped contribute to this feeling of growth in this area. This vector received the most engagement because the participants felt more confident living in Florence and were experiencing heightened levels of intercultural competence. I will turn to the evidence that supports these assertions by looking at the environmental context of Florence, Italy,
that encouraged the newfound confidence and the academic climate that allowed the participants to be more authentic.

**Environmental context and Italian faculty.** The foreign context for the students created heightened levels of dissonance and contributed to change in their identity and intercultural competency. A factor that contributed to this surge in confidence was positive recognition of their ability, in part from feedback from the Italian professors. For example, Anne (JAH-YN) noted how her Italian Art History professor praised her when she was able to recite certain facts about the famous Florentine Duomo on the first day of Art History class in front of some of her William and Mary colleagues. This outside recognition by someone less known to her helped convince Anne (JAH-YN) that she had something to offer. The participants were not naïve to think that they knew everything, but exuded a new joy that they had not experienced since high school. Emily (JP-YY-It) gained a greater life perspective because of one of the Italian professors who told her to “trust in the process” when she questioned whether she was in the most appropriate Italian language course. These students were emboldened by the comments of their foreign faculty and used this feedback to see themselves in a different light.

In general, the study abroad program itself provided a new perspective for students. Teresa (JP-NN) offered the following on her development from the study abroad program: “It made me feel actually more like myself than I had in a while. It made me feel like I had felt in high school . . . .” Teresa (JP-NN) expressed that the study abroad environment helped her gain the perspective that she was indeed competent. This was an expression of confidence and that “I can do anything.”
The students were influenced in general by the supportive academic environment of their study abroad program and through the positive feedback they received from Italian faculty. Teresa (JP-NN) commented, “My Italian teacher was a really great teacher. I never had someone . . . that had that sort of teaching style.” In this class, the Italian professor was engaging with the students during in-classroom discussions. The combination of both the supportive environment and faculty allowed the students to feel secure.

**Developing competence in a less competitive environment.** The participants commented on the fact that William and Mary is a competitive environment. Even though there were William and Mary participants on the program, the environmental context had changed for the participants. Given their setting for classes in Florence, the participants felt a new perspective regarding their academics. The study abroad program did not have the same level of competitiveness that they felt relative to their William and Mary classes. Because the Florentine environment was less competitive, the participants felt more competent and thus more confident in seeing themselves as scholars. The Florentine environment was less competitive for several reasons: the students were in small classroom settings unlike some of the larger lecture courses more common for underclassmen at William and Mary, the students felt more relaxed in their coursework because it was a study abroad setting even though they received a letter grade, and the students felt supported by their peers. Madeline (JP-NN-M) said:

> It [study abroad] built my confidence. The first day I got back here [U.S.], I definitely felt a lot more confident. I keep saying that, but I walked taller. I know I could get to a place. I don’t know, going to William and Mary, it’s like really
easy to get intimidated by people because everyone was so smart, that actually
taking Italian made me feel good because I was like, I’m smart. Oh, my gosh.
Madeline (JP-NN-M) was able to juxtapose her on campus experience with the larger
student body relative to the small class environment in Italy, and found that the out-of-
country environment presented a less competitive environment. But even more
importantly, she recognized and saw herself as smart in this new environment.

Another participant also discussed feeling different in the study abroad program
context in Florence. Anne (JAH-YN) said: “I think that [taking Art History in Italy] was
really affirming, especially since here for me personally, at William and Mary, everybody
here’s so smart that a lot of times I never really feel like I’m on top.” Anne (JAH-YN)
felt that the environmental context of Florence was supportive of her feeling more
confident. The students all noted a boost in confidence in their new environment. The
lack of the competitiveness typically evident at William and Mary was not present all the
time in the study abroad setting and this change allowed the students to flourish. In
addition to confidence, the participants thought of themselves and their identity in a
different way because of the study abroad program. I now turn to the third theme in my
findings.

Leaving to Find Self

All of the participants discussed finding out something new about themselves and
this exploration led to identity development. Because the participants were away from
the William and Mary environment and their families and friends back home, they found
a quiet place that fostered self-reflection that helped to develop their identity. Lindsey
(JM-NY) even discovered that although she thought of herself as an extrovert, the study
abroad program allowed her to get in touch with her introvert side. She wrote in her journal:

On this trip, it's definitely helped me realize that I am an introvert. While [my roommate] likes to digest her thoughts about the day aloud with someone else, I am definitely one to think about it on my own! I need time by myself and my thoughts to process the day’s events. I can surely ‘talk to anyone’ but I need to think about things personal on my own/by myself!

The format of the study abroad program provided the type of environment that encouraged reflection and this context suited Lindsey’s (JM-NY) quest to process information on her own to make sense of how the experience was influencing her identity development and learning. She learned that she was both an extrovert and an introvert depending on the context.

Anne (JAH-YN) felt she became a different kind of student due to the study abroad program. She commented, “The sense of urgency in terms of academics came back for me.” Anne (JAH-YN) was able to identify that part of her identity was being a strong student. Additionally, the study abroad program provided the participants the lengthier separation from their parents they needed to come to the place where they could be truly on their own. There was a realization by the participants that their parents were not always going to be there to help them figure out the “real world.” Because of this realization, there was a stronger urgency to be more resilient and more self-sufficient than in the past. Abby (JN-YN) stated:
It’s, you are by yourself and you have to do it on your own. . . . It’s very different doing it on your own. I felt that it gave a sense of preparation of. . . I don’t know . . . surviving in the real world because you have to.

The study abroad program put physical distance between the students and their families, thus providing the participants with a chance to contemplate their own views.

Emily (JP-YY-It) agreed with the feeling that the study abroad program allowed a different adult-like perspective stating, “Traveling with your family when you’re a kid is one thing, but traveling by yourself on your own is a completely different thing.”

Emily’s (JP-YY-It) identity was shaped differently this time around on her study abroad program because she was not living with or traveling with her parents in Italy. She was making her own decisions as to what she should see and do while in Italy. Because Emily (JP-YY-It) exercised more independence than her last time in Italy, she had more opportunities to become her own person. Emily (JP-YY-It) appeared to emerge as the quasi-group leader in the beginning of the study abroad program and “expert” because of her advanced Italian language skills. This distinction allowed her an even greater sense of confidence because she had skills that the other students did not. Italy was an old home to her and thus the feelings of being completely overwhelmed were not present.

Because of the new confidence within, the participants commented on recognition of these strengths through different life decisions. With increased confidence, there emerged a different feeling about who they were as students and how they viewed themselves as individuals. Thus, a developed identity emerged out of the freedom they were expressing because there was no adult supervision. This freedom allowed them to think about what really mattered to them in terms of life and academics. The participants
spoke of new ways of being—they wanted to follow their hearts and be happy. An aspect of being happy was choosing a major area of study that would complement their interests. One participant saw a stronger connection with her homeland while another participant saw her mother’s past journey in a different light.

Follow your passion. The participants engaged in a thoughtful discussion with me about the ways in which the study abroad experience changed their career trajectories and life expectations. Annie (SH-YN-I) mentioned that she no longer wanted to continue down an academic path (i.e., major choice) that did not bring happiness. She said: “Now I’m just not going for a course that’s easy, not going for course that fulfills basic requirements. I go for courses that I think what would change my life that will make me feel better [sic].” Annie (SH-YN-I) no longer felt constrained by societal demands of what is needed for to get a perfect job or perfect life. She felt a new freedom to be the person she has always wanted to be and explore more options for her future. Thus, in turn, her identity was allowed to flourish without the barriers she once felt. She listened to herself in the process and through the self-reflection came to the conclusion that when she makes life choices that are out of her interests, she will be a more fulfilled person.

Emily (JP-YY-It) also saw herself with more clarity and stated, “I’m definitely seeing all of my roles because I’m back. I’m really just more open to new experiences and slowing things down a little bit.” Here, Emily (JP-YY-It) expressed the different life roles that she may have in the future. Figuring out identity involves assessing all of these life roles and then ranking them in order of what matters most. The study abroad experience allowed these different life roles to surface so that Emily (JP-YY-It) could begin the sorting process of what really matters to her identity. For example, Emily
(JP-YY-It) felt that going through the motions in life is not what makes her happy. She said, "The whole doing things for the sake of doing them has kind of not been on my priority list versus doing things I'm passionate about." Emily (JP-YY-It) began to make the hard choices of ranking what areas in her life deserved her attention and time and what areas were not worthy of her time. The recognition of these roles takes time and energy to figure out. For some participants, they felt that the study abroad program allowed them the time to reflect on what their interests were and align them with their identity.

One aspect of identity development for the participants was finally being able to give themselves permission to make decisions out of self-interest for once. For example, Abby (JN-YN) said:

You forget what it's like to be your own person because you have so many obligations. I recognize when I am going crazy from over booking myself and I am okay with saying no to people and just letting myself be human again.

In figuring out these complicated life roles and decisions made out of self-interest, the participants spoke about choosing a major or committing to their current major because it brought them closer to who they were as people.

Alignment of academics and career choices as an expression of identity.

Another way in which the participants expressed identity development was by devoting thought during their study abroad program and afterwards to either affirming or modifying a major area of study. Because most of the participants were between their sophomore and junior year of study at William and Mary, many of them wrestled with the next two years and wanting to ensure they had chosen the right path. They felt that
they had the opportunity to either try something new or reaffirm that they were in the major that made the most sense to them. Some of the participants talked about ways in which the study abroad experience challenged the ways in which they thought about their major area of study. Lindsey (JM-NY), a marketing and sociology double major, commented:

> It [studying art history in Florence] made me realize that Art History wasn't really my thing, which was okay. I definitely have a greater appreciation for it. I can see a piece of artwork that is hundreds and thousands of years old, I can really appreciate it but it's just not really something I want to do. I haven't necessarily changed my career path but I think it [study abroad program] had given me a better appreciation of people just in general and realizing that we come from different places and we experience completely different things but when we get down to it, we are humans. We all have our struggles and we all have our successes and we all have failures . . . .

Thus, Lindsey gave herself permission to not like every course, but rather to find an appreciation for why that course matters to other people. This testing out time was important to the participants and their identity development because they were able to make discerning choices about what they would subscribe to in terms of future interests. The opportunity of discernment also allowed a heightened level of intercultural competence because the participants were giving reflection time to why people choose different life paths.

One of the passions that the participants talked about was learning the Italian language. Madeline (JP-NN-M) commented: "I forgot how much I loved learning a
language." Madeline (JP-NN-M) began to appreciate something that she had forgotten as a strong aspect of her identity. Madeline (JP-NN-M) was fluent in Spanish, but had never delved into learning Italian. Because language was important to her growing up because her mother was an immigrant, she reaffirmed that it was something she was passionate about not in her major but academically. Annie (SH-YN-I) even decided to pick up Russian when she returned from the study abroad program because she enjoyed learning Italian while studying abroad and thought another language would be interesting to explore. Emily (JP-YY-It) said that she has "been toying around with the idea of taking Italian class or stopping by the Italian language house more often . . . ." The study abroad encouraged her to explore continuing her language learning with more vigor.

The context of the study abroad program allowed the participants a wide array of life choices while in country. Because there was a broad array of life choices to consider during the study abroad program, the participants were able express what they favored and what they did not favor. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal: "I know the city lifestyle is not for me in the long term, but I can deal with it for the moment." In making these choices, the participants thought more seriously about their future and how a job would align with these newfound interests. Teresa (JP-NN) thought differently about what would make the best career fit down the road. She said:

I definitely rethought my life plan just in terms of seeing people doing so many different things there that weren't all of the typical jobs I always think about. I thought, maybe it will be nice to have a simpler life in the countryside or something and not . . . you don't have to be the best.
The study abroad program provided examples for the students of a larger array of job options and ways of living that they had not been exposed to by merely taking college classes. The different context provided them important times to reflect and consider how the decision of what courses to spend time on can align with the future.

With a broadening scope about options for life in general and career options, the participants gained more insight into other cultures as well. The participants were able to see another world culture at play and work because they lived in Florence for four weeks. Some of them even traveled after the program was completed. Because there was adequate time to consider how other people conduct their lives, the participants in turn considered how they lived their lives and what, if any, changes they would want to make.

**Larger image of the world.** The participants exuded a new confidence in navigating Florence among people from different cultures. Anne (JAH-YN) said:

> We did a lot of normal, mundane, Italian things . . . . For me, getting to do these mundane things was what was one of my favorite parts. It allowed me to really see Florentine life through the eyes of a resident, instead of a tourist, which really permitted me to widen my global perspective on life. [I]t was good to assert my independence and do things on my own. I think that I learned to adapt quickly in situations and new situations with people from different countries.

The four-week stay afforded more time to engage in life tasks that were similar to what they experienced back home. The wider worldview influenced identity because the participants were able to more fully understand their place in the world and to appreciate the perspectives of those from different backgrounds. The participants saw similarities
and differences from how they conduct their lives and also within people. Anne (JAH-YN) commented:

In going to Italy, that was interesting. It was very clear to see that Americans are very different than Italians, even though technically we’re all White. They might be slightly tanner than us but in terms of physicality, the difference is not too far. I think that was really interesting. It was interesting to learn their ways and their culture as opposed to ours, just to know that’s something that’s really different even though you can’t really see it.

Anne (JAH-YN) was able to articulate the ways in which her intercultural competency was developing over the course of the study abroad program. The new ways in which she was contemplating people’s differences and similarities was striking given the fact that she had traveled abroad before. Yet, because she thought of Americans as being “all White” there was less intercultural competency noted in this area of her development.

Just like Anne (JAH-YN) commented on the fact that being in a new environment allowed her to assert her independence and see people differently, other participants continued to explore more about humanity. Abby (JN-YN) commented on seeing people in the world differently, too:

That’s also a good perspective to have. That you’re aware of other people and it comes out more when you’re stressed, but even when you’re not. I think that that’s a good thing to recognize, that not everyone is the same. I really wanted to get a good feel for the whole culture and not so much look at it from scientific perspective, but then take what I learned and put that into just being a person who knows how to relate to other people. I think that I’m getting out of the American
mindset of presuming that we know what the world is, I think, is an important takeaway.

