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**A STUDY OF CULTURAL AWARENESS AND TRANSFORMATIVE  
LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ABROAD**

by

Desirae Gould

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services and Leadership  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in Higher Education  
at  
Rowan University  
August 23, 2018

Thesis Advisor: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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## **Abstract**

Desirae Gould

### **A STUDY OF CULTURAL AWARENESS AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ABROAD**

2017-2018

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

The goal of this study was to explore the effects of study abroad on students' cultural awareness and transformative learning. This study was conducted at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ. The students in this study have participated semester long study abroad during fall 2016, spring 2017, or fall 2017 semesters. For some this was their first time travelling abroad. The literature strongly suggests that there are many benefits for students that participate in study abroad. The data analysis suggests that respondents increased their cultural awareness and have more appreciation for those that are different than them. In addition, that this was also a transformative learning experience for them as they had adopted new idea, beliefs, and values by participating in this study tour. Overall, the data suggests that subjects benefited from their study abroad experience.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Study abroad is now becoming more and more a part of the college and university experience. Studying abroad is also now more accessible to students through the various types of programs that are being offered that range in duration. For instance, if a student is unable to study abroad for a year or semester, he/she now has the opportunity to participate in short term study abroad programs. The range of programs being offered is important to meeting student needs such as costs and credit transfers. The study abroad experience is not only valuable but important to living in a global society. There are many benefits of studying abroad that range from personal growth to gaining new skills to bring to the workplace. Students are able to develop a variety of skills such as interdependence, cultural and global awareness, and/or learning a new language.

Study abroad also offers students an opportunity to live and study outside of their comfort zone. Students that study abroad can be challenged and experience culture shock when integrating into a new society. While studying abroad may present some challenges and adjustments, it provides students with a unique experience that can set them apart from other students. For example, students meet new people, try new things and customs that translate into their growth as a person and student. The experience can also change the way students view the world. However, understanding more about a student's study abroad is important in adding information to the knowledge base on this topic. This study provides insight into a student's experience after studying abroad for at least one semester.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Understanding what impacts a student's cultural awareness in today's society is important. It is valuable for students to engage with people who are different from themselves. Some people have inaccurate interpretations and perceptions of what constitutes study abroad programs. In addition, some people may not see the value in study abroad programs. While some may view study abroad as an opportunity for students to party and maybe attend classes, this study sought to challenge this perception. Experiencing a different culture is expected to help students to better understand the world they live in and impact their cultural awareness. In addition, these experiences can become transformative and may change a student's beliefs and values.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to learn about the development of cultural awareness and transformative learning of the students who participated in study abroad at Rowan University. This study focused on students that studied abroad for one semester which is typically 4 months in duration. Students work with the Advisor for Education Abroad at Rowan University to apply and plan for their semester abroad. Students also work with a study abroad provider that assists with the VISA process, selecting classes, and housing. The literature supports that there are many benefits to study abroad. This study explored the cultural awareness and transformative learning that developed in the students who participated in a semester long study abroad program lasting one semester.

## **Significance of the Study**

Cultural awareness is relevant in today's society as people celebrate their diversity and differences. The opportunity to study abroad in any capacity brings value back to the community a student is a part of in terms of diversity and perspective (Martinez, 2011). The significance of this study is its capacity to provide greater insight into the impact of study abroad programs in higher education. Understanding the impact of study abroad brings value and knowledge to higher education administrators and institutions that seek to promote study abroad to their students. Students can describe experiences during their college career as transformative. However, understanding how transformative experiences abroad can impact their overall college experience is also beneficial.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

There is an assumption that study abroad provides opportunities for cultural awareness and transformative learning experiences. In addition, there is a potential for researcher bias as the researcher experienced study abroad and therefore is an advocate of study abroad. This study's data and information were collected through surveys and are limited in program options. The students who completed the survey participated in a semester long study abroad program. The study is not inclusive of study tours, internships abroad, faculty led tours, or year long programs offered by Rowan University. There were only 80 participants that studied abroad during the fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017 semesters which represent a limited number. The low number has resulted in a total population approach for collecting data.

## **Operational Definitions**

1. **Cultural Awareness:** Refers to the ability to recognize the different beliefs, values, and customs that someone has based on his/her origins, and it allows a person to build more successful personal and professional relationships in a diverse environment.
2. **Cultural Competence:** Is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
3. **Culture:** The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.
4. **Culture Shock:** The feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes.
5. **Global Awareness:** Is a conceptual understanding based upon an applicable knowledge of global and cultural perspectives. The understanding of concepts that impact the world encompasses, but is not limited to, environmental, social, cultural, political, and economic relations.
6. **Study Abroad:** Refers to the act of a student pursuing educational opportunities in a country other than one's own; Study tour (form of study abroad)- is a travel experience with specific learning goals and the learning goals of each study tour can vary.
7. **Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow Psychocritical Approach)-** Mezirow states that transformative learning, “ is the process by which we transform our

taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.” In addition, that “through transformative learning we are freed from uncritical acceptance of others’ purposes, values, and beliefs” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 133).

### **Research Questions**

The study sought to address the following questions:

1. To what extent does study abroad affect students cultural awareness?
2. In which ways does study abroad influence transformative learning of a student?
3. What benefits do students receive through study abroad?
4. Does study abroad impact students appreciation for those different from them?

### **Overview of the Study**

Chapter II provides a review of literature from scholarly sources. This chapter establishes the frame of reference. The review describes a brief history of study abroad and the benefits of study abroad. There is also a focus on transformative learning and cultural awareness and how they each apply to study abroad.

Chapter III provides a description on the procedures and methodology used to complete the study. The methodology overview includes the context of study, population sample, data collection tool, and data analysis.

Chapter IV reports the findings of the study that were based on the research questions. The data are summarized and provide a profile of the study subjects.