Abby (JN-YN) felt that because she was able to get out of this American mindset given the distance from home, she could more fully appreciate other cultures. Additionally, she was able to become more flexible in her thinking because she considered the viewpoints of other people more readily while in Italy.

Yet at the time of the interviews, once the participants returned home to the William and Mary campus, they did not seek out new opportunities to engage in culturally diverse groups. Part of this may be due to time constraints with maintaining an active academic and social calendar, but another aspect for some was the lack of desire of wanting more different experiences beyond what occurred on the study abroad program. They needed a period of time in order for the change they experienced to resonate.

The fact that the participants made more connections with people both on the study abroad program and within the Italian culture enabled them to find deeper identity connections with themselves and others. Annie (SH-YN-I) commented: “I think I’m able to have a more international view of things. I think when I talk to other people I have more subjects to talk about. I’m able to pick up things related to Italy very quickly.” Her deepening sense of self moved her to think more about her homeland while studying abroad.

**Different connection with homeland.** Annie (SH-YN-I) talked about the ways in which Italy made her feel more connected to her homeland in Asia. She said, “I feel when I see things I can make more connection.” Annie (SH-YN-I) felt that when she was in Italy, she reverted back to her homeland’s cuisine. She found herself visiting this one
particular restaurant and ordering in her native tongue instead of trying Italian or even
English. Annie (SH-YN-I) even commented on the fact that she was treated differently
because the waitress was the same nationality that she identifies with. She gravitated
towards this restaurant because she felt more comfortable with what the menu offered.
She even learned that there is a sub-culture of people just like her in Italy and that the
Italian culture shares similarities with her home country. In terms of being recognized by
others, she identified more with her homeland while abroad in Italy than with the U.S.
where she was an international student.

So, for Annie (SH-YN-I), the fact that she recognized she was more Asian than
American helped give her a greater place in the world. If she did not realize this before
she went on the Florence study abroad program, she now could understand more about
herself and how much she does value her Asian culture. This may allow her to make
connections that she would not have made back on the William and Mary campus. Her
identity became more Asian while studying abroad and this will guide her future
decisions as she continues to find her place both on campus and in the greater world.
Annie (SH-YN-I) and I did not discuss her feelings on being an international student at
William and Mary. Just as Annie (SH-YN-I) experienced something profound in her
identity development, another participant saw her culture as a defining aspect of her
identity. I now turn to another area of identity development—making deeper connections
with the culture in which one was raised.

**Different connection with parent.** Madeline (JP-NN-M), the other minority
student on the study abroad program, discussed how the study abroad experience made
her more deeply connected to her mother, who immigrated to the U.S. Madeline’s (JP-
NN-M) mother had to contend with learning a brand new language when she emigrated and this made Madeline (JP-NN-M) more fully appreciate her Mom’s struggle when she first came to the U.S. and did not speak English. Madeline (JP-NN-M) said: “She [her mother] has an education, but people don’t look at you that way when you don’t speak their language . . . When I went abroad, I was really shocked as to everything my mom has been doing for the past 26 years.” When Madeline (JP-NN-M) experienced the disrespect towards women in Italy, she thought of her Mom again saying, “I can imagine being like my Mom where it’s like you don’t know when people are insulting you. You don’t know when someone’s being sarcastic, because you can’t get it. It’s just not part of your culture.” The disrespect came when the Italian men called out to her in ways she had not experienced before. The Italian men would call out to her in provocative ways and ask for her phone number. Madeline (JP-NN-M) stated:

I don’t expect them [Italian men] to just be wolf whistling at me or calling me beautiful when they don’t even know me and just telling me they love me and blah, blah, blah like that. That was something that was just really challenging for me because I think I should be treated . . . Or I know I shouldn’t be treated that way.

Because Madeline (JP-NN-M) saw her Mom in a different way, she recognized in herself a difference in how she treats other international people saying, “I guess I’m more sensitive of that, and I’m less sensitive to people who get frustrated to international people and they just talk to them like they’re dumb, because they’re not dumb [sic].” Thinking about others also showed a deepening of the greater world community in which the participants live. Thus, out of the dissonance that Madeline (JP-NN-M) experienced
due to the sexist climate on the study abroad program and observing how those not speaking Italian were treated, she was able to turn to people who were more caring like her and sensitive to cultural differences. Madeline’s (JP-NN-M) expressions of self helped to add more insight to the last theme from my findings—developing community. I turn to that next.

Developing Community

In addition to the participants’ important self-discovery, they talked about learning more out about people in general and forming a community among those people. Anne (JAH-YN) said: “I think that at that moment, I really became aware of how the Florentine sense of community had affected all of us and how studying abroad in another country with total strangers can really bring people together.” This new learning was certainly tied to a broadening global perspective and a deepening realization of their gender. Safety emerged as a concern among the female participants that they did not believe their male counterparts dealt with. As a result, community developed around the idea of gendered experiences abroad. Community support also contributed to individual growth on the study abroad program, but the development of affinity groups presented immediate challenges. These affinity groups served as havens of safety for the students who found support from peers within these smaller groups of students. The challenges that emerged from the development of affinity groups ultimately translated to learning opportunities for the participants.

Gender abroad. The participants felt constrained, especially in the evenings, in a way that they felt that their male colleagues were not. This constraint was not experienced in the classroom setting, but rather during the free time that the participants
had when they were not studying or attending class. When the female participants went out in the evening, they had to cope with catcalling and disrespect. The disrespect came with the type of language the men were using toward Madeline (JP-NN-M) and other students while they were walking around. There was never any disrespect experienced from the host family. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal on the insecurity she felt because of the disrespect:

> We passed the market today and had to deal with a lot of merchants/salesmen, which was sometimes uncomfortable. You must be very stern and adamant with them, which feels wrong. I feel like I shouldn’t be bothered by having to face those interactions constantly. Someone touched me intentionally on the behind today; after that I was insecure and became so cognizant of my surroundings that I couldn’t sit in one place, I was nervous about the people around me. (emphasis added in the original)

Given that Teresa felt insecure caused her to develop in different ways. Madeline (JP-NN-M) said: “I knew that in Italy men are not very respectful towards women in some ways . . . .” Because of the pre-study abroad program realization of this cultural aspect, she was not shocked, but rather unsettled, by the experience.

Even being a woman affected how they coped with the huge marketplaces in Florence. Abby (JN-YN) said: “It was intimidating going into there as a woman by myself trying to figure out what I wanted.” In the journals, the participants again commented on the recognition that because they were women, they had to be more aware of their surroundings. Yet, because of this new awareness, the participants had to find coping mechanisms within themselves which in turn strengthened their identity
development. Lindsey (JM-NY) said in her journal: “I’ve gotten used to the longer-than-normal-staring, I’ve learned to ignore it/present myself as strong and knowing where I’m going/what I’m doing (even when I don’t).” At the end of the day, the participants recognized an additional layer to their identity development which was the intersection of being female and studying abroad. Anne (JAH-YN) said:

If you’re coming back at dark, that’s another thing you have to think about is safety. I had a conversation with the girl that I’m super close with after the trip. It was a learning experience for us, learning how to be safe in a new environment. Especially as a woman and the more concerns you have as opposed to the guys that were on the trip as well, walking around at night and stuff. That’s certainly something that was an interesting revelation. Especially something you don’t really get on campus here in America. We have this safe feeling [in America] and this culture of trust between everybody on campus.

The female students all had heightened awareness of safety concerns when traveling abroad. They felt that the William and Mary campus was safer, though in fact it is probably not as safe as they may think.

Anne felt the additional responsibility of making sure she was safe when out on her own in Florence. She acknowledged this additional responsibility was because of her gender and because she was studying abroad. The concept of safety would have meant something very different had any of the participants been male.

As a female studying abroad, the participants recognized a different conversation about safety they had to have with themselves and other female students. In addition to contending with issues surrounding safety in general, there were also issues surrounding
safety and drinking. Madeline (JP-NN-M), Lindsey (JM-NY), Abby (JN-YN), and Anne (JAH-YN) specifically mentioned safety in their journals and/or their interviews. Madeline (JP-NN-M) expressed a concern for the other students because of the choices in drinking and going out. In her journal she wrote:

I felt really uncomfortable and shocked and kind of bummed because I didn’t really understand why they wanted to consume that much alcohol. I wasn’t judging them, I just wanted more for them . . . I just worried about their safety. I was also really afraid that people would judge ME! (emphasis added in the original)

Madeline (JP-NN-M) felt that because she turned her back on going out and choosing to be safe, that other students would judge her as not being in the fun group. Yet, she stayed true to herself and continued to choose not to drink while studying abroad. Her identity was strengthened in this way as she became comfortable with her choice and she continued to develop her integrity every time she chose not to drink with the other students.

In thinking about safety for others, the participants also became more self-aware of how actions in the past, such as not following up with a friend at night to ensure they had safely returned to their residence, were not as safe as they could have been. Madeline (JP-NN-M) commented in her journal: “I am very aware of my surroundings, and I am cautious.” Because they were more cognizant of making safe decisions while abroad, they felt that this carried over into William and Mary campus life once they returned. Anne (JAH-YN) mentioned that now that she has returned to campus, she ensures she calls someone who is important to her instead of just saying “see you later.”
Trust was implied within this safety concern. Anne (JAH-YN) also mentioned that during the program she had to think about whom she could trust. She said, “We [being her close friend] didn’t trust each other with anybody else, because, oh well, some people on the trip for sure, were not on their guard and aware of their surroundings.” Thus, there were alliances formed around whom the participants could trust on the program and whom they could not trust. Out of this discernment, came a greater awareness of whom they could turn to for support when they needed it.

**Support.** Community support emerged in different forms during the program. While there was little support from the host family, there was more support found through the other peers and the Italian faculty on the program. The support received from the American faculty member was minimal. He was available for questions and one participant remarked that because he brought his family (wife and children), she felt as if there was an additional comfort of home. The idea of support challenged the participants in new ways because they turned to other people that they traditionally would not have turned to for support. The awareness that the group shared the common Florence experience, although in different ways, allowed them to see each other as a large support network. In turn, the larger support group offered opportunities to engage with different people many of whom the participants had never seen on campus before. Madeline (JP-NN-M) said:

> Meeting new people allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and learn. People can really surprise you. I think that’s it. You just really don’t know a person until you talk to them . . . I’ve had some really good conversations with people I don’t think I would have ever met on campus.
Madeline (JP-NN-M) talked about seeing her peers in a different way than she would have on campus by virtue of living in Florence. As noted before, in the pre-departure meetings the students did not frequently engage with one another and for the most part, did not know one another prior to the study abroad program. Madeline (JP-NN-M) highlighted an aspect of the study abroad program that was important to the participants: knowing who to turn to when they needed an ear to talk to or just someone to understand what they were going through.

**Peer-to-peer.** The predominant points of connection were found in a smaller, common nucleus of peers. Anne (JAH-YN) said, “I think I found more support within my peer group.” Each participant defined their peer groups differently, but for the most part there were two main groups of students: one group who socialized after hours and another group who did not engage in going out at night. I would argue that the students found support with one another versus relying on other students studying abroad. Lindsey (JM-NY) said: “Talking to them [other students on the program] definitely helped me because when I express my feelings of this is scary and I don’t really know what I’m doing, they also had those feelings.” Lindsey (JM-NY) also felt that seeing some of the friends she had made on the study abroad program helped her cope with bad days. She wrote in her journal: “I was super happy to see them [her friends] and I explained the past 3 (somewhat frustrating) hours I had to them.” The reliance on peers in the group was heightened because of the lack of social media available to connect with friends back home or family while in Florence. The group dynamics of more women than men on the study abroad program resulted in a focus on relationships as well.
While social media enabled some of the students to contact their families and boyfriends through infrequent and short occasions of FaceTime® and Skype, not all of them relied on social media to keep in touch. Social media did not appear to distract them from their coursework. The participants never mentioned the differences between social media at home and abroad other than to say that they did not engage in much social media because of time constraints and lack of reliable connectivity. Many of the participants mentioned that they used video calling infrequently or at the language school they would send brief messages to their families because there was a stronger Wi-Fi connection. Because the participants were not turning to social media as much as they would when at William and Mary, there was more time for conversation with their peers, language institute colleagues, professors, and host families. The networks that developed were that much richer because social media was not relied upon. Additionally, the environmental context of being in Italy where lengthy mealtimes and conversation are part of the culture yielded more support for favorable peer-to-peer interactions over food.

One participant exemplified that stronger peer-to-peer connection and developed a profound and deep relationship with a classmate on the study abroad program whom she did not know before the program. Anne (JAH-YN) said:

Me and the girl definitely shared some pretty personal stories and stuff that we’d gone through. That was really nice to be a world away, but still have someone that close. I know I can’t say that anybody else really made a connection like that on the trip. I think she and I got really lucky and hadn’t met each other before, but were destined to meet each other.
The study abroad context of Florence provided a setting in which Anne and others felt more comfortable and willing to share in. Because the participants were turning to each other for support, there was also recognition of who had prominence within the group just by virtue of knowing the language.

**Role of language with making connections.** The two participants who had previously taken Italian language courses did comment that they found support through international students that they took classes with. These students were from all over the world. Emily (JP-YY-It) emerged as the group leader simply because she had a more advanced knowledge base of Italian and was more comfortable being in Italy because she had lived there in the past. Emily (JP-YY-It) was also able to know when other people were not saying respectful things towards other students. She used her Italian language to protect the other students and ensure they were not taken advantage of especially in the marketplaces. In this respect, she assumed a parental role because she looked out after her colleagues. Thus, language and the participants’ Italian language acquisition served as a defining way in which participants coped with being in a new environment.

Language was a general divider among the students, but there were other sharper divisions that I will discuss next.

**Affinity groups.** Throughout the four-week program, many of the participants mentioned a splitting of the larger groups into two groups. The splitting occurred along the lines of religion as well as those individuals who were members of fraternities and sororities back on campus and those who were not. The splitting first appeared to center around whether the student participant chose to go out at night or stay in. Madeline (JP-NN-M) stated:
I feel like there were for sure at least two groups but I did like my best to be in both . . . I saw it more split like it was the people who like going out that group and the other group did go out but not as much. They for some reason just never meshed. I don’t know why. I don’t know if some of the girls in the group that did go out as much felt weird about the other group because they were sorority girls and maybe they didn’t feel as welcome. That was the vibe I got a little bit. From the splitting, emerged a feeling of being an insider or outside to the larger group. My study participants did not all appear to be in one group over another group. This splitting created dissonance and a feeling of being an outsider among those who did not go out with others. Thus, when the groups were viewed in negative ways, they were more similar to cliques. Anne (JAH-YN) self-identified that she was in the group that went out and was more social. She felt more like an insider because more people on the program went out in the evenings and thus she was part of the larger group. She even felt that those students who did not go out missed out a lot on culture.

However, not all students felt that they were part of this inside group. One student participant felt that she was an outsider because she did not go out at night and because she was not Roman Catholic. Thus, she felt exhausted trying to fit into groups that she did not identity with. Teresa (JP-NN) commented about the formation of affinity groups and on how this made her feel:

Even just in dealing with people, I felt like I didn’t really know what I was doing. I felt it should not have been so difficult [on returning home]. I faced a lot of challenges with a lot of interpersonal relationships actually with the people who were also abroad with me which I didn’t expect as much.
Feeling like an outsider within the William and Mary group added a layer of dissonance for some. This feeling caused the participants to delve into their identity in deeper ways than if they had not experienced dissonance.

There were some occasions that more of the group participated in than other times. One occasion was surrounding a student’s twenty-first birthday. Many members of the study abroad group came together for an evening out to celebrate the special occasion. Seeing everyone together made Lindsey (JM-NY) especially excited. She said in her journal about another occasion: “It was really refreshing to just eat with everyone (not in our typically ‘segregated’ tables) and hang out and take our time and just enjoy each other’s company!” Even though there were occasions for everyone to be together, there were still some participants who felt like outsiders because of the insecurities surfacing in the context of a study abroad program. Given the fact that not everyone felt as if they belonged, there were periods of identity challenge ever-present that enriched their self-reflections both during the studying abroad and when they returned home. Religion was a marker for some of the participants as to whom they chose to be around.

Religion. Religion served as a divider within the larger group as well. Because Italy is predominately Roman Catholic, there were a few participants who desired to travel to Italy because of the religion. Teresa (JP-NN) felt very overwhelmed by the whole experience and even questioned her own religion because of the religion affinity group that developed. Teresa (JP-NN) talked with her roommate about the religious divide:

I talked with my roommate about it. She understood why I was upset but I think she still was firm in her side of it and we still just disagreed. I felt like there was a
weird divide at that point but it just...I guess it seems weird because by my logic, I felt like I was viewing religion the correct way, not correct in the sense of my beliefs are right. I felt like I was approaching choosing a religion in the correct way.

The one group that was focused on the Roman Catholic religion did pray together and worship together. Teresa (JP-NN) even went with the Roman Catholic affinity group feeling her religion was very much in line with the same tenants of this religion. The Roman Catholic affinity group was comprised of about seven students. Within this affinity group, the students went to mass weekly and one student in the group went a minimum of three times a week. However, Teresa (JP-NN) still felt that she did not fit in. Because of this lack of connection to the group, Teresa (JP-NN) felt very emotional regarding her role with the group and questioned where she fit. Ultimately, she decided she was okay with not fitting in. Teresa (JP-NN) said:

It was just weird to have that [religion] suddenly be a defined thing and I honestly don’t know what...that’s the religion I was raised in but I don’t know what religion I would choose or I’m not super devoted to any certain practice. It was just weird to have it. It was like a need to fit in by devoting myself to a certain practice. It was just weird that that would define me.

In the end, however, Teresa (JP-NN) rejected her religion once she was back on campus. The aspect of dissonance that the study abroad program created spilled over into her fall semester. Her parents suggested engaging with a campus religious group, but Teresa (JP-NN) decided that she was not so whetted to her religion after all and never attended the group. She is still struggling with this aspect of herself and her identity as it
relates to religion. She commented: "I just feel like whatever religion I end up choosing, I want to be very devoted to it. I feel like I don't have an identity enough in it to claim myself right now." Religion was only one aspect that created movement along the vectors. Another area was identity in a broader scope as it relates to national identity.

*National identity dissonance.* Some of the participants questioned who they were because of the study abroad experience. As stated above, religion was one aspect in this questioning, but there also emerged a questioning of identity in terms of national identity and Italian identity. Teresa (JP-NN) talked the most about this dynamic. She said:

It was weird [on returning from Italy] because I was expecting to come home and feel really great about being back in America and expecting everyone to be just welcoming because I wasn't a foreigner, and I still felt out of place. While I was there [in Italy] thinking about America, I was thinking America doesn't have an identity but I was still thinking Italy has too much America in it or more America in it than I was expecting. I was really feeling when I was there not like a cultural identity crisis but just a lack of any type of identity because my family is mixed with a bunch of different ethnicities . . . .

Because of the exposure to a new cultural identity, Teresa (JP-NN) felt an unrest that she had not experienced before she traveled abroad. Instead of feeling that she was an even greater part of the national identity when she returned from her study abroad program, she felt distant and out of place. This made her question and in turn think more deeply about whom she was as a person.

*Returning to campus.* The feeling of community that the participants experienced in Florence with close peer-to-peer interactions and a different lens on their
homeland and home culture shifted when they left Florence. When the participants returned to the William and Mary community, they experienced change in how they approached their academics and how they wanted to connect with other students. My findings supported that once a student has participated in a short-term study abroad program, there are many feelings of dissonance experienced. Out of this newfound self emerged feelings of renewed confidence in their academic ability and in the community they supported. The participants revealed that the institution is not doing enough for them upon their return from the short-term study abroad program. Despite efforts to gather all students at a two-hour dinner social, only some of my student participants were able to attend the event. The majority of those student participants who did attend the event couched the gathering in negatively. Teresa (JP-NN) said, “You wrote on your nametag where you studied. I didn’t really end up talking to any of the other people that had studied in other places because it was kind of like they were having a reunion with the people they had studied abroad with.” Teresa (JP-NN) did not feel a sense of community as a result of the larger mix of the group of students attending this post-study abroad event.

Moreover, there were no icebreakers at the event and thus missed opportunities for further interaction with peers. Anne (JAH-YN) commented that the experience was “not genuine.” The conversations in general were more surface level because of the brevity of the event. Many of the students who studied abroad were not present or they had to leave early to attend class. The institution missed the mark for re-engaging the “new” student. In the following chapter, I will discuss, utilizing a graphic representation,
the change from the pre-study abroad student to their post-study abroad identity as a means of furthering support for the study abroad student at the institutional level.

Furthermore, the sense of community that the participants experienced while studying abroad was not present in the pre-departure course. The pre-departure meeting lacked substance and form. Since I attended the pre-departure meetings, I gained invaluable insight into this phase of the program. There were only a few short comments made by the students in the pre-departure course such as logistical concerns. I believe this was because no one knew each other and because there was nothing done by the faculty during those meetings to encourage interaction among the students. Anne (JAHYN) said, “Most of us only knew one or two people going on the trip, from what I could tell. I knew one guy going on the trip... These were completely new people to me.”

While important travel information was discussed in different segments throughout the pre-departure class, there were no detailed accounts of how other students from previous Florence programs would have changed the course. For example, inviting my participants back next year to talk about advice for the upcoming study abroad program would be useful. Moreover, the notion of transforming the pre-departure course into an online option may be most useful as the students may find the platform a safer environment to ask questions. Additionally, if the course morphed into a post-departure, one-credit course, this could save the college money in terms of only offering one course “live” to the study abroad students upon their return and afford the students an opportunity to reflect and talk with each other in a classroom setting. All of the important travel information from the Reves Center could be put forth very easily through an online portal.
Even the notion that affinity groups may develop and to expect that may help to alleviate anxiety for the student—especially the ones who have never traveled abroad before. My study participants also commented on wishing they knew more about the two phone plans that were offered while abroad. Apparently, you had to choose between a phone that could be used to reach other student colleagues and a phone plan that allowed for you to call back home. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal, “They didn’t tell us we had to pay for our own phone plans and I had to choose between being able to contact people here in Florence and call home to the states.” Thus, because Teresa (JP-NN) was not given this valuable information up front in the pre-departure meetings, she felt slighted. The developing sense of community that the participants valued in Florence could have been more supported prior to departure. Because the community did not begin to develop in real ways until the students actually left the campus to travel abroad, the study abroad program, despite its short length, can be said to be the main thrust of the change that the students experienced.

Conclusions

The focus of this study on how individual students developed in their identity and intercultural competence while on a short-term study abroad program uncovered several key findings. Intercultural competence emerged as the students talked more about developing mature interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and with the professors and host families. The participants appreciated other cultures, but at the time of the interviews it appeared more superficial as the students did not have time to put to practice their interactions with individuals from different cultures on campus. The participants were not actively seeking out organizations or events on campus once they
returned to engage in more culturally diverse events. The participants were more concerned about whether their major was the right fit and whether they were making choices that supported their new self. The participants understood the world differently, too, depending on what their previous experiences were as not all of the participants had traveled abroad before. All of these findings help make the case for a new conceptual model and how they link to the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) that I will discuss now in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Study abroad programs are gaining momentum both on an institutional level and a national level with more students participating (Institute of International Education, 2014). One of the factors adding to this momentum are the potential student learning outcomes as a result of the cultural immersion of a study abroad experience (Coryell, 2013). While the previous chapter outlined significant research findings, this chapter discusses the findings in light of the literature and serves as an important link between my research and what more can be accomplished in terms of future research.

Before going further into this chapter, I think it is useful to be reminded of the two main research questions that have helped to shape my study’s findings relative to college students studying abroad in Florence, Italy:

1. How does the William and Mary faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience in Florence, Italy, play a role in developing college student identity within three months of their return from the travel?
   a. Do some vectors from Chickering and Reisser’s Seven Vector model of college student development show up more than others?
   b. Do Chickering and Reisser’s seven vectors appear in similar ways among the students in the study sample?

2. How does a faculty-led, short-term study abroad experience influence a student’s intercultural competency within three months of their return from the travel?
In the first section to this chapter, I will discuss the identity development of my participants. A new conceptual model was created to detail the developmental process a student studying abroad on a short-term study abroad program may go through both during the experience and upon their return. The findings of this research add to the scant research on short-term study abroad programs and associated identity change for college students (Blahusiak, 2012; Mapp, 2012; O’Callaghan, 2006; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Warner, 2009). The findings also shed light on the important link between a short-term study abroad experience and a heightened level of intercultural competency that was the focus of my second research question. Second, I will discuss implications for future practice in the study abroad landscape. This section is divided into three separate recommendation areas: one for students, another for faculty leading the program, and a third for the institutions supporting these faculty and students to include any study abroad offices. Third, I will add my own personal thoughts on the study abroad program. Last, I will make recommendations for areas of future research recognizing that my study only captured a small part of the wider study abroad landscape. For now, I turn to attending to the research questions and begin with a discussion on identity development.

Discussion on Identity Development

The college student who studies abroad is challenged and supported in myriad ways (Coryell, 2013). Just like the literature on long-term study abroad programs found, my study concluded there was identity development among my student participants on their short-term study abroad program (Danielak et al., 2014; Franklin, 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013; Moran, 2005). There was movement in terms of the students talking more about their place in the larger world and getting to know other people from different
cultures—thus, they began to achieve levels of intercultural competency (Deardorff, 2006). Importantly, the development of intercultural competency occurred at various levels. For example on one of the continuum, Annie (SH-YN-I) illustrated less developing regarding intercultural competency as she did not discuss in depth seeing people from other cultures in a different light. She was more concerned with her homeland’s culture and how the culture fit into the larger Italian culture. For example, Annie (SH-YN-I) wrote in her journal, “One thing that really surprised me is that the high school educational system of Italy is really similar to that of [my homeland’s].” Pointedly, Annie was the only sophomore on the study abroad program, and as Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model highlights, those in the early years of college are more focused on the first three vectors versus the vector of managing interpersonal relationships. As an international student, Annie spent a year in the United States at William and Mary and had some travel experience. She was just beginning to appreciate the differences of various cultures, but she was still tied to her own Asian culture as evident in her eating patterns of frequenting Asian restaurants while in Florence.

Conversely, Lindsey (JM-NY) discussed in great length what she had learned about people from other cultures. For example, Lindsey (JM-NY) spoke about the differences in the Italian culture: “It was an excitement but also a relaxed factor of being in Italy because it’s very slow-paced in terms of how Italians live their lives, and I think I got used to that.” Thus, when considering the development of intercultural competency, it is important to realize that this development occurs along a continuum with varying lengths and depths of individual development.
Of the vectors identified by Chickering and Reisser's (1993) college student development theory, the most movement was found in terms of developing competence and developing mature interpersonal relationships—two of the vectors typically found in the earlier stages of the college career (Torres et al., 2003). Each task within the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) was experienced, albeit in different ways, by every one of my participants. This certainly affirmed the model as a helpful tool when talking about and discussing identity development among college students. Yet, the vector model came up short in fully explaining the student experience abroad. For example, the vector model did not account for the affinity groups that developed among the students nor the safety concern. Issues of student safety are more pronounced given events of recent years regarding campus violence. Because the initial vector model was created 45 years ago, how students view safety has changed over time.