Chapter V explains the major findings and offers suggestions and recommendations for further study on the topic.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

Gaining cultural awareness and obtaining a global mindset is an important skill to have in today's world. Study abroad has allowed college students the opportunity to travel and continue their education. Students now have options to study abroad on long-term or short-term programs. This review discusses the impacts, influences and benefits of study abroad. The history of study abroad is reviewed and the program began as a summer study tour. Study abroad offers many benefits whether students participate in long-term programs such as a semester or year. Some students may choose short-term programs such as a two week study tour and there are benefits to study tours. The importance of cultural awareness and how it affects a student's experience will be reviewed. Also, the Transformational Learning Theory and how students can have transformative experiences through study abroad will be discussed.

#### Brief History

In the 1920s, there was a rise in universities' support for international group travel that provided academic credit. Most schools offered study abroad options to European countries that would typically be short-term and during the summer (Lee, 2012). The University of Delaware launched America's first study abroad program in 1923. The study abroad program was first proposed by Professor Raymond W. Kirkbride, a World War I (WWI) veteran (Institute for Global Studies, n.d.). In 1923, there were eight students who went on a study tour to France for six weeks. The program began to get



more recognition, and it became an official program known as the Junior Year Abroad (Lee, 2012). The University of Delaware continued to send students to France, and later to Switzerland and Germany (Institute for Global Studies, n.d.). The program soon became the model that other colleges in the United States could use to design their own study abroad tours and programs (Lee, 2012).

In the 1950s, political support rose for post-war study abroad as a way to help with world peace between the world's nations. This was able to happen, due to the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) that developed these programs quickly (Lee, 2012). The CIEE was founded in 1947 and facilitated travel of U.S. students to study in Europe and brought international students to the U.S. This company has dedicated itself to providing educational experiences that transform the lives of all (The Leader, n.d.). The council started to send thousands of students to Europe annually. During this time, interest increased for study abroad programs in non-European countries, such as Africa, Asia, South America, and mostly Japan (Lee, 2012).

From the 1990s to modern day, the tourism field has skyrocketed, due to the advances made in technology and communication. There were increases in exchange programs between other countries and the United States of America (Lee, 2012). Colleges began not only to send their students abroad, but faculty as well, and universities began to develop faculty-led study tours (Lee, 2012). In the beginning, most study abroad programs focused on language, and then more comprehensive courses followed. In addition, the length of study abroad and housing options began to be offered

(Lee, 2012). Now, colleges across the United States are offering opportunities to students to study abroad.

### **Benefits of Study Abroad**

Today, contemporary society is more globalized than ever before, and students, as future leaders, need to be able to embrace cross-cultural differences. Study abroad can prepare students for their future careers in a variety of fields (Martinez, 2011). It is important that minority students take advantage of studying abroad before graduation. The percentage of minority students going abroad to study, according to reports, is a lot less than the 80.5% of white students who studied abroad in 2008-2009. Not only does study abroad bring meaning to their search for future careers, but it also adds to the gratification of their undergraduate experiences (Martinez, 2011). Employers are searching for students who are more culturally aware and have an adventurous nature that brings creative thinking to an organization. Going abroad can remove students from their normal academic semesters and motivate them in new ways. In addition, students return with new energy and passions to share with their community (Martinez, 2011). Students give feedback during discussions in and out of the classroom, and there is also improvement in grades. Diversity from this experience generates debate, mutual respect, and gives perspective (Martinez, 2011).

People live in a global economy, and it is useful to have study abroad listed on professional resumes. Most colleges and universities provide offices that support students in their journey. While the cost of study abroad can be financially large, it is a good investment for the future (Warlick, 2007). However, student affairs professionals can

assist students in navigating the process in their search for and applying for scholarships. Some suggest living with a host family instead of other American students. By living with a host family, students will learn more about their culture and have respect for it (Warlick, 2007). Students may want to take courses that coincide with their location. In addition, students should seek volunteer opportunities or work while abroad to feel more connected to the community. Lastly, students stepping outside of their comfort zone can use those experiences appropriately in job interviews to stand out as a candidate (Warlick, 2007).

Research conducted at a large mid-Atlantic university on students who participated in study abroad and had explored the role of openness in their experiences abroad. The study was published in September 2015 in which 59 undergraduate students took surveys before and after they studied abroad for three months (Martin, Katz-Buonincontro, & Livert, 2015, p. 619). The study sustained the hypotheses that were proposed. The first hypothesis was that “study abroad will result in significant increases in students’ openness to experience, critical thinking, and race and cultural understanding” (Martin et al., 2015, p. 620). The second hypothesis was “openness to experience will moderate the benefits of studying abroad. Students with high levels of openness will gain more from their sojourn than those with low levels of openness” (Martin et al., 2015, p. 620). The survey questions given to students focused on assessing these areas of interest. It was found that there was an increase in students’ knowledge and the ability to comprehend new cultures. This was seen in students who had initially reported a low level of openness in the survey. This study demonstrated that students

having these cultural experiences had a new appreciation for diversity and reduced stereotypes (Martin et al., 2015, p. 619).

Although there are many benefits to studying abroad, students often have trouble articulating what they have learned when they return home (Kowarski, 2010). If students are unable to properly articulate the transferrable skills they developed by studying abroad, it may not be useful to mention their experience in job interviews. Michigan State University responded to this issue by creating a workshop called Unpacking your Study Abroad Experience that focused on the skills developed during studying abroad (Kowarski, 2010). At Clemson University, students used interactive blogs that allowed them to converse with others about their cultural experiences. By doing this, students would be able to retain the memories of their study abroad experience and reflect (Kowarski, 2010). These kinds of workshops have been implemented at other colleges and are also known as re-entry workshops. These workshops focus on assisting students with their transition back to their home country and offer ways to incorporate those experiences into resume and interview responses.