Additionally, the model did not portray the competing pressures on identity associated with race and gender. Others have pointed out race and gender as important to mediate discussions. For example, Belenky, Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) model of black identity, and the work accomplished within critical race theory (as cited in Evans et al., 2010) come to mind as a few important to note. Thus, I propose a new model that helps to capture the process a student travels through when they embark on a short-term study abroad program. The Seven Vector model complements the new conceptual model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). To better understand the new model, I first note a summary of the findings relative to my theoretical framework and research questions.

Ways in which the participants changed in Italy. Recall, the four main findings emerging from this research were the varying levels of prevalence among the
vectors, confidence, leaving to find self, and developing a community. The Seven Vector
model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) helps in understanding these findings. The level to
which the participants experienced each vector was my first major finding. I was able to
clearly break down the vector model into three different levels: high, middle, and low
prevalence. This helped me to explain what vectors were most fully developed and the
least fully developed among the participants. The most fully developed vector was
developing competence and the least fully developed vector was developing integrity. It
is important to note that while my research questions focused on identity, and the vector
of establishing identity received only mid-level prevalence, Chickering and Reisser’s
(1993) theoretical framework labels all vectors as identity development or formation.

Developing competence is the first vector in the model, and as such it should
come as no surprise that the participants commented on their growing competence as a
result of the study abroad program. Because the first three vectors (developing
competence, managing emotions, and moving through autonomy toward
interdependence) are typically experienced in the first years of college (Torres et al.,
2003) and the participants were for the most part upperclassman, the notation of the
fundamental vectors outlined in the model are more common. The focus on managing
relations occurred on two levels, within the William and Mary group and with external
groups.

As the participants’ confidence increased, they experienced movement along the
developing competence vector. Competency was not tied to the book knowledge that the
participants gained, although there was a wealth of new material, but rather tied to the
authentic learning that occurred outside the classroom. All of the participants discussed
ways in which they felt different and changed after the short-term study abroad program. In feeling more competent with even using a map, the participants felt their overall confidence levels increased especially for those participants who had never traveled before. Lindsey (JM-NY) said about the study abroad and her increased confidence, “I’m much more able to explore and I’m much more willing to do that, like, even on my own.”

This finding of competence was connected to the context of the William and Mary undergraduate environment that participants identified as being highly competitive. Because William and Mary is a competitive environment, the vector of developing competence is in line with Chickering & Reisser’s (1993) model which names this vector as the first one that can develop among college students. Yet, what was different on the study abroad program was the changed context of being in Italy versus the U.S. Because the participants were not shackled by the competitive academic environment that had surrounded them before they left for the study abroad program, they were more free to fully develop and test different ways of bringing meaning into their lives and self.

In order to discover more about themselves in terms of identity, purpose, and emotions, the participants had to leave the U.S., as this different global context provided the distance needed to obtain a new perspective and ability to gain competencies they had not fully developed before they left. The students gained this perspective by reflection with others and self, excursions throughout the countryside, in-class activities, host family stays, and interactions with locals. In interacting with the locals, to include bartering, some of the participants realized new ways of managing people. Reflection, in particular, helped the participants mature by allowing them concentrated time to think
about the changes they were experiencing or had experienced if they wrote their journals upon returning from Italy.

Because there were challenges with this transition from U.S. culture to Italian culture, there were obvious heightened emotions. However, in dealing with their emotions of feeling tired, homesick, confused, and out of place, they found their strengths through the quietness of reflection and time. These three vectors of establishing identity, developing purpose, and managing emotions worked together to help explain the change that the participants experienced. Some of the participants, as discussed, reaffirmed their major areas of study and some thought about what was not congruent for them in a particular area of study. Annie (SH-YN-I) discussed taking another Art History class at William and Mary because she found the Italian Art History course “fairly interesting” and even continues to listen, on her own, to a website in which two professors discuss different artwork from all over the world. Emily (JP-YY-It) even has thought about adding a minor of Art History.

As the participants developed community among strangers, they developed mature interpersonal relationships with their host families, Italian professors, and other students. Because community emerged as a research finding, there was strong support for the participants moving from autonomy toward interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). As the participants made more decisions about whom they would associate with and trust, they created their own support networks within the larger group and developed integrity. The formation of these networks required dealing with others in a different way than on the William and Mary campus. The language barrier for most of the students and the new culture, especially the way women were treated, created a
context in which the group bonded together because of their shared experiences. Yet, what occurred was that the larger group fractured into smaller groups that formed distinct affinity groups.

As affinity groups formed, the participants chose to associate with the smaller groups for important reasons namely support, safety, and similar religious beliefs. In turn, the smaller groups had characteristics that some of the participants did not subscribe to (largely centered around going out at night and drinking), which served as a dividing point. Although the smaller groups were not all one gender, they appeared to also be divided more along the lines of whether the students were associated with Greek life back at William and Mary. Additionally, the finding of community is supported by outside research. Another dissertation study looked at the experiences of women who were members of a special cohort and found that because the cohort was all female, there was evidence of support and community found within (Haight, 2010). Because community was a finding in my study, there may have been a link, similar to this study, between this finding and the gender of my participants.

Just as some of the findings could be explained through use of my theoretical framework, there were some findings that could not be explained. In particular, there was a gap with regard to the findings of safety and affinity groups that seemed out of place within the vector theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The notion of the environmental context that included the Italian faculty that helped to shape the participants’ confidence levels was not a factor within Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) developing competence vector. Additionally, the idea that Madeline (JP-NN-M) felt a different connection with her mother was not addressed in the developing mature
interpersonal relationships vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Moreover, because Annie (SH-YN-I) felt more connected with her homeland this, too, was not addressed as a cultural component to the developing mature interpersonal relationships vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Additionally, the finding that affinity groups emerged because of feeling as an insider or outsider as a Roman Catholic was surprising. Thus, an important finding was that there may be other underlying assumptions and causes, unexplained by the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), that could aid in a richer explanation of the study abroad experience for college students. Finally, the intersections of racial identity and gender that were experienced by some of the participants to include Madeline (JP-NN-M) were unexplained by the model.

**Reaching deeper connections within themselves in Italy.** There is a connection between identity development and the short-term study abroad context (Ellwood, 2011). Identity is best understood in the context of psychosocial theory as it relates to intrapersonal development of a college student (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009). Psychosocial theory deals with college students “grappling with life issues of identity and meaning making” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 47). The myriad points of development that my study participants experienced provide support that the psychosocial theory was the best theory in which to situate their story (Evans et al., 2010). This theory helps frame the myriad decision points that college students may face as they transition from childhood into adulthood (Evans et al., 2010). As noted, the study-abroad literature primarily attends to long-term study abroad and student outcomes. My findings on a short-term student abroad experience found high prevalence in the areas of developing competence and developing mature interpersonal relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). As with
other research regarding student identity and study abroad (Braskamp et al., 2009; Dolby, 2008; Ellwood, 2011; Franklin, 2010; Hackney et al., 2012; Salisbury et al., 2013), my research noted change in students in terms of such variables as career choice, identity, cultural maturity, overall student interest, and an increase in student exposure to world cultures and economies when they study abroad.

The theoretical framework helped me understand why and how there could be development within the context of a short-term study abroad program. Despite the fact that some of my participants traveled abroad before attending the Florence program and others had never left the U.S., there was still movement within the realm of identity development because of the short-term study abroad experience. Emily (JP-YY-It) who had lived abroad before commented in her journal that “[t]he whole point of studying abroad is to try new things.” The “new things” in which she tried were more mature ways of looking at Italy than what she remembered as a young girl living there with her family. For Emily (JP-YY-It) the whole experience of the study abroad program allowed her to gain a different life perspective and contemplate what was really important to her in life. She said:

I’m really just more open to new experiences and slowing down things a little bit. I actually stopped a few of the superfluous extracurriculars [since returning from the study abroad]. Things I wasn’t really passionate about, but I started doing freshman year, and then I felt like I had to do it because of obligation. So, I actually slowed down my extracurriculars by two or three clubs which allows me to concentrate on what I want to do, and the things I’m passionate about. I think
that's definitely an effect of it. The whole doing things for the sake of doing them
has kind of not been on my priority list, versus doing things I'm passionate about.

One of the ingredients that made Emily’s (JP-YY-It) development possible while in Italy
was the supportive environment. The new ways of living her life now at William and
Mary were directly related to her study abroad experience.

Because there was movement within the realm of identity development to include
stronger relationships and growing in maturity levels, Chickering and Reisser’s (1993)
theory was helpful in explaining the ways in which the students were describing to me
how they changed given the experience of a short-term study abroad program. For
example, out of the finding of community, the development of mature interpersonal
relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) was an integral aspect to the finding’s
meaning. The theory provides a means of naming regarding what the participants
experienced while studying abroad. The model also provided credence and stability to
my findings in the sense that I could link each finding to a vector from the model
(Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Expansion of the Seven Vector Model

Given the fact that the vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) did not
completely explain the findings, I sought supplementation from other theorists to more
fully understand the student experiences. In the following section, I annotate areas of
inquiry that could be complemented by other psychosocial theorists as well as areas that
could be further developed in researching identity in the context of a study abroad
environment.
Although Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector model provided a strong theoretical lens for analysis of the changes that occur in identity for a college student studying abroad, the model did not explain fully all of my findings. From my data analysis and peer review process, the theme of undeveloped thinking emerged. For example, Madeline (JP-NN-M) and Teresa (JP-NN), as previously noted, discussed their views on drinking in the context of the study abroad program. They saw student drinking as an unsafe activity that did not positively reflect American culture. The two women did not explore the reasons why some of the participants may have decided to drink—for example loneliness, identity crisis, homesickness, gendered differences, culture of Italy, or stress due to host family. Instead, the two students quickly noted their discomfort with the activity and did not delve into explanations of other reasons why this activity may have been engaged in by some of their colleagues in the study abroad context.

The lack of higher order thinking made me consider that another college student development theorist could provide a strong complement to the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Specifically, Perry’s (1968) theory of cognitive-structural development details how college students make important decisions and come to the knowledge in which to make those life choices (Evans et al., 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013). The theory moves us from labels of dualism to multiplicity to relativism as reflective of the stages in which a college student moves from relying on the professor as an authority for knowledge to questioning the professor’s views and relying on their own internal modes of learning (Evans et al., 2010; Locklin, 2013; Perry, 1968).

In much the same way that the vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) were prominent at different levels, so, too, was there a range of levels of higher level thinking
among the students. The voices of some of the students represented dualistic thinking in terms of how they viewed alcohol (Perry, 1968). Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal, “[M]any people in the group were drinking before they went out. That doesn’t make sense to me, pregaming and going out, that’s what we can do at home.” This example highlights the cognitive belief that Teresa (JP-NN) judged the activity of drinking abroad as wrong versus trying to delve deeper into the reasons the other students decided to use alcohol.

Another example of dualistic thinking (Perry, 1968) came through the inability of some of the participants to delve into their casual observations in deeper ways. For example, Anne (JAH-YN) noted that they had to take short showers because there was a water scarcity in Italy. She did not investigate the economic or policy factors that drive this water conservation or consider the cultural norms regarding bathing. Instead, she thought of this rationing on an individual level in terms of how she was impacted. Anne (JAH-YN) also noted how she felt limited in the amount of water she had available to drink. Instead of probing at the reasons why this was the case, she simply commented on the fact that she was dehydrated most of the time she was abroad. She expected the same access to the quantities of water she had in the U.S. rather than thinking about the reasons why water was not as available in Italy. She said:

We kept having to pay for water, which was really unfortunate. That was honestly, that was probably the biggest challenge, because also in our minds it was like, if you’re going to pay three euro for a normal size bottle of water, why not pay three euro for a coke?
The Italians have different cultural norms regarding drinking bottled water and bathing routines compared to the U.S., but Anne (JAH-YN) only saw this as good/bad versus situating the reason into a larger cultural context.

Perry's (1968) theory helps explain the more naïve thinking, the black-and-white thinking, that some of my participants engaged in regarding people from other cultures, too. As noted, some of the students had more surface engagement in managing interpersonal relationships. This lack of engagement surfaced when students such as Annie (SH-YN-I) only saw what she considered the "worldly" attributes of Florence such as "no free water offered in restaurants, Italian is spoken everywhere, pasta, pizza."

Focusing on the surface or obvious elements of being in a new city ignored engagement with deeper cultural norms and practices. Madeline (JP-NN-M) commented in her journal that her "cab driver spoke a little English" and that "the elevator [in the hotel] was SO small" (emphasis added in original).

Views on relationships also were evident in how some of the participants spoke of the various affinity groups that emerged from the larger group. The perspective here was you are in or you are out. Instead of considering why some students on the study abroad program gravitated to the smaller groups, or what support they garnered from these activities, some viewed the separate groups simplistically. For example, Anne (JAH-YN) noted that you either went out at night or you did not. Future research in this area could help shed light on whether further reflection on a study abroad experience could lead to movement within Perry's theory (Evans et al., 2010; Perry, 1968).

Some of the dualistic thinking expressed through the participant's interviews may have been due to the fact that they were of rising sophomore or junior status, and some of
this may even been due to a language barrier that existed with the international student that I interviewed (Evans et al., 2010). More dualism (Perry, 1968) in thinking emerges in the early college years. More complex thinking develops as students mature, gain more experiences, and reflect on the experiences they have had to date. The broadly structured format of my research questions may have not encouraged deeper thinking for some of the participants. Additionally, the timing of the second interview may have not allowed enough time to have past for the participants to really dwell and reflect on their short-term study abroad experience.

The participants were of rising sophomore or junior status and did not all come from the same backgrounds and experiences. Missing from the vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), despite its holistic nature, were opportunities to contemplate intersections of multiple identities, specifically race and gender. For example, because I had two minority student participants, their experiences were based not only on their class year, but also their race. When gender is added in, multiple levels of nuance and complexity are added for analysis.

**Further research on women in study abroad settings.** Another area less explained by the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) was the differentiation of development based on gender. Given the fact that I had only female student participants, the Seven Vector model has limitations despite its holistic intention (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). As previously noted, the work of Josselson (1996) that built upon Marcia (1966) may be helpful in describing the identity development that my female study participants expressed. Even though the author studied females from the time they were college seniors to older adults, Josselson’s (1996) work and practice may
be useful in helping to give more context to the identity development that occurs based on gender for my participants after their study abroad program. Josselson’s (1996) theory found that women could be divided into four categories that effectively describe how a woman copes when faced with a crisis and how, in turn, she internalizes this reaction into her identity. These categories include foreclosures or guardians, identity achievements or pathmakers, moratoriums or searchers, and identity diffusions or drifters (as cited in Evans et al., 2010). Her theory may help to explain the various roles that the female student participants portrayed on the study abroad and how those roles in turn influenced their identity development due to assumptions they brought into the experience.

How the students interpreted the ways in which they were viewed as women may help to shed light on their identity development. For example, Madeline (JP-NN-M) noted her reaction to the lack of respect for women in Italy that she experienced. Gender is not a specific component of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) work. As a result, the model represents hegemonic norms that are often associated with men. When gender is considered more centrally, the experiences of women highlight differences relative to men in the same situations. Consider how Madeline (JP-NN-M) saw the world as a place where women are respected without thinking about why the Italian culture may encourage disrespectful behavior.

Some of the participants addressed issues of safety that were different from their male counterparts. According to Josselson’s (1996), “[d]ependency and safety are conflict areas for women in foreclosure, who hold onto the past when forming their identity and current perceptions of self” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 60). In the foreclosure stage (Josselson, 1996), women do not take risks and make life decisions to include
decisions about careers that are similar to their parents’ choices (Evans et al., 2010).

Additionally, the feminist theory of identity development could provide a gendered perspective for my data even though it is not specific for college students.

This feminist theory of Downing and Roush (1985) is comprised of five different stages and has been described as follows (Erchull et al., 2009):

The stages include passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness–emanation, synthesis, and active commitment. This model was initially developed to assist clinicians in working with women who were in the process of discovering a feminist identity. (p. 832)

So, even though the model was developed without specific engagement with college student women and almost 30 years ago, the five stages may still be applicable within the theory as it may provide further fodder for my participant’s individual identity development. When viewing the data that I collected in this study using this lens, the role of gender manifests in the developing competence vector because here the participants gained confidence both as women and as students. For example, considering the stages of this theory, my data best highlights the fourth stage. "This [fourth] stage is characterized by an integration of her sense of self as a female with her identity as defined outside of gender, as well as an ability to make independent choices based on personal, rather than group, values" (Erchull et al., 2009, p. 833). Madeline (JP-NN-M) serves as a good example of this stage. She talked about making certain choices based on her religious beliefs—namely, not to drink and to attend church regularly. Despite the influence of the group, she made a decision based on her own beliefs. She noted that her concerns for safety based on her gender were a reason for this choice, as were her values.
However, based on the data, some of the participants made choices that reaffirmed group values, which highlights that they were not at an advanced stage of development.

The work on women's development done by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) provides another way to view the gendered role for my participants. Most original works of identity development did not include women, and as a result, the perspective added by Belenky and colleagues (1986) provides a more nuanced way to look at the data from my study. The authors, building on other theorists such as Perry (1968), argued that there are five ways that women view knowledge and drew connections to how the women constructed meaning within their identity. These five ways include silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge (as cited in Evans et al., 2010).

From my study, the issue of safety emerged. The issues of safety may have been specific only to the women on the study abroad program and not the men attending the program because women have different concerns than men in terms of living their lives given societal expectations and barriers. The development of community for the female participants aligns with the research on women's ways of knowing, in particular the ways in which women make connections (Belenky et al., 1986).

Understanding the ways in which multiple facets of identity intersect is critical to more nuanced analysis. Critical race theory provides a different perspective to the stories relative by the two minority participants (Creswell, 2013). Critical race theory argues that the White race is the most powerful in U.S. society and thus people from non-majority races must fight against that existing power hierarchy in society. For my participants, race, when viewed with a critical lens may have surfaced in how the two
minority students in my study thought of themselves as less powerful in a White-dominated student group.

**Intersections of race, gender, and study abroad.** Historically, White female students typically attend study abroad programs in larger numbers ("Who Studies Abroad," 2012). Thus, acknowledgement of the important distinctions regarding the influence of gender differences associated with the acquisition of knowledge and development of identity needs to occur. As noted, I only had two participants who were of a minority race, but their experiences were differentiated from the other participants who were all White making it important to apply critical race theory to understand their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Annie (SH-YN-I) sought out Asian restaurants to eat at while studying abroad and made connections between Italy and her homeland. Madeline (JP-NN-M) thought about ways in which her immigrant mother must have felt powerless because of the language barrier when she came to the U.S. Race and identity development were not specified in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector model. Yet, we know that race and gender are inextricably connected and that often in order to describe a minority student’s identity development, several theories must be used (Evans et al., 2010). These models could help address questions they may have been feeling due to the fact they were minority female students studying abroad. Seeing the students more holistically and complexly provides a platform for deeper analysis.

**Dissonance in the context of short-term study abroad.** The participants alluded to feelings of dissonance throughout their interviews with me as well as writing about them in their journals and relating in their artifact explanation. The managing emotions vector in the model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) does not detail dissonance as
an aspect of change in identity development. But, the environmental context in Italy created uneasiness among the participants that in turn stirred emotions they may not have expected to surface. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal, "The trip was really uneventful, we spent most of the day traveling and Sienna gave me a very weird vibe." The contrast here between espousing everything was okay on the study abroad program is challenged by Teresa’s (JP-NN) added comment of having a "weird vibe" in one of the cities. Recall that Teresa (JP-NN) wrestled with a crisis in her religious identity during the study abroad program and was dealing with heightened levels of emotion as a result. She may not have fully recognized these differences while abroad.

Festinger’s (1957) famous theory of cognitive dissonance could help to more fully explain this mix of emotion that some of the participants alluded to and help future researchers engage in different ways with participants on a short-term study abroad program. The theory could also help frame journal inquiry by delving into more ways in which the participants felt out of place. The very nature of a short-term, immersive study abroad program is to create dissonance. The participants described periods of frustration with their host families because of the language breakdown. Because the participants had to learn to cope in spite of the language barrier for some, they in turn developed identity strengths surrounding human interactions. Teresa (JP-NN) commented in her journal about the frustrations of trying to please her host family:

I really felt like we were making our host family irritated with our inability to understand them. It was strange, because we could understand the words of what they were saying, the language part of it, but we still couldn’t grasp what they were asking us to do. It wasn’t that we couldn’t speak Italian, it was that they had
a certain way they wanted us to do things, like set up dinner, and we didn’t know what we were doing or didn’t do it their way . . . She [host mom] was very upset [because the house alarm was accidentally set off] and dinner was probably one of the most tense and awkward experiences I’ve had; we were all dead silent while we tried to be gracious about the food that she was giving us, and I was super aware of myself, trying not to be rude.

Here, the recognition that mere words were not enough to communicate meaning resulted in tension for the student, and this dissonance provided an opportunity for growth.

Just like Teresa (JP-NN), Lindsey (JM-NY) experienced issues with her host family. Lindsey (JM-NY) exemplified this can-do spirit even though she was frustrated with her roommate’s lack of ability to communicate in Italian and with the task of communicating with her host mom in Italian:

Definitely language, like I was saying before with my host mom. It was very overwhelming at first. I was very excited and I think I was ready to go into it but I don’t think I quite realized all that it entailed. She would do our laundry and you’d have to translate this sock can be washed with this dark shirt because it’s okay. She would have to say, ‘Oh no, please don’t put that together because I can’t hand wash those together,’ and ‘this is where you need to put it.’ Anyway, all sorts of things that I had never learned before and trying to work through that. I think we each have our own levels of patience and she wasn’t necessarily the most patient at all times. I mean, I understand but for me I have to be very clear-minded to be able to think in Italian and speak in Italian and understand in Italian. Like I was saying before, my roommate I think she struggled a lot with that and
so she would often just shut down which I was very tempted to do. That’s what
my natural instinct wanted me to do but then I had to step back and say we have
to communicate with our host mom whether or not we like it. Let’s just take this
one step at a time.

Given Teresa’s (JP-NN) and Lindsey’s (JM-NY) challenges with their host families
largely due to the language barrier, the participants experienced feelings of unrest they
wrestled with that could be better explained through the theory of cognitive dissonance
(Festinger, 1957). This theory could provide support for the conflicts they experienced in
gaining appreciation for a new culture but at the same time experiencing what they did
not like about the people within the culture.

Now that I have discussed the ways in which my findings related to my first
research question, I turn to my second research question that addressed the link between
study abroad and intercultural competency.

**Intercultural Competency**

I set out to explore whether there was any change that emerged three months after
the participants returned from Florence, Italy, in the realm of intercultural competency.
As previously noted, there were varying degrees of intercultural competency (as defined
by Deardorff, 2006) that I recognized within my seven female participants. The literature
tells us that intercultural competency is an ongoing process given the quick snapshot that
the college environment provides (Bruening, 2007). My participants did show varying
levels among themselves regarding intercultural competency. I highlight two different
participants talking about how they saw the world differently because of their study
abroad experience. I highlighted these two participants below because of their more
detailed accounts of intercultural competence. The evidence from my data showed that prior travel abroad did not greatly influence the participants' gains in intercultural competency. One of the participants, Anne (JAH-YN), who had traveled abroad before and another participant, Lindsey (JM-NY), who had not traveled abroad before, discussed their growing ways of knowing intercultural competence.

Lindsey (JM-NY) said:

It's [the world] definitely a lot bigger that I thought. We [the U.S.] are definitely a lot smaller than I think we may think sometimes. I didn't think [prior to the study abroad] it's a wonderful thing that there are so many different places on earth. The earth may look so different and the food may be different and the people may be different but, like I said before, we are all humans. Even though we may come from different backgrounds and we may have cultural traditions that are so different from our own. That shouldn't separate us. We can still find beauty in that we are all human and we can relate to one another in some things and to some things we may not be able to relate but that's okay. We can be okay with that. I think it's very easy to get caught up in your own little bubble and not really pay attention to the rest of the world.

Obviously, Lindsey (JM-NY) spent time thinking about the ways in which the United State's culture was different from the Italian and world culture at-large. She provided strong evidence that the study abroad program helped her develop a more in-depth view of the world cultures and the people who live in these cultures. Lindsey (JM-NY) was not the only participant to display a deepening sense of the world. Anne (JAH-YN) saw the world and people differently, too, even though she had traveled abroad before:
Well, I definitely think after going abroad and especially if you’re living abroad and this being my third time going to Europe, that I see the world as a much, almost like a smaller place, but at the same time, a bigger place. I look at it as like when I went back and forth, it was like, ‘Oh, I’m not really going home,’ or ‘I’m not really going away. I’m just kind of going.’ . . . I take American things for granted less and realize that everybody does do things differently. For them, for what they see as normal and what I see as normal are two different normals, but that’s okay, because that’s how it was where they lived versus how it is here in the states.

In this respect, there was a developing sense of intercultural competence in Anne (JAH-YN) because she saw the uniquenesses between American culture and global culture. Yet, Anne (JAH-YN) saw two different normals that were not blended. This harkens back to the concept of the American bubble introduced in Chapter Five. At times, Anne (JAH-YN) simply relocated her American bubble to Italy when she studied abroad and returned to her American bubble when she returned.

Others showed less development of intercultural competencies. Annie (SH-YN-I) did not mature as much as other participants in intercultural competency. She commented more on surface level differences. For example, she said in her journal, “For my opinion, language is an imperative tool for us to understand another culture beyond surface level.” However, she did not fully explain how and why language acquisition is vital to being global players in the world market. Her pattern of eating in non-Italian restaurants and instead choosing Asian cuisine highlights less expansion of perspectives and embracing of differences. While not all of the participants talked in detail about
knowing and thinking about cultures in different ways, the idea of exposure to foreign
cultures such as the one in Florence, Italy, provided important training grounds for the
participants to later develop their intercultural competency. I now turn to the new
conceptual model that helps to complement and further enhance my study’s important
findings.

New Conceptual Model

In light of the less developed areas of identity namely race and gender within the
Chickering and Reisser (1993) model, I have proposed an alternative way of thinking
about the student studying abroad that includes the intersection of race and gender as well
as religion and socioeconomic status. Each student brings life and academic experiences
to the study abroad paradigm as well as knowledge gleaned from any pre-departure
program that a university might offer. As noted in my study, there were four pre-departure
meetings in April prior to when the students departed for Florence in May, yet
these meetings missed an opportunity for engagement with students. Undeniably, the
academic and life experiences contributed more to the background of experiences relative
to the pre-departure courses because in my study the pre-departure courses were but a
small segment of the time the participants spent learning about Italy prior to departure.
Further, participants did not note any learning or development associated with these pre-departure meetings. However, in future studies, the pre-departure courses may play a
more significant role.

There were several areas of disruption throughout the study abroad program in my
study for my participants to process. The waves through the study abroad experience
represent the discomfort that the students experienced during the short-term study abroad
program. Throughout the study abroad program, the notion of relating to a host family that was different from their own families and who spoke another language was an experience of dissonance. Another area of dissonance was affinity groups that formed when the larger group of students split into smaller groups. Because of the affinity groups developing, some of the students felt uncomfortable about the disunity of the larger group. At the same time, the affinity groups also provided support and safety nets for some of the students. The close friend that Anne (JAH-YN) developed represents one way in which the groupings helped provide support during the program. Thus, the affinity groups could easily be represented by a straight line, too, as they were at times disruptive and at other times comforting. Because of these areas of disruption, the students questioned their identities in new ways leading to cognitive dissonance.