Upon their return, students often have re-reverse culture shock; also called re-entry. The range of re-entry challenges that students experience include: boredom, “no one wants to hear,” reverse “homesickness,” changed relationships, people misunderstand, inability to apply new knowledge and skills, and loss/compartimentalizing the experience (Re-Entry, n.d.). There are some helpful tips for dealing with re-entry. For instance, students are often encouraged to take a language course, seek work, or volunteer

opportunities that connect with what they learned, and stay connected to the people they met abroad (USAC, n.d.).

Study abroad is a transformative experience for many students. There has been an increase in short-term study abroad programs that offer more affordable options to students and families. Short-term study abroad has been called into question for not meeting academic learning goals. However, evidence has shown that remarkable benefits have been gained for students (Kamdar & Lewis, 2015). While there may be some disconnect with academic studies in relation to study abroad, it is beneficial given that students engage in the experience and can assess the outcomes (Kamdar & Lewis, 2015). Social media also plays such a major role in the world today, and it is important to reflect on the role of social media in study abroad. The use of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are being used by study abroad offices to promote information to students (Bilsing, 2015).

### **Benefits of Study Tours**

There has been an increase in the number of students participating in study tours, also known as short term study abroad programs. Immigration is increasing, which in turn affects the spread of globalization (Mapp, 2012). Although cultural diversity may be taught through coursework, the classroom still has its limits. Due to these limits, obtaining experiences in another country through study abroad is becoming popular. It is noted as a new process to develop intercultural knowledge and adaptability in students (Mapp, 2012). In 2009-2010, the Institute of International Education (IIE) reported that 270,604 students had participated in some form of study abroad program. The increase

was four times the amount it has been within the last 20 years. Students are travelling to countries that are more diverse and represent more countries around the world (Mapp, 2012). Short-term programs ranging from one-week to eight-week programs have helped to increase the growth and number of students studying abroad. The reason short-term programs are attractive to students is due to the flexibility of programs in regard to financial and academic demands (Mapp, 2012). Therefore, the number of students participating in short-term programs represents over half of the study abroad population. Study abroad programs have enhanced students' abilities to understand that there are differences and similarities between them and people from different cultures. It has been suggested that students in long term programs experience more growth than those in shorter programs. However, a study was conducted that showed that students who participate in short term programs get just as much or more out of short-term study abroad programs as those who participate in long-term programs (Mapp, 2012).

### **Cultural Awareness**

The way cultural awareness is defined can vary but is a positive skill and understanding to have. Being culturally aware does not mean that a person knows everything about another culture but is aware of cultural differences. When interacting with someone from a different background it is important to understand people have different experiences, values, and backgrounds from yourself (Discover Corps, 2017). Another definition is, "awareness of cultural differences and their impact on behavior is the beginning of intercultural effectiveness" (Cultural Awareness, n.d). According to the

National Center for Cultural Competence, cultural awareness includes: (Cultural Awareness, n.d).

- Having a firm grasp of what culture is and what it is not
- Having insight into *intracultural* variation
- Understanding how people acquire their cultures and culture's important role in personal identities, lifeways, and mental and physical health of individuals and communities;
- Being conscious of one's own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, and biases
- Observing one's reactions to people whose cultures differ from one's own and reflecting upon these responses
- Seeking and participating in meaningful interactions with people of differing cultural backgrounds.

Living in a global society, college graduates will find that job requirements will include being able to work with others from different cultural backgrounds. In fields such as education, business, and engineering cultural awareness and competence is a required skill to be successful (Lokkesmoe, Kuchinke, & Ardichvili, 2016). Holmes and O'Neil (2012) wrote that, "As people become citizens of the world for the purpose of work, education, and business, they are required to span boundaries of language, ethnicity, and nationality" (as cited in Lokkesmoe et al., 2016, p. 156). Cultural awareness is an important skill for students to develop and can assist with effectiveness and creativity (Lokkesmoe et al., 2016).

There have been several studies on study abroad and cultural awareness that focus on a specific group, personal development, or intercultural competence/awareness. Studies have shown that study abroad programs increases students worldview, cross cultural effectiveness, interest in travel, global perspective, increase reflective thought and self confidence. Kitsantas (2004), examined the development of cross-cultural skills and global understanding in students that studied abroad. This study surveyed 232 students on cross-cultural awareness skills before and after their study abroad experience. The study also focused on student goals and how their goals impacted their development (Kitsantas, 2004). The study found that students cross-cultural skills and global understanding increases through study abroad. In addition, that the goals students set for themselves was used to develop their skills (Kitsantas, 2004).

A study focused on the impacts of study abroad involving cultural awareness and personal development was conducted on business students from the University of Southern Mississippi that studied abroad during the summer in London, England (Black & Duhon, 2006). The educational objectives were, (a) more cross-cultural tolerance and empathy, and (b) self-confidence and independence. The researchers used the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory instrument also referred to as the CCAI which uses four dimensions to measure cross-cultural adaptability (Black & Duhon, 2006). This instrument was able to measure the ability of a student to adjust to cross-cultural situation and improve cultural sensitivity. The survey instrument was distributed to students at the beginning of the program (Black & Duhon, 2006). However, students were not aware that they would complete the CCAI at the end of the summer program. The survey results



indicated that students had meet the educational objectives. After the completion of the program students had developed more cross-cultural competence/empathy, and had more self-confidence and independent (Black & Duhon, 2006).