Undeniably, the students experienced a change during the study abroad program and when they returned to the U.S. and the William and Mary campus. They were not the same students as when they left in May. Thus, the model represents a snapshot of the new identity that the students now portray following the study abroad experience. As they re-entered the campus scene, they experienced their new identity in a variety of ways and issues of race, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status complicated and challenged their new identity. This model only captures their time immediately following a study abroad program. This model could be revised and updated to further capture change and development down the road.

As noted, the experience of female participants may not be the same as male participants studying abroad. The experiences of Madeline (JP-NN-M) and Annie (SH-YN-I) were different than the other participants because of their minority status and
international student status in terms of how they saw their family differently and their home culture.

One of the ways that the participants’ new identity continued to develop was through their participation in campus life. They were more confident in their academic community and more self-assured in what they felt they could accomplish upon their return. Both of these ideas emerged from the data and are expressed in the model. The arrows leading from the bottom of the model to the top express the important support from a variety of sources to include social group support and institutional support. The support must be present throughout the entire process for the student who is planning to study abroad, embarking on a study abroad, and returning from a study abroad experience. All of these entities can play a significant role in assuring the new identity is integrated and challenged in the college community after return from the study abroad program.

The institution helps to set the tone and financially support and guide successful internationalization efforts. The social group provides important support that helps to buttress the students’ individual growth. Beneath the surface of these two important groups, there are individuals who may play a more significant role. For example, internationalizing the curriculum must be guided by the individual faculty who teaches the students. Without institutional support of the significance of study abroad programs to identity development, the new identity can never be completely buoyed.

The theoretical framework of student identity development is integrated into the new model. While my study showed greater development (notated by the larger arrows) among two of the seven vectors of Chickering and Reisser’s model (1993), other future
studies may show a different developmental expression. Thus, this model is flexible and can easily be adapted to a new study's findings. I now turn to the new conceptual model.

Figure C. New Conceptual Framework
Implications for Future Practice

There are several important implications for future practice that have emerged from my study. These implications are meant to provide guidance for future research that may surround a study abroad program because we know that colleges and universities alike desire global citizens (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Mapp, 2012; Pelletier, 2012; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Smith & Mitry, 2008; Wright & Clarke, 2010). We know study abroad programs are increasing (Dolby, 2008; France & Rogers, 2008; Kelly, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). The implications are furthered with specific guidance for the student attending a study abroad program, for the faculty leading and supporting other faculty on a study abroad program, and for the institution that houses the various study abroad programs and scholarships. I first turn to implications for the students.

Implications for students. The exercise of journaling emerged as an important aspect to the study abroad experience. At the outset, I asked all participants to keep a journal. The journal could be written, in blog form, or hand notes. While not all student participants on the study abroad program engaged in a journaling exercise, all of my student participants did journal. As noted, I provided journal prompts prior to the student participant engaging in the study abroad program.

One of the students commented that her journal was unique because she kept detailed accounts of how much everything cost, what food locations were the best, and in-the-moment stories of what she was feeling day-to-day. Lindsey (JM-NY) said, “I remember who I was talking to or if I was by myself or what the weather was like. All these sensations that come back to me.” Because the program was four weeks, Lindsey...
and the other participants were left with accounts of their experiences due to their journals. Additionally, keeping a journal while studying abroad may help intentional reflection become an aspect of everyday life. Lindsey (JM-NY) said, “I think that taking the time to journal when I was in Italy has made me do that more here [at the college].” In the future, she may journal more about her college experience and the ways in which the community affect her growth and development. Journaling provides an opportunity for reflective practice that can allow for awareness of different viewpoints and understandings. The role of reflective journaling is important to learning because the journaling process creates a space for new ideas and meaning to emerge.

Additionally, the aspect of identifying a meaningful artifact also emerged as an important element linking the experience to the changed student. The artifact provided a snapshot of the entirety of the study abroad experience for the student and symbolized the growth they had experienced abroad in a way that words could not capture. A faculty member or campus leader might include in a follow-up exchange with students who study abroad what artifact serves as a tangible reminder and representation of the study abroad program. This artifact may serve as an important reminder of the experience when students engage in any post follow-up courses within the university context or as important conversation-starter to engage other students and colleagues who may be hesitant to talk about the study abroad experience. The artifact may serve as a portal into the individual student’s experiences providing in-depth accounts of the change experienced during a study abroad program for both the global centers on campus, for the faculty, and for other students interested in participating on a study abroad program.
Based on the interest of my student participants, I would encourage other study abroad participants to speak up about their experiences with other students and friends as well as faculty members. Clearly, not enough research has been accomplished on this population to capture all of the relevant and important material gleaned from discussions with study abroad participants. If more students who were leaders on campus and who had studied abroad spoke about their experiences in the forum of study abroad informational sessions or small focus groups facilitated by faculty or the international center, they could positively influence other students on the fence about whether to study abroad and allay any concerns they might have. Oftentimes, students with concerns would much rather ask fellow students than a member of the international center. Because so few participants spoke during the pre-departure courses, there is room for past participants to step up and interact more. The study participants that I utilized for my pilot study come to mind as being students who could have stood in front of the class during the pre-departure course and answered questions.

Implications for faculty. Faculty matter in an important way to the delivery of an institution's internationalization goals. "As the drivers of teaching and research, faculty are key to institutional internationalization efforts" (Hill & Helms, 2013, p. 4). During the interviews with my student participants, the faculty member leading the program was rarely mentioned as an important contributor to the changes they underwent. Individual faculty leading study abroad programs may have unique personality characteristics that lend themselves to engaging or not engaging with the students (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014). Yet regardless, the faculty role is critical to the student experience. The college faculty member was
mentioned only in terms of the fact that his family brought a comforting aspect of home to the study abroad experience and that he was available for questions or concerns. The lack of mention of other interactions or forms of support from the faculty leader highlights that the student participants did not heavily rely on the American faculty as a support network. Outside the classroom, the faculty had little interaction with the students. Although the students commented that it was comforting to have the faculty member and his family attend the study abroad program with them, there were missed opportunities for the faculty to engage the student studying abroad. The engagement of the faculty may have encouraged more reflection in the student.

The faculty and his or her department can support the student studying abroad in a variety of ways. For example, the faculty member leading the study abroad program may think about including journal prompts, similar to the ones that I used for my study, as an aspect of the coursework. Furthermore, the faculty member could engage in close follow-up with students after they return from a study abroad program. On this study abroad program, students were asked to complete two courses from a choice of three. This would provide an area for the faculty to give feedback and also follow-up with the student should the journal reflect something unique. The faculty leading the program may also think about ways in which their departments and the institution as a whole could better support the returning student and ways that their institution could help marry the important domains of internationalization as espoused by CIGE (2014) and discussed in Chapter Two. Aspects of engagement could be most profound through coursework and assignments and these would be direct ways to enhance CIGE's internationalization efforts which include curriculum and learning outcomes (CIGE, 2014). For example, the
faculty member who leads the study abroad course may offer a one-credit post-study abroad program de-brief that would allow the students a safe forum to discuss ways in which their study abroad experience has been integrated into their other coursework. This one-credit course could also serve as a forum for further discussion among similarly situated colleagues.

For faculty, thinking about the real ways in which the experiences change the student studying abroad could prove beneficial in their personal development and growth. The concept of integration of learning could help capture the multitude of layers that a student studying abroad might realize their identity (Barber, 2012). The integration of learning could be most valuably captured in the classroom setting although “there are multiple potential pathways to integration of learning” (Barber, 2012, p. 592). Capturing these experiences in the classroom setting is one way in which the larger community can support through financial resources or time the study abroad students in terms of their identity development. Implicit in the internationalization of the college curriculum is a discussion on integrating learning. One study (Vainio-Mattila, 2009) captured a way in which students can translate their learning in the larger global world to a more local level by participating in Canadian non-governmental organizations through service projects. This study could serve as another illustration of the importance of a supportive community in helping the students make connections between themselves and their study abroad experience. Similar to this Canadian study, another way to integrate the study abroad student’s learning may best be expressed through service learning organizations and community organizations in which their developing intercultural competence can be expressed and utilized to a greater degree. An institute housed within the international
Reves Center that focuses solely on ways in which study abroad students could be re-engaged through community partnerships both locally and globally may find traction. Further development of these thoughts and critiques could be insightful to the college community as well. In turn, this could inform ways in which the classroom setting could support and challenge this new thinking.

Even though William and Mary has espoused globalization and implicitly includes internationalization in the university’s strategic planning, there must be more accomplished in terms of learning from the study abroad student in the classroom setting. Liberal arts colleges have historically been linked to study abroad programs (Brewer, 2010). Typically, liberal arts colleges have higher numbers of students studying abroad (Brewer, 2010). Thus, because William and Mary is a liberal arts college with the highest number of students engaging in study abroad programs compared to other public universities, the college would be well-served to integrate the returning study abroad students in a meaningful way in the classroom and further develop ways to engage their learning while abroad (Coryell, 2013). According to the Institute for International Education (2014), there were 674 undergraduates or 45.8 percent who studied abroad at William and Mary during the 2012-2013 academic year.

My findings supported the notion that there is not enough offered to students returning from a study abroad program to challenge and support them in terms of furthered identity development and heightened intercultural competence in the classroom or community. The missing link between the students and the college and community environments could be well served through increased engagement upon return. The students who studied abroad must be able to integrate their learning about another culture
into their classroom studies. One way in order to accomplish this is through allowing the students to be asked to explain an artifact, similar to the exercise that I went through with my student participants, in a classroom context. For my participants, the artifact served as the prompt for them to think more deeply about their study abroad experience. The classroom context could be the setting of a global education studies course that could provide the forum for the students to showcase their artifacts upon return and increase their intercultural learning capacities (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014).

Even though the artifacts were one aspect of my data triangulation, they emerged as important reminders of the power of a tangible object to tell a story. The feelings that they evoked in the participants were moving. The artifacts were critically important in the participants being able to tell more of their story to me and thus more deeply explore the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) in a deeper way. Because the artifacts emerged as important to the participants, I would recommend that the artifact show-and-tell be an aspect of the post-departure course. The professors that lead this course could include discussion and prompts around the artifacts themselves.

As much as this is an individual faculty responsibility, the department chair for whom the faculty member works could also provide support across the department. The department chair could envision ways in which the various cultures that the students study abroad in could be engaged in the curriculum. The department chair is in a unique position to set the tone for the department's direction and if the department chair expressed interest in the study abroad experiences, they would gain greater traction within the departmental walls and the institution in general. There needs to be a
heightened effort by the institutions supporting students who study abroad to leverage connections both at home and abroad if they are to maintain a position of preeminence (Marginson, 2004).

**Implications for the institution.** The institution plays an important role in addressing the missing engagement link between the returned student and the community. The institutions must continue to support its students through scholarship funding as well as private funding to further the expanse of who can attend study abroad programs. Because my study supports the finding that impactful change occurs during a short-term study abroad, more funding could be focused on the short-term study abroad programs. With increased funding and support, more students in the college community, to include student athletes and minority students, could have the opportunity to study abroad. Lindsey (JM-NY) said, “I think it would be great if every college student could study abroad personally.” Research has shown that study abroad programs are not widely attended by male students, science majors, first-generation students, students with disabilities, minority students, and student athletes (Brux & Fry, 2010; Lucas, 2009; Paus & Robinson, 2008; Stroud, 2010; Szekely & Krane, 1997; Twill & Guzzo, 2012). While I did not explore whether my participants had disabilities or whether they were first-generation college students, I did have two participants who were minority students based on the demographic questionnaire they completed for me and one who was a science major. The experiences of these students show identity development in a profound way.

The institution should consider meaningful ways to allow the students to engage with one another. There should be multiple points in which the student is engaged about his or her study abroad experience once they return. Because all of my study participants
were either of sophomore or junior status, there is ample time to engage with the students after their study abroad experience. In addition to the post-departure, one-credit course that could be offered for the students, there could be additional programs offered through residence life and the office for student diversity on campus. Many of the students talked about new ways of seeing people from other cultures and how they fit in the broader global picture. The students in my research spoke about seeing people differently. The institution could further promote this developing intercultural competence through more robust residence life programming and extracurricular activities on campus. Student engagement and learning could be measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement, a quantitative educational tool that could help increase the effectiveness of study abroad programs and learning gains throughout the semesters post-departure.

Moreover, the institution could provide further support by deepening involvement with faculty and changing the ways the pre-departure courses are structured. I offer three recommendations to further institutional support and better align student engagement with learning prior to departure. First, there should be a broader pre-departure faculty training session. The training session could help prepare faculty, especially those who lead a study abroad program for the first time, by exposing them to important college developmental theories and ways in which they could integrate learning abroad with coursework. Second, the institution could support faculty by sending early and mid-career faculty abroad through endowments similar to the international faculty development program at Virginia Tech (G. Ghosh, personal communication, December 4, 2014). By sending faculty abroad, the classroom experience for the students would be further enriched because the faculty member could offer rich descriptions, artifacts, and
journal data with the students from their time abroad. Additionally, important partnerships for continued global scholarship could be forged between the home institution and the abroad institution. Third, the pre-departure meetings can and should be further spread out throughout the spring semester instead of all contained in the month of April when students are busy preparing for the end of an academic semester. By changing the way the courses are scheduled, more students could be engaged in learning and relationship-building with other colleagues and faculty leaders long before departure abroad.

Family members are an integral part of many college students' lives when on campus. Thus, an additional level of support that institutions could enlist are the families of students studying abroad. Providing support to families of students studying abroad can help them see that the experience is not merely a vacation, rather a rich learning experience. When families are informed about the ways in which students develop and change due to experiences abroad, they can provide better post-experience support. Yet, in terms of familial support, there is a delicate balance. The familial support would be best served for the students upon their return from the study abroad program versus during the study abroad program. Because of the lack of frequent contact with the participants' families while studying abroad, my participants noted how they able to grow on their own and become more independent. The Reves Center on the William and Mary campus and other various international offices housed on college campuses could provide important guidance on these developmental changes through an accessible website.