### **Transformational Learning Theory and Experience**

Jack Mezirow presented the transformative learning theory and the three dimensions of perspective transformation. These three dimensions include psychological (changes in understanding of self), convictional (revision of belief systems), and behavioral (changes in lifestyle). The Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow Psychocritical Approach) “is the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning schemes, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 133). In addition, that “through transformative learning we are freed from uncritical acceptance of others’ purposes, values, and beliefs” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 133). Mezirow's theory included 10 phases of transformation which are (Blake-Campbell, 2014):

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. Critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

6. Planning a course action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

Studying abroad can be a transformative experience for students. Regardless of the length, study abroad is structured to challenge students on how they perceive the world. In addition, studying abroad offers real world experiences that challenges previous beliefs of how one perceives their world (Blake-Campbell, 2014). Mezirow suggests that self-reflection is critical to these experiences that could change a person's frame of reference to be more inclusive. While students who participated in long-term programs gain more than those who participated in short programs, the difference is made up when students reflect on what is happening to them (Blake-Campbell, 2014).

There are debates over the efficacy of short-term study abroad programs. The Study Abroad for Global Engagement project, presented its findings at the Forum on Education Abroad conference. The findings suggested that students who studied abroad for a short time are likely to be just as globally engaged as those who studied abroad long-term (Fischer, 2009). A Minnesota study, surveyed 6,400 graduates from 22 colleges who had studied abroad in the past five decades. The purpose of the study was to learn whether individuals had become globally engaged, and if this could be attributed to having studied abroad (Fischer, 2009). The result of the survey, demonstrated that 83% of

study abroad alumni reported that going overseas had a strong impact on their lives. The results strongly suggest that study abroad is transformative (Fischer, 2009).

### **Studies Conducted on Study Abroad at Rowan University**

There was a study conducted at Rowan University that focused on the impact of study abroad. The research project explored the effects of study abroad on students' cultural awareness and transformative learning. This study was conducted on students at Rowan University that participated in a faculty-led study tour, Teach and Discover India. For some this was their first time travelling abroad. The literature strongly suggested that there are many benefits to study abroad such as this short-term study tour (Gould, 2017). Data analysis suggested that respondents increased their cultural awareness in the pre/post assessment analysis. In addition, there was also a transformative learning experience for them as they had adopted new ideas, beliefs, and values by participating in the study tour. A majority (78%) of the participants' responses showed that they were impacted and influenced by participating in the Teach and Discover India study tour (Gould, 2017).

Cuss (2012) used a qualitative approach to conduct research on the study abroad experience of students at Rowan University. The purpose of this study was to research and determine the impact of study abroad on students. The students who participated in the study had studied abroad for an academic semester (Cuss, 2012). Using interviews, Cuss examined the participants' cultural learning, transformational learning, alcohol use, and risky behaviors. Cuss collected on data on what students now considered risky behaviors. The researcher found that risky behaviors could be sexual, taking risks at night

such as walking home drunk, blacking out, accepting drinks from strangers, and risque attire (Cuss, 2012) The learning that look placed was influenced by various experiences. The data suggested that students gained cultural learning and experienced transformational learning. In addition, the students reported participating in risky behaviors and alcohol use while participating in study abroad (Cuss, 2012).

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

This literature review offers an overview of the history of study abroad. The purpose of study abroad in the beginning was to assist the world's nations toward world peace after World Wars I and II. Studies have shown that there are benefits to study abroad and study tours. The opportunity to study abroad offers a transformative experience for students. In addition, students obtain self-development benefits as well. Students who participate in study abroad become globally engaged and develop their identity. Study abroad offers the opportunity students to travel abroad but also take academic classes. Some may view study abroad as a “semester off” for partying instead of focusing on academics. Studies have also shown that students who study abroad may participant in risky behaviors that could take away from the benefits that study abroad can offer to students. The purpose of this study was to give insight into the benefits and to better understand the value of the study abroad experience.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Context of the Study**

This study was conducted at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. The university is a medium-sized public research institution located 20 minutes from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There are three campuses which are located in Glassboro, Camden, and Stratford. In addition, there are approximately 18,500 students that attend the university ranging from bachelor to doctoral degree seeking students. More specifically, there are approximately 16,150 undergraduate students. The university is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The International Center at Rowan University offers a range of services and assistance for international students. There are approximately 75 international students attending Rowan University from 19 different countries. The International Center offers a range of services, such as assistance for F-1 international students and J-1 visiting scholars and students. In addition, intensive English language program and paperwork assistance for students that have been accepted. The International Center also assists students with the visa process, applying for university housing, and registering for classes as a matriculated student.

The Office of Education Abroad assists students who are interested in studying abroad. There are 10 university approved partner organizations and universities. These partner organizations and universities are: International Studies Abroad (ISA), Lorenzo d' Medici University- Italy, American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS), Northumbria

University- UK, Semester at Sea, Osnabruk University- Germany, Studio Art Center International (SACI), University of Kent- Canterbury, SEA Semester, and World Endeavors (Education Abroad Office). Students are able to select from a variety of programs such as faculty-led study tours, summer sessions, internships abroad, and long-term study abroad options. In addition, long term study abroad options are offered typically take place through a semester or year abroad. The Education Abroad office also works closely with the Financial Aid to ensure aid and scholarships go towards a student's overseas program.

There were 80 undergraduate students that participated in study abroad for a semester during the fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017 academic terms. The cost for each student varies depending on the program the student selected and even their housing option. Students can choose to live in an apartment with other student abroad students, live at sea, or home-stay where the student lives with a host family. While students are abroad they may choose to travel to different countries with their program provider or with friends. In addition, some students may volunteer in their host country.

### **Population and Sample**

The target population for this study was students who participated in study abroad for one academic semester. These students have also studied abroad within the past three semesters which include fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017. The students participating in this study were all undergraduate students who attended Rowan University during the spring 2017 semester. This was a total population sample, in which the survey was

provided to all students that had studied abroad between fall 2016-fall 2017. A total population sample was used due to the entire population being very small.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments used to assess students' cultural awareness and transformative learning experiences was modified from two studies that utilized survey instruments. The first study was conducted by Stone (2014) that studied the learning phases and outcomes of transformative learning in students who studied abroad. The next study was conducted by Salisbury (2011) that focused on the intercultural competence in undergraduate college students who studied abroad. Permission was granted for me to use and modify these instruments.