Clearly, there is so much more to the experience than simply showing pictures to loved ones, friends, and peers upon return. The community needs to be aware of the
myriad ways in which the study abroad student may exhibit change. Additionally, the counseling center could work more closely with the Reves Center to engage with the students upon their return as the counseling center’s services may prove useful to the returning study abroad student, or even while they are studying abroad, in terms of emotional and other psychological support.

Even the career development office on campus could benefit from understanding the research in this arena in the event a student who has studied abroad seeks assistance or desires to change a career focus. Moreover, in terms of career planning, the study abroad experience needs to translate from a line on a curriculum vita to a detailed talking point in an interview. Additionally, the affinity groups that developed within the larger group of my research study could be leveraged in ways that are beneficial to the students. For example, the group could become a career development network in the future for jobs and like-minded interests.

My study has shown change occurs in a student who studies abroad. Thus, this change should be acknowledged and affirmed at the institutional level that supports the returning student. As noted, important programming developments could occur via residence life and further offerings of extracurricular activities to address the engagement piece. Another aspect in which the institution could support the returning student who has studied abroad would be to establish a post-departure study abroad course.

Because there are scant resources available for allowing both a pre- and post-departure course, the pre-departure course could be moved as an online option and instead have the students engage with each other during the post-departure course instead (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014). Because there was little
interaction among the students in the pre-departure course due to the fact that many of them did not know each other, the post-departure course would allow a venue where the students, now as friends, could be together and reflect with each other. As well, the online forum prior to the study abroad program could provide a more open timeframe and format to connect with students that will be on the study abroad program. Social media could enhance the dialogue of students to help in preparing for the study abroad program.

At the institutional level, there should be support for a curriculum that promotes intercultural competence and gains not only for the student but the faculty as well. Just as more can be accomplished through support of learning while studying abroad (Coryell, 2013), there can be institutional support for the faculty back home at the institution who will be there to instruct the student who returns from a study abroad program. Thus, the institution must first set intercultural competence as a priority and then provide the buttress for the faculty who will teach the returning study abroad student. Because of the important role faculty play in teaching the study abroad student (Coryell, 2013), there must be more support within the institution for them.

A leading liberal arts college in the nation regarding institutional support for the faculty is Beloit College in Wisconsin. Beloit offers an integrated pre- and post-study abroad course that highlights how the institution can support the faculty who attend and participate in the study abroad program (Brewer, 2010). Of the post-study abroad course offered at Beloit there were many important tasks (Brewer, 2010):

The post-study-abroad course sought to help students understand their own assumptions and values, and how their study-abroad experiences related to their
intellectual and personal education. These courses continue to be taught today.

(p. 90)
The faculty member, or even someone from an outside entity within the college community such as counseling department, could facilitate the course (T. Johansson, personal communication, October 29, 2014).

My participants yearned for an opportunity to see each other again once back on campus and desired more opportunities to reflect on their time abroad. Lindsey (JM-NY) commented, “Also just to de-brief and reflect, because I think the more that I think through my experience, the more beneficial it has been for me.” In fact, some of the participant students were setting up weekly meals as a chance to talk about the study abroad experience. The role of community extended beyond the boundaries of the study abroad program. The post-departure course could be that weekly meeting to sit down and connect with shared memories and experiences from the study abroad program.

Assessment of any kind is important in knowing whether an experience such as the short-term study abroad is valuable. Utilizing various assessment tools and techniques can help my study gain relevancy in the future. One of the ways that an institution and in turn faculty could assess my study participants is through utilizing a model with proven reliability and validity. While the theory behind the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and how the model dovetails into assessment strategies of learners (here college students) would be useful for an institution such as William and Mary, there needs to be concrete assessment tools utilized to gain a fuller picture of the study abroad student. The Global Perspective Inventory is a well-established assessment tool that could be used in quantitative or mixed-methods research.
on the study abroad student (Braskamp et al., 2009). The American Council on Education (hereafter ACE) works to articulate areas of policy in the international arena and has developed a position on an assessment of learning paradigm that is used in other disciplines such as medicine (The Stanley Foundation, 1996). These four areas are ability, skill, knowledge, and attitude (The Stanley Foundation, 1996). Since I used college student development theory as my theoretical framework, it was important to see how this one theory fit into the assessment toolkit that ACE has espoused. In order to show how the ACE paradigm fits into my research, I have detailed the figure below that highlights my three research area foci. Next, I created a table to detail how my findings could move beyond my research focus and fit into an assessment matrix that could be used for future quantitative or mixed-methods research study.

![Figure D. Research Focus' Three Topical Areas](image)

*Figure D. Research Focus' Three Topical Areas*
This table outlines the potential interaction that I saw between the Seven Vector model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and ACE’s evaluation of global competencies within the realm of ability, skill, knowledge, or attitude of learners and institutions as detailed in its handbook on advancing comprehensive internationalization (The Stanley Foundation, 1996). The same seven vector codes (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) that were utilized for my research (see Appendix J) are used in this table. I have also added a ninth column to detail intercultural competency (IC). I argue that the ACE evaluation should include this component explicitly to allow a deeper discussion of how institutions could assess this important global marker in college students.

Table 3

Link Between Seven Vector Model (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and ACE’s Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACE Items</th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>MIR</th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>DI</th>
<th>IC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, it is evident that the vectors do interact with ACE’s position. The interaction is most heavily in the area of the skills domain of the ACE model. Given the fact that my study participants showed movement on all of the vectors and skills acquisition outside the classroom experience, we can say pointedly that the students are moving toward realizing the ACE framework which encompasses similar elements to how scholars have defined “intercultural effectiveness” (King et al., 2013, p. 70). Thus, the short-term study abroad experience through articulation of the Seven Vector model
(Chickering & Reisser, 1993) develops students towards a change in ability, skills, knowledge, and attitudes (The Stanley Foundation, 1996).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As with any research, there were shortcomings in my study. For one, I did not have any male participants. Given the underrepresentation of males studying abroad, I would recommend a study focused solely on males studying abroad to understand better if this population of students perceives the same types of changes in identity and intercultural competency.

Second, follow-up studies with my student participants one-, two- and three-years after their study abroad would help to show the further development of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Seven Vector model. Because my second interview engaged the students only about a month after they returned on campus, a follow-on study during subsequent years would help capture change, if at all, that was experienced. The passage of time on views of the experience were noted by Lindsey (JM-NY) who said,

> Also, I think, as time has gone since I’ve gotten back, I’ve had more time to process it and think through how I experienced it [study abroad]. If you would ask me right when I got back, to even now, I think my answer differs a lot.

The ways in which the students might respond given more time, maturity, and development could highlight additional avenues of support to provide during the study abroad experience.

Additionally, a study that re-visited the participants in several years and compared this population to students who never studied abroad could help mark the varying degrees of intercultural competence between groups. Because efforts at internationalization seek
to broaden the curriculum we may see little or great difference between these populations. How graduates interact with diverse cultures on the job can also help us understand more fully the influence of study abroad travel during the college years. Additionally, a longitudinal study similar to the one conducted by Baxter Magolda (2009), would allow the interaction of the participants with work-life cultures for an extended period of observation and potentially show growth within the intercultural maturity model (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

A third area of future research could be with faculty members who lead study abroad programs. In particular, I reflect on the faculty member who led the Florence program in my study. The reflection and experience that he felt could be similar or different from the student’s reflections. Obviously, the faculty member was older than my student participants, but it would be intriguing to gain his perspective, the faculty member’s family’s perspective as well as the perspective of the Italian faculty and Italian guide on the program and include comments on what they observed in regard to identity development among the student participants. Conversely, another area of future research in terms of faculty could also focus on the idea of faculty as learners (Barczyk, Davis, & Zimmerman, 2012; Eddy, 2014). Faculty, too, need to develop intercultural competency to achieve internationalization goals and in particular they need to see the importance of internationalizing the college curriculum which ensures that the study abroad programs remain relevant (Brewer, 2010).

A fourth area of future research could be with student participants from another institutional culture. For example, I could study research participants from another four-year public institution in the area, outside the state, or internationally. The competitive
culture that surfaced from my research participants talking about the college may not be present at another institution. These differences should be embraced and studied in terms of the evolution of the seven vectors in different institutional contexts.

**Personal Reflections**

I chose this topic long ago because I realized that a piece of my life had not fully been captured. I, too, studied abroad on a short-term program through William and Mary between my junior and senior year. When I returned, the campus engagement aspect of connecting my experience to my program was missing. I remember keeping a journal simply because I always enjoyed keeping a journal when I traveled, but I have only returned to that journal a few times in my adult life. I often wonder, how did the study abroad program affect my future career decisions? Did I choose to continue traveling later in life because of the study abroad experience? In what ways did my identity change when I studied abroad? The research in this study was self-reflective in many ways. Real ways in the classroom that I could have spoken about my study abroad experience would have helped me engage in the experience and give it more relevance in the future. I also would have appreciated being able to see the group that I shared so much with in a more consistent manner. The networks that we formed within the larger group could have been capitalized on more in the future. Through hearing the student’s stories, there developed a sense of urgency that these stories are worthy of a place in future research and scholarship. The choice of studying abroad at a pivotal time in my college student experience shaped me in ways that I may never realize. For the research participants and other students preparing to study abroad in college, I want them to know
that their story is important and worthy to tell because they will never be the same as when they left. Their new self is relevant as they decide where to sit at the world table.

Conclusions

I found that a short-term study abroad program contributes to a college student’s development. As college communities seek ways to engage students in the broader world, they anticipate that students will gain intercultural competency as a result. Short-term study abroad programs answer that call. My study is significant because although research supports the importance of a long-term study abroad, there is scant research detailing the impact of a short-term study abroad programs on student development and this study helps fill that gap. A short-term study abroad program is another vehicle of change in a college student’s life, but one that is being shortchanged given the lack of general attention by faculty and institutions in terms of the impact on student identity and development of intercultural competencies.

The students and arguably the faculty who attend short-term study abroad programs have important and rich stories to tell. Unfortunately, the institution is neglecting to provide a substantial forum, both pre- and post-study abroad, for them to make meaning of their experiences. Students are not being challenged to reflect on their study abroad experience through journal entries and artifacts that serve as important links to an often forgotten time in a college student’s life. Little connection exists between their study abroad experience and their on-campus academic programming.

Given the importance of institutional internationalization efforts, the findings from my study can provide institutions with a roadmap to intentionally engage students who have completed these worthwhile programs with their on-campus experiences. As
well, institutions must and should do more in courting a wider population of students to study abroad. If more students were engaged in a short-term study abroad program, we would have deeper conversations in the classroom and larger community abroad.

There are two important takeaways given my study’s findings that are critical to keep in mind with this ongoing discussion among students, faculty, and institutional leaders. First, there are several theories that can help campus members understand the change that a student studying abroad may feel. In particular, it is important to consider the intersections of identity that students bring to their study abroad experiences as programs of support are developed. If faculty and institutional leaders knew more about college student development theory, they could better support students during this experience and upon their return to campus. Aiding students in making intentional connections with their academic and extracurricular involvement when back on campus provides enhanced links to the study abroad experiences and helps to create an integrated learning opportunity for students (Barber, 2012).

Second, there are not enough points of re-engagement for study abroad students once they return to campus to help them integrate the learning accomplished abroad with their campus based majors. As institutions seek to internationalize, there must be time spent in the classroom and through on-campus organizations to continue important discussions on how the study abroad student sees the world differently. If we neglect this important piece of re-entry for the student, we miss an opportunity to fully leverage the study abroad experience for individual student development and learning. Clearly, as my research findings illuminated, the students who are returning from a study abroad program are changed. The change they experienced may only now be resonating in their
daily lives months after their return to campus. The palpable change that they experienced can continue to be accessed years down the road in a chosen career as a future study may help capture.

Institutions should do more to support the study abroad student through extracurricular involvement (both at home and while abroad) and in forums of peer-to-peer discussion. The study abroad student wants and needs to talk more with other study abroad students. Teresa (JP-NN) commented: “I feel like the experience I had was different than other people. I’m not sure if that’s true because I haven’t talked to many of them about it.” This student’s isolation does not capitalize on the rich experiences the group experienced and results in students yearning for a community in which they feel understood. As demonstrated through my research, the community of support that the participants created for themselves while studying abroad was vital to their well-being. The American bubble that they created while abroad, however, may have stunted their personal growth and growth in intercultural competency because they spent less time with the Italian culture alone versus with other William and Mary students.

When the students returned to campus, competing demands of the current academic term and commitments to extracurricular activities did not create space in their day to allow for frequent interaction with their Florence peers. During my last round of interviews, I heard about how the participants were attempting to gather their Florence peers once again. If built-in structures were in place that could foster the space and time for group interaction upon return, more leverage might be gained from the study abroad experience. The role of short-term study abroad program for college student identity development and gains in intercultural competency requires additional institutional
attention—at the faculty level for integration in academic programs and at the institutional level to provide opportunities for processing of the changes to identity. Educators must seek to provide rich learning opportunities for students in which the travelers come back from studying abroad claiming “Veni, vidi, didici—I came, I learned, I conquered.” The college student experiencing a short-term study abroad program can then truly return having lived through something greater than they could have ever imagined.
Appendix A: Introductory Participant Email Pre-Study Abroad

Ciao! My name is Ashleigh Lee (WM alumna, '02 and J.D. '06). I am a Ph.D. doctoral candidate at William and Mary in the Educational, Policy, Planning and Leadership department. My dissertation focuses on the impact that a short-term study abroad has on a college student’s identity development. Dr. Pamela Eddy is my dissertation chair.