The survey (Appendix C) consists of five sections which address: (a) general demographic information, (b) data related to cultural awareness, (c) data related to transformative learning, (d) data related to benefits of study abroad, and (e) data related to appreciation for others. The survey used a Likert-scale that allowed participants to rate the responses as: #1=strongly disagree, #2=disagree, #3=neutral, #4=agree, #5=strongly agree.

The survey tool used in this study exhibited an acceptable level of reliability and validity. Reliability was determined by the Cronbach's Alpha Test using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The result was .715, which is an acceptable level of reliability. This was determined after a pilot test was conducted by several students. Laura Kahler sent an email to subjects that met the criteria for the study requesting that they participate in the study (Appendix D). The instrument was an online

survey via Qualtrics in which the survey link was distributed to participants (Appendix E). There were demographic questions in the beginning of the survey relating to gender, class year, and the country that the student visited. The following questions, were in the form of a scale that asked participants to read the statement and indicate how much they may disagree or agree with the statements.

### **Data Collection**

Laura Kahler, Advisor for Education Abroad submitted an official letter stating that she would be assisting in the data collection of study abroad students as she had direct access to student information (Appendix A). First, the subjects were sent a letter of endorsement from Laura Kahler explaining that my research topic and requesting their support when the official survey is sent out to them. The subjects were then sent an email explaining the purpose of the survey and the survey link was provided. This email was drafted by me and then Laura Kahler sent the official email to students. The survey was administered to these students on March 18, 2018. The students were given a deadline of April 3, 2018 to complete the survey. Once students accessed the survey online, the general information page explained the purpose of the study and information regarding the study. The remainder of the survey questions gave specific directions on how to complete that specific section of the survey.

After gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Rowan University (Appendix B), a pilot test was conducted. The instrument reported no errors or survey access problems. The survey took approximately 5-6 minutes to complete.



## **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyze the data collected from the completed surveys. Using SPSS was useful in identifying student's awareness and learning who had participated in study abroad. The survey results also identified student feelings toward people from different cultures. Student responses provided insight into the extent to which study abroad affected cultural awareness. In addition, it provided insights into how study abroad influenced transformative learning in the students who participated.

## Chapter IV

### Findings

#### Profile of the Sample

This study was conducted at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. The university is a medium-sized public research institution. The subjects of this study were Rowan University students who participated in study abroad for one semester between fall 2016-fall 2017. Of the 80 surveys that were distributed, 32 were completed, yielding a completion rate of 40%. Table 4.1 corresponds to the number of student responses and demographic information. There were 22 females (68.8%) and 10 males (31.3%) who completed the survey. The subjects ranged in class year status which included 3 sophomores (9.4%), 10 juniors (31.3%), and 19 seniors (59.4%). The subjects who completed the survey studied abroad during the fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017 semesters. There were 8 subjects (25%) abroad during the fall 2016 semester, 15 subjects (46.9%) abroad during the spring 2017 semester, and 9 (28.1%) abroad during the fall 2017 semester. The following describes the countries where subjects studied. The countries were reported as 10 (31.3%) in Spain, 5 (15.6%) in Italy, 5 (15.6%) in England, 5 (15.6%) in Australia, 3 (9.4%) in France, 1 (3.1%) in Czech Republic, 1 (3.1%) in New Zealand, 1 (3.1%) in Ireland, 1 (3.1%) in Japan. In addition there were 8 subjects (25%) whom this was the first time they traveled abroad and 24 (75%) who had traveled abroad before studying abroad.

Table 4.1

*Student Demographics (N=32)*

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	10	31.3
Female	22	68.8
<b>Class Year</b>		
Freshmen	0	0
Sophomore	3	9.4
Junior	10	31.3
Senior	19	59.4
<b>Semester Abroad</b>		
Fall 2016	8	25
Spring 2017	15	46.9
Fall 2017	9	28.1
<b>Study Abroad Country</b>		
Australia	5	15.6
Czech Republic	1	3.1
England	5	15.6
France	3	9.4
Ireland	1	3.1
Italy	5	15.6
Japan	1	3.1
New Zealand	1	3.1
Spain	10	31.3
<b>First Time Outside U.S.A</b>		
Yes	8	25
No	24	75

## Analysis of the Data

**Research question 1.** To what extent does study abroad affect students cultural awareness?

Table 4.2 provides a summary of the impact of study abroad on a student's cultural awareness. A Likert-scale allowed subjects to rate the response as #1=strongly disagree, #2=disagree, #3=neutral, #4=agree, #5=strongly agree. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The results indicate that student's level of cultural awareness was impacted by studying abroad. The highest percentage of agreement (84.4%) was given to the statement, "I understand ways of living are different in other cultures." The lowest percentage of agreement (46.9%) was given to the statement, "My experience abroad has influenced me to seek out a greater diversity of friends." The highest percentage of disagreement (6.3%) was given to the statement, "My experience abroad has influenced me to seek out a greater diversity of friends." The lowest percentage of disagreement was (3.1%) was given to the statement, "My experience abroad continues to influences my interactions with people from different cultures."

Table 4.2

*Student Level: Cultural Awareness (N=32)*

*(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I understand ways of living are different in other cultures. <i>M=4.84, SD=.369</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15.6	27	84.4
I feel comfortable working with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. <i>M=4.53, SD=.567</i>	0	0	0	0	1	3.1	13	40.6	18	56.3
I value people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. <i>M=4.5, SD=.718</i>	0	0	0	0	4	12.5	8	25	20	62.5
My experience abroad continues to influence my interactions with people from different cultures. <i>M=4.5, SD=.762</i>	0	0	1	3.1	2	6.3	9	28.1	20	62.5
My experience abroad has influenced me to seek out a greater diversity of friends. <i>M=4.19, SD=.931</i>	0	0	2	6.3	5	15.6	10	31.3	15	46.9

**Research question 2.** In which ways does study abroad influence transformative learning of a student?

Table 4.3 provides a summary of the influence of study abroad on a student's transformative learning experience. A Likert-scale allowed subjects to rate the response as #1=strongly disagree, #2=disagree, #3=neutral, #4=agree, #5=strongly agree. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The results indicate that student's study abroad experience influenced transformative learning of the students. The highest percentage of agreement (53.1%) was given to the statement, "I tried new things and/or roles so that I would become more comfortable with them." The lowest percentage of agreement (15.6%) was given to the statement, "I thought about acting differently from my usual beliefs and roles." The highest percentage of disagreement (9.4%) was given to the statement, "I thought about acting differently from my usual beliefs and roles." The lowest percentage of disagreement was tied at (6.3%) was given to the following statements, "I gathered information needed to adopt new ways of acting" and I have adopted new ways of acting into my life."

Table 4.3

*Student Level: Transformative Learning Experience (N=32)*

*(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I tried new things and/or roles so that I would become more comfortable with them. <i>M=4.41, SD=.756</i>	0	0	1	3.1	2	6.3	12	37.5	17	53.1
I gathered information needed to adopt new ways of acting. <i>M=4.22, SD=.87</i>	0	0	2	6.3	3	9.4	13	40.6	14	43.8
While abroad, I had an experience that made me question the way I normally act, as well as by beliefs and values. <i>M=4.06, SD=.982</i>	0	0	3	9.4	5	15.6	11	34.4	13	40.6
I have adopted new ways of acting into my life. <i>M=4, SD=.803</i>	0	0	2	6.3	4	12.5	18	56.3	8	25
I thought about acting differently from my usual beliefs and role. <i>M=3.75, SD=.842</i>	0	0	3	9.4	7	21.9	17	53.1	5	15.6

**Research question 3.** What benefits do students receive through study abroad?

Table 4.4 provides a summary of benefits a student receives through study abroad.

A Likert-scale allowed subjects to rate the response as #1=strongly disagree, #2=disagree, #3=neutral, #4=agree, #5=strongly agree. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The results indicate that student's did receive many benefits. The highest percentage of agreement (68.8%) was given to the statement, "I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world." The lowest percentage of agreement (37.5%) was given to the statement, "Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better." The highest percentage of disagreement (46.9%) was given to the statement, "I often feel irritated by persons of a different race." The lowest percentage of disagreement (3.1%) was given to the statement, "It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues."



Table 4.4

*Student Level: Benefits of Study Abroad (N=32)*

*(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world. <i>M=4.63, SD=.609</i>	0	0	0	0	2	6.3	8	25	22	68.8
In getting to know someone, I like knowing both how he/she differs from me and is similar to me. <i>M=4.25, SD=.622</i>	0	0	0	0	3	9.4	18	56.3	11	34.4
Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better. <i>M=4.19, SD=.78</i>	0	0	1	3.1	4	12.5	15	46.9	12	37.5
I attend events where I might get to know people from different racial backgrounds. <i>M=3.44, SD=.759</i>	0	0	2	6.3	17	53.1	10	31.3	3	9.4
It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues. <i>M=2.78, SD=.906</i>	1	3.1	12	37.5	14	43.8	3	9.4	2	6.3
I often feel irritated by persons of a different race. <i>M=1.66, SD=.827</i>	15	46.9	15	46.9	1	3.1	0	0	1	3.1

**Research question 4.** Does study abroad impact student's appreciation for those different from them?

Table 4.5 provides a summary of student's appreciation for those different from them which was impacted by study abroad. A Likert-scale allowed subjects to rate the response as #1=strongly disagree, #2=disagree, #3=neutral, #4=agree, #5=strongly agree. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The results indicate that student's did have a greater appreciation for those different from themselves. The highest percentage of agreement (40.6%) was given to the statement, "I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar and different from me." The lowest percentage of agreement (28.1%) was given to the statement, "Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship." The highest percentage of disagreement (59.4%) was given to the statement, "I am only at ease with people of my own race." The lowest percentage of disagreement (3.1%) was given to the statement, "I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries."

Table 4.5

*Student Level: Appreciation for Those Different (N=32)*

*(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar and different from me. <i>M=4.34, SD=.602</i>	0	0	0	0	2	6.3	17	53.1	13	40.6
I would like to join an Organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries. <i>M=4, SD=1.047</i>	1	3.1	2	6.3	5	15.6	12	37.5	12	37.5
Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship. <i>M=4, SD=.803</i>	0	0	0	0	10	31.3	12	37.5	10	31.3
I would like to go to dances that feature music from other countries. <i>M=3.75, SD=.984</i>	0	0	3	9.4	11	34.4	9	28.1	9	28.1
I am only at ease with people of my own race. <i>M=1.56, SD=.801</i>	19	59.4	9	28.1	3	9.4	1	3.1	0	0
Getting to know someone of another race is generally an uncomfortable experience for me. <i>M=1.5, SD=.622</i>	18	56.3	12	37.5	2	6.3	0	0	0	0

## Chapter V

### Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary of the Study

Some people do not believe there is value in study abroad and have inaccurate perceptions of what constitutes study abroad programs. This perception was challenged through this study. The literature strongly suggests that there are many benefits for students that participate in study abroad. This study investigated the impact and influences that study abroad had on students that studied abroad at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. More specifically, the benefits, appreciation for others, cultural awareness, and transformative learning. The study was designed to assess the impact of cultural awareness, and transformative learning on students who participated in study abroad during the fall 2016, spring 2017, or fall 2017 semesters. The subjects of this study were undergraduate students who studied abroad for one entire semester. Majority of the subjects studied abroad during the spring 2017 semester (46.9%), were women (68.8%), and studied abroad in Spain (31.3%).