I would like to seek your permission in allowing me to observe a few of the pre-departure meetings that you will conduct with your students in preparation for the Florence, Italy, 2014 study abroad. I have received IRB approval.

If you would like further details, please do not hesitate to contact me at easchullerlee@gmail.com. I would be pleased to meet with you individually before the meetings as well.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking with you!

Sincerely, Ashleigh Lee
Appendix B: Participant Email Post-Study Abroad

Ciao and Bentornato!!

Hope everyone had a safe and wonderful time in Italy! Thank you again for agreeing to take part in my research study on a faculty-led short-term study abroad experience and its influence on identity development and intercultural competence.

I am looking forward to hearing your perspectives and learning more about your experiences in Italy this summer.

If you have not already done so, please send me an electronic copy of your journal entries (can either be all of them or ones you select for me to read) and your signed consent form.

I would like to conduct our first interview in person. Please email me back and let me know when you plan to return to campus. We can then arrange a convenient time to meet at SWEM or another campus location!

Grazie, Ashleigh
Appendix C: Participant Demographic Data Questionnaire

Name: ______________________________________________

Major/Minor: ______________________________________________

Race/Ethnicity: Please check all that apply:
   ___ Caucasian
   ___ Pacific Islander
   ___ Hispanic
   ___ Native American
   ___ Asian
   ___ Multiracial
   ___ Other: Please specify: ______________________

Class year: ___________________

WM email address: _________________________________

Personal email address if you wish to share: ________________________________

1. Have you ever studied abroad before? _________________________
   1 a. If you have studied abroad, where did you travel to? _______________
   1 b. In which country did you study abroad on your previous trip? _______________

2. Have you ever traveled abroad? _________________________
   2 a. If you have traveled abroad, where did you go? _______________
   2 b. Was the travel in conjunction with a: (please check all that apply)
       Service-learning opportunity?: ________________________
       Family Travel?: _________________________
       High School trip?: _________________________
       Other?: ______________________________ (please specify)

3. Do you speak a foreign language(s)? _________________________
   3 a. If so, what do you speak? _________________________
   3 b. Do you consider yourself fluent? _________________________

4. Why did you select the study abroad trip to Florence? (Short answer fill-in below please—may use back of sheet)
WHAT DO I HOPE TO LEARN FROM YOU?

The investigation, entitled **EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF A FACULTY-LED SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE** is designed to explore the impact that a short-term study abroad to Florence, Italy, had on you in terms of development and intercultural competency.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO ME?

I am currently working on a dissertation in this field. Studying your responses to my interview questions will be informative of any experiences you may have had while studying abroad in Italy during Summer 2014.

WHAT I WILL REQUEST FROM YOU?

- I will ask that you answer my introductory email questions to set up a convenient time to meet.
- I will ask that you keep a journal either in writing or through a blog site and answer questions involving your experience while in Italy. I will have journal question prompts for you although you may choose not to answer any or all of them. I will request access to your journal and/or blog site. I have attached the journal prompts electronically. The prompts may be subject to modification.
- If you agree to participate in my research study, I will ask for your availability for 2 interviews that will last no more than 90 minutes. The interview will be at a location that is convenient for you on campus or in the surrounding Williamsburg area.
- I will ask that you bring an artifact with you to the interview that represents the change, if any, that you experienced while studying abroad.
- I ask that you allow me to take notes and audiorecord the interviews. Additionally, I ask that you allow me to take a picture of the artifact you may bring with you to the interview.
- I ask that you review the notes from my interview electronically and send them back with any revisions within a week to me at easchullerlee@gmail.com.
- I ask that you do not share your transcriptions with anyone else.
- If you decline to become a research participant, you will not be required to complete the interviews described above.
- You may freely terminate participation at any time without penalty.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The confidentiality of your personally identifying information will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
- Only the researcher through the information that you provide will know your name and other identifying information. Neither your name nor any other personally identifying information will be used in any presentation or published work without prior written consent.
- The audiorecording of the interview described above will be erased after the dissertation study is complete and the tape recording devices that will be used for the interview will be stored in the researcher's home office in a secure location.
- You may refuse to answer any questions during the interviews if you so choose. You may also terminate your participation in the study at any time. To do so, please inform the interviewer of your intention or email the interviewer as soon as you decide. Neither of these actions will incur a penalty of any type.
- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decline to participate, this decision will not endanger your class standing, final grade, or future relationships with the College of William & Mary.
- A summary of the results of the study will be sent to you electronically (to the email address that I have on file for you) once it is complete.
- Upon completion of the study, you will be compensated with a Starbucks gift card.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT THE FACULTY ADVISOR AND ME?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela Eddy, Ph.D., at peddy@wm.edu at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia (757-221-2349). If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Tom Ward at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) or Dr. Ray McCoy at 757-221-2783 (rwmcco@wm.edu), chairs of the two William & Mary committees that supervise the treatment of study participants.

By checking next to the “I agree to participate” response below, then signing and dating this form, you will indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this study, and confirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

__ I agree to participate

__ I do not agree to participate

A copy of this consent form will be provided to you at the interview for you to keep.
SIGNATURES:

PARTICIPANT: _______________________________________________________
Date: ______

INTERVIEWER/RESEARCHER:

Date: ______

Personnel Qualifications:

Dr. Pamela L. Eddy, Professor, School of Education, Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, College of William and Mary, is a researcher, scholar, mentor, and prolific writer. Dr. Eddy’s teaching experience spans decades. She has received numerous accolades and grant money for research projects. She has chaired 30 dissertations.

E. Ashleigh Schuller Lee is a Ph.D. candidate in the Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership program at the College of William and Mary. She is currently enrolled in dissertation credits. She has completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative module required of all William and Mary researchers.
Appendix E: Pilot Study Interview Protocol

Grand tour question: How do you describe your study abroad to others when they ask about your trip?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
Could the question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

Change:

1. Describe how you have changed as a result of your study abroad experience?
   a. What prompted this change?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
Could the question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

   b. Describe the situation in Italy that made you think differently?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
Could the question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

2. Please give an example of how that change has affected your senior year at William and Mary in terms of learning. What about in relationship with friends?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
Could the question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

3. What changes have you seen in your other classmates who joined you in Italy?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
Could this question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

Intercultural Competency:

1. How do you see others differently as a result of your study abroad experience?

Is this language clear?: Yes No
2. In what ways do you see your local community differently since your trip? Is this any different as a result of your study abroad experience?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:

3. How do you understand the world now that may be different due to the study abroad experience?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:

4. Would you recommend a study abroad experience to other classmates as a way to enhance their cultural competency and appreciation of other cultures? Why or why not?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:

5. How do you define intercultural competency?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:

Internationalization:
1. What do you bring back to the classroom and your own academic studies now that you have studied abroad?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:

2. Have you changed your major because of the study abroad? Minor?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments:
3. Has the study abroad experience caused you to confirm or reconsider your anticipated career choice? If yes, in what ways?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

4. What value does a short-term study abroad program have to the William and Mary learning community?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________

Concluding thoughts:
Is there any additional information you would like to share about your study abroad experience to help me in my research on understanding a study abroad’s influence on college student development and the value that it may have had in your life?

Is this language clear?: Yes  No
Could this question be improved?
Comments: ________________________________
Appendix F: First-Round Participant Interview Protocol

1. I am excited to discuss your study abroad trip with you. Tell me how you describe the experience in a few minutes to someone that asks.
   a. Do you describe the trip differently depending on who asks? In what ways?
   b. How does your description depend on how interested the person is or how much time you have?

2. How do you find yourself relating to people now that you have gone on your study abroad experience?
   a. What type of connections are you making with your academic work?
   b. What type of changes have occurred when you meet an international visitor on campus?
   c. What do you think contributed to your thinking about interrelationships differently after your trip (if they describe they are thinking differently)?

3. What challenges, if any, did you face in Italy?
   a. Did these emerge in different settings?
   b. What challenges emerged as a result of living with the host family?
   c. How did you handle them when first faced with the challenge?

4. What type of connection did you maintain with family and friends at home?
   a. Did you text/call?
   b. Did you Skype?
   c. How often?
   d. Did this change over the course of the trip?
   e. What did you talk about in these conversations?

5. What forms of support did you find during your study abroad experience?
   a. What type of support did your peers provide?
   b. Family/friends at home?
   c. Your host family?
   d. Your instructor?

6. What surprised you the most on the trip?
   a. Coursework?
   b. Culture?
   c. Host family?
   d. Being away from home?

7. How do you see yourself now as compared to when you left for the Florence program?
   a. How would you describe your maturity?
   b. How would you describe how you relate to new experiences/cultures?
c. How would you describe how you react to new situations/diverse people? How do you view your academics differently now as compared to when you left for the Florence program?

d. How do you describe your knowledge/learning now?

e. What type of connections do you make between your experience in Italy and your coursework/major?

f. Have you changed your career path and life’s goals now that you’ve studied abroad?

8. If you had to access your pre-trip self relative to your post-trip self, what would you say?

   a. Personal level
   b. Academics/Knowledge
   c. Interpersonal relationships

9. How do you see the world differently upon your return?

10. Anything we haven’t covered that will be important for me in understanding the college student experience in study abroad settings?
Appendix G: Sampling Of First-Round Interview Questions Related to Vectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Vectors</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managing Emotions</strong></td>
<td>What challenges, if any, did you face in Italy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing mature</td>
<td>What challenges were present as a result of living with the host interpersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Purpose</td>
<td>Have you changed your career path and life’s ambition now that you have studied abroad?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The vectors are derived from Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) model.
Appendix H: Second-Round Participant Interview Protocol

1. How do you see yourself now that you are back on campus?

2. In what ways have you changed since you first arrived to Florence in May 2014?

3. How do you interact with your student and professional colleagues who are
different from you culturally and ethnically since you studied abroad to Florence?

4. How have you incorporated your work in Italy in courses since you have returned?

5. Please describe your artifact.
   a. Why did you choose this one to share with me?
   b. What is significant about this artifact?
Appendix I: Participant Journal Prompts

1. As you contemplate your study abroad trip, you have signed up to be part pilgrim, part explorer, part scholar. What was your motivation to participate in this trip? Describe what propelled you to want to travel in this way internationally?

2. First impressions: During your first hours in Italy you may experience a culture shock. While it may not be "shocking," entering cultures that are different from your own can feel like a significant change. Reflect on your first few days. What did you experience (emotionally, intellectually, kinesthetically, etc.)? Describe what it looks like, feels like, and sounds like in this part of the world. What is familiar? What is different? What surprised you?

3. Our first impression of a new culture is often surface level. What are the cultural artifacts that stick in your mind that contributed to your views of this new culture? What assumptions can we make based on these artifacts? How can we dig deeper?

4. When we examine other cultures some aspects of our native culture seem to stand out even more as we are able to see assumptions we've held about our way in the US. What have you learned about yourself on this trip? What are the relationships between the psycho-emotional "baggage" we carry abroad and how has it influence your experience?

5. Do you feel that you were embraced as a stranger in Italy? What made you feel this way? What efforts did you make to cross the cultural divide between strangers?

6. How do you describe your interactions with your Italian host family? As the weeks go by, has that interaction changed at all?

7. How will you describe your study abroad experience to other students when you return to campus? What has changed? How do you see yourself integrating the learning that occurred on your trip when you return?

8. How are you seeing the world differently as a result of your study abroad? What connections are you making to your courses at William and Mary? To previous experiences?

9. If you could only describe one memory from the trip what would it be? Why was this so important to you? What did it make you question?

Jot down any items that are important to you as you process the trip—remember, it only has to be important to you!
Appendix J: Researcher and Peer Reviewer Coding Sheet

DC=Developing Competence. Student participant is developing a greater confidence. The student participant may see something with less difficulty than before the study abroad.

ME=Managing Emotions. Student participant handles emotions in a more mature and adult-like way. Student participant can make decisions without feeling overwhelmed by them.

AI=Moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Student participant acts more like a more mature adult not as dependent on his or her parents while making reasonable decisions while studying abroad. However, the student participant discovers that they may rely on other people in society for support and nurturing as they move forward in life. Thus, this is the interdependent aspect of the vector.

MIR=Developing mature interpersonal relationships. Student participant connects with other individuals, including other student participants on the study abroad, in deeper and more meaningful ways. This vector can also be described as a way the student sees individuals from other cultures in a different way.

IC/GC=Intercultural competency and global competency. Student participant discusses new ways in which they are relating to people from other cultures and/or people who have different views.

EI=Establishing Identity. The student participant proclaims that they question something about themselves or that they discovered something new for the first time about themselves.

DP=Developing Purpose. The student participant sees his or her future in a clearer and less murky way. The student participant has decided to maintain his or her major area of study despite experiencing a study abroad.

DI=Developing Integrity. The student participant develops a deeper sense of what is right and wrong and can justify his or her explanation. Student may also describe a respect for someone else including his or her host family that did not exist prior to attending the study abroad.

Note. The codes reflect abbreviations for Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Seven Vector model.
Appendix K: Peer Reviewer Confidentiality Agreement

I agree to participate as a peer reviewer in the doctoral dissertation of Ashleigh Lee. I agree to maintain the utmost confidence throughout this peer review process by not sharing or disseminating in written or electronic form the transcription(s) of the student participant(s) in Ashleigh Lee’s study or any information gleaned from the review without prior written consent from Ashleigh Lee. Additionally, I will not use any of the data that I am checking for my dissertation.

Signed: ________________________________

Dated: ________________________________
Appendix L: Crosswalk Between Selected Articles And Seven Vector Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Vector Model</th>
<th>Braskamp et al., 2009</th>
<th>Dolby, 2008</th>
<th>Ellwood, 2011</th>
<th>Orahood et al., 2008</th>
<th>Tajes &amp; Ortiz 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Emotions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving through autonomy toward interdependence</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing mature interpersonal relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing identity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing purpose</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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