A Likert-scale survey questionnaire was sent to 80 subjects via Qualtrics. The survey began by collecting demographic data followed by four sections that focused on the impacts and influences of study abroad on Rowan University students. Thirty-two subjects completed the survey, yielding a completion rate of 40%. The data were gathered using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations

were used to analyze the data collected from the completed surveys. Overall, the data suggest that participants benefited from their study abroad experience.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

**Research question 1.** To what extent does study abroad affect students cultural awareness?

Cultural awareness is a positive skill to acquire in a globalized society. When interacting with someone from a different background it is important to understand that people have different experiences, values, and backgrounds from one's self (Discover Corps, 2017). The National Center for Cultural Competence has reported six statements on cultural awareness. For example, having a firm grasp on what culture is and what it is not, being conscious of one's own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, and bias, etc. The findings suggest that subject's cultural awareness was affected by their study abroad experience. Majority of the subjects (84.4%) strongly agreed when asked, "I understand ways of living are different in other cultures." The next two statements with a high percentage of strongly agree were, "I value people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds" and "My experience abroad continues to influence my interactions with people from different cultures." The data strongly suggest that subject's cultural awareness was affected in a positive way. Subjects reported high levels of cultural awareness as a result of studying abroad.

**Research question 2.** In which ways does study abroad influence transformative learning of a student?

The findings suggest that the subjects had a transformative learning experience that was influenced by studying abroad. Blake-Campbell (2014) explains that studying abroad can be a transformative experience regardless of length as study abroad is designed to challenge students on how they perceive the world. In addition, study abroad offers real world experiences that challenge previous beliefs of how one perceives their world. Majority of subjects (53.1%) strongly agreed when asked, “I tried new things and/or roles so that I would become more comfortable with them.” The following statement, “I gathered information needed to adopt new ways of acting” reported the second highest percentage of strongly agreed (43.8%). The data strongly suggest that subjects had a transformative experience by studying abroad. The results suggest that subject’s perceptions of the world were changed. In addition, that they tried new things or adopted new behaviors as a result of their new environment.

**Research question 3.** What benefits do students receive through study abroad?

The world we live in today has become more globalized and students need to understand and embrace cross cultural differences. The study abroad experience generates debate, mutual respect, and gives students perspective (Martinez, 2011). The findings suggest that students received benefits as a result of their study abroad experience. Majority of subjects (68.8%) strongly agreed when asked, “I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world.” The following statement, “In getting to know someone, I like knowing both how he/she differs from me

and is similar to me” reported a combined percentage of agreed/strongly agreed of 90.7%. The data suggest that students are embracing different cultures and ideals. In addition, the data suggest that students are interested in understanding different cultures. The agreement with these statements provides insight into how subjects value these traits which allows them to benefit from the experience of studying abroad.

**Research question 4.** Does study abroad impact student’s appreciation for those different from them?

The findings suggest that student’s appreciation for those different from themselves was impacted by their study abroad experience. Martin (2015) found that students having cultural experiences had a new appreciation for diversity and reduced stereotypes. Cuss (2012) found that students gained cultural learning that was influenced by various experiences. Majority of subjects (59.4%) strongly disagreed when asked, “I am only at ease with people of my own race.” The following statement, “Getting to know someone of another race is generally and uncomfortable experience for me” reported the second highest result of strongly disagree (56.3%). The data suggest that subjects are comfortable with getting to know others from different races and cultural awareness. The data also suggest that they have an appreciation for diversity which can lead to reduced stereotypes.

## **Conclusions**

The results of this study aligns with the findings of other related studies that have been conducted. For instance, Gould (2017) found that Rowan University students increased their cultural awareness and had a transformative learning experiences because

they participated in study abroad. The Rowan University students who participated in a semester long study abroad program was impacted and influenced by their experience. While there are benefits to all forms of study abroad such as study tour, short term study abroad and long term study abroad this study focused on students who studied abroad for one entire semester. This study strongly suggests that subjects benefited from participation in study abroad and had an appreciation for other different from themselves. In addition, that study abroad was a transformative learning experience as well as enhanced subject's cultural awareness.

The world has become more globalized and it is important that students have an understanding and appreciation for others. As students enter their professional careers they will work with people from diverse backgrounds. Study abroad is a useful experience to include on one's resume. There is value in studying abroad as it teaches students cultural awareness and offer students an opportunity to challenge their belief and perception through transformative learning. The data provided insight into understanding how study abroad impacts students at Rowan University which is a mid-size public institution. This study has been helpful in breaking down negative stereotypes of study abroad and provides insight into the overall benefits of the study abroad experience.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following are recommendations for practice at Rowan University and possibly other institutions based off the findings included in this research:

1. Allocate more resources and funds into marketing study abroad to students.



2. Provide study abroad scholarships to encourage and lessen the financial strain of studying abroad for a semester.
3. Recruit alumni of students that participated in study abroad that could participate in an ambassador program to promote study abroad to their peers.
4. Provide resources for Re-Entry Workshops to assist students in describing their experience in their resume and cover letters.
5. Hire additional staff to assist in expanding the study abroad office and focusing on new projects to assist in the development and growth of the office.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The following are recommendations for further research based off the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Further studies should be conducted with a larger population of students who participated in any study abroad program at Rowan University.
2. A study should be conducted on students who participate in long-term study abroad to be compared to short-term study abroad.
3. Administrators should present assessment research to students to show the benefits of study abroad to help increase participation in these programs.
4. Further research should be conducted on the influence of transformative learning in study abroad programs.
5. A study should be done on faculty members that led study tours and the program objectives.

6. Further research should be conducted on study abroad and student identity development.
7. Administrators should use this data to develop more services and advertisement for study abroad.
8. A pre and post study should be done to assess student's perceptions before and after their study abroad experience.

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## Appendix A

### Official Letter from Laura Kahler, Advisor for Education Abroad



October 19, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter will certify that the Education Abroad Office will be assisting Desirae Gould with her data collection for her Master's Degree thesis. If you have any questions or need further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Kahler".

Laura Kahler  
Education Abroad Advisor  
Rowan University  
University Advlsing Center, Savgiz 3<sup>rd</sup> fl.  
X64105  
E: kahler@rowan.edu

## Appendix B

### Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

\*\* This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.

The originating e-mail account is not monitored.

If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office \*\*

**DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier:** FWA00007111

**IRB Chair Person:** Harriet Hartman

**IRB Director:** Sreekant Murthy

**Effective Date:**

### eIRB Notice of Approval

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#### STUDY PROFILE

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**Study ID:** [Pro2017002049](#)

**Title:** Study of Cultural Awareness and Transformative Learning Through Participation in Study Abroad

<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Burton Sisco	<b>Study Coordinator:</b>	None
<b>Co-Investigator(s):</b>	Desirae Gould	<b>Other Study Staff:</b>	There are no items to display
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Department Funded	<b>Approval Cycle:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Risk Determination:</b>	Minimal Risk	<b>Device Determination:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Review Type:</b>	Exempt	<b>Exempt Category:</b>	2
<b>Subjects:</b>	80		

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#### CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

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<b>Submission Type:</b>	Research Protocol/Study	<b>Submission Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Approval Date:</b>	4/6/2018	<b>Expiration Date:</b>	
<b>Pregnancy Code:</b>	No Pregnant Women as Subjects	<b>Pediatric Code:</b>	No Children As Subjects
<b>Prisoner Code:</b>	No Prisoners As Subjects		
<b>Protocol:</b>	Assistance with Data Collection Letter Alternate Consent Form Planned Recruitment Email Thesis Protocol Survey	<b>Consent:</b>	There are no items to display
		<b>Recruitment Materials:</b>	There are no items to display

**\* Study Performance Sites:**

Glassboro Campus                      College of Education, Rowan University  
There are no items to display

**ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of**



**individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**

4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations :** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

**Appendix C**  
**Survey Instrument**

**General Information**

1. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. Class Year
  - a. Freshmen
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
  
3. What semester did you study abroad?
  - a. Fall 2016
  - b. Spring 2017
  - c. Fall 2017
  
4. What country did you study abroad in?

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5. Was studying abroad for a semester your first time traveling outside the U.S.?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

**Section 1**

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Choose your answers from the following 5 options: #1=Strongly Disagree, #2=Disagree, #3=Neutral, #4=Agree, #5=Strongly Agree.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Getting to know someone of another race is generally an	1	2	3	4	5

uncomfortable experience for me.					
8. I would like to go to dances that feature music from other countries.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar and different from me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am only at ease with people of my race.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 2

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Choose your answers from the following 5 options: #1=Strongly Disagree, #2=Disagree, #3=Neutral, #4=Agree, #5=Strongly Agree.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I value people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I understand ways of living are different in other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel comfortable working with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My experience abroad continues to influence my interactions with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5

16. My experience abroad has influenced me to seek out a greater diversity of friends.	1	2	3	4	5
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### Section 3

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Choose your answers from the following 5 options: #1=Strongly Disagree, #2=Disagree, #3=Neutral, #4=Agree, #5=Strongly Agree.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world.	1	2	3	4	5
18. It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I attend events where I might get to know people from different racial backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I often feel irritated by persons of a different race.	1	2	3	4	5

### Section 4

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Choose your answers from the following 5 options: #1=Strongly Disagree, #2=Disagree, #3=Neutral, #4=Agree, #5=Strongly Agree.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. While abroad, I had an experience that made me question the way I normally	1	2	3	4	5

act, as well as my beliefs and values.					
23. I tried new things and/or roles so that I would become more comfortable with them.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I gathered information needed to adopt new ways of acting.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I thought about acting differently from my usual beliefs and roles.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I have adopted new ways of acting into my life.	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for completing the survey!**

## Appendix D

### Endorsement Email from Laura Kahler

#### Education Abroad

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Hello everyone,

You will be receiving an email about a study abroad experience survey for a research study here at Rowan. It would be greatly appreciated if everyone could fill this out. The survey should only take about ten minutes.

Desirae Gould is conducting this research study and her email is [gouldd9@rowan.edu](mailto:gouldd9@rowan.edu) if you have any questions!

Thank you for your help!

Interim Education Abroad Advisor University Advising Center, Savitz Hall 3rd fl

x4105 | [studyabroad@rowan.edu](mailto:studyabroad@rowan.edu) | [www.rowan.edu/educationabroad](http://www.rowan.edu/educationabroad)

## Appendix E

### Survey Email Sent via Qualtrics



Dear Study Abroad Participant,

My name is Desirae Gould and I am a graduate student here at Rowan University. I am conducting research to learn about the experiences of students who have study abroad. I am particularly interested in determining if students who participated in study abroad experience what is known as a transformative learning experience and cultural awareness. I am completing my master's degree and this research is part of the completion of my thesis and graduate program.

I am reaching out to see if you are interested in being part of my research. Participation in this study involves completing a survey. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time and will be completely anonymous. My hope is to learn more about your experience participating in study abroad. Also, you will help me meet the graduation requirements of my master's program. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me at [gouldd9@rowan.edu](mailto:gouldd9@rowan.edu) or my thesis advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at [sisco@rowan.edu](mailto:sisco@rowan.edu) but you do not have to give your personal identification.

If you would like to participate in this study, please follow the link to the survey below.

Thank you in advance for being part of my research! I look forward to hearing from you.

**Follow this link to the Survey:**

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV\\_39sbmwhcOk321Lf?Q\\_CHL=preview](https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_39sbmwhcOk321Lf?Q_CHL=preview)