
Toward a Research Agenda for U.S. Education Abroad

Leaders in International Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper builds on the 1996 AIEA publication, *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States*, and provides SIOs with a concise overview of research in the area of U.S. education abroad. Beginning with a brief discussion of the changing role of U.S. higher education and the ever-increasing momentum toward assessing and documenting outcomes, it then looks at the major trends in contemporary education abroad research and provides an overview of the major methodological and design challenges. Brief attention is given to the major theoretical models that have traditionally informed education abroad research and conceptual frameworks from related disciplines that may further extend education abroad research. Commonly used instruments are discussed in context of measuring outcomes. Some notable gaps in the existing research and needed directions are also discussed and a preliminary research agenda is proposed. The document concludes with a brief discussion of the major publication venues for research on education abroad. Appended to the paper is a list of key terminology and related definitions.

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Overview

This paper aims to advance a research agenda for U.S. education abroad, and both builds on and expands on questions raised about such research in a 1996 AIEA publication on *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States* that reported on the findings of an AIEA working group chaired by Barbara Burn and Ralph Winkler.

The paper begins with a brief discussion of the changing role of U.S. higher education and the ever-increasing momentum toward assessing and documenting outcomes. This is followed by an overview of the major trends in contemporary education abroad research, with particular emphasis on research in short-term programming, and an assessment of the major methodological and design challenges. Because of their importance to education abroad and higher education research, attention is given to the major theoretical models that have traditionally informed education abroad research and to conceptual frameworks from related disciplines that may further extend education abroad research. Commonly used instruments are discussed in context of measuring outcomes. Some notable gaps in the existing research and needed directions are also discussed. The document concludes with a section on the major publication venues for research on education abroad-related topics.

For the purposes of this discussion, the term *education abroad* is preferred over the more traditional term of *study abroad* to more accurately reflect the emerging range of types of outbound educational opportunities, which include study abroad, research abroad, intern abroad, teach abroad, and service-learning abroad. Since the 1996 AIEA publication, research in education abroad has grown increasingly complex and sophisticated, although it has remained largely focused on study abroad, the most traditional form of education abroad. As the scope and nature of education abroad programming changes, so too must the direction and focus of the field of scholarship that supports and informs practice. Thus, this paper will utilize the broader category of education abroad and reference study abroad only as a distinctive experience type. Studying abroad is used as the action verb inclusive of all experience types. Appended to the paper is a short list of key terms and their definitions, adapted from the Forum on Education Abroad Glossary.

Introduction

Higher education in the United States is increasingly being asked to justify its value and to demonstrate that students are learning essential knowledge and skills. Therefore, institutions have begun to direct more attention to documenting practices that effectively maximize student learning. With this increased attention to assessing student learning has come growing interest in understanding and documenting what students learn through education abroad programming (Bolen, 2007; Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009; Steinberg, 2007). U.S. education abroad enrollments have been steadily increasing since the mid-1990s, from under 100,000 in 1996/97 to over

280,000 in 2011/12 (IIE, 2014). As educators grapple with pressure to accommodate this growth while striving to ensure quality, observers have grown more vocal in their calls for less reliance on superficial program evaluations, mere tabulation of participation figures, or anecdotal accounts as 'evidence' for meaningful education abroad learning. Rather, key stakeholders are calling for more rigorous program assessment and research that will provide a clearer understanding of the totality of the education abroad experience (Bolen, 2007; Engle & Engle, 2003; Poole & Davis, 2006; McLeod & Wainright, 2009; Stearns, 2009; Stimpfel & Engberg, 1997; Teagle Foundation, 2006). It is simply no longer enough to claim in this environment of greater accountability that education abroad is a good thing for students without offering specific evidence to support such assertions (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Grünzweig & Rinehart, 2002; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010).

Senior International Officers (SIOs), the individuals at institutions of higher education whose responsibilities often encompass education abroad, are thus being asked with greater frequency to supply evidence of student learning resulting from education abroad. Until recently, however, there has been very little outcomes assessment research beyond a smattering of studies looking at language proficiency and changes in attitudes and career goals (Kraft, Ballantine, & Garvey, 1994). Like others in higher education, international educators have to justify the value of their efforts but have been hindered by the general lack of valid and reliable data needed to respond to the rising barrage of questions. Research specifically focused on education abroad began to emerge during the 1950s, but it was not until the end of the 1970s that a respectable literature base began to form (Chao, 2001; Comp, 2005; Weaver, 1989). During the 1970s, 189 research studies were published, and the number increased to 675 by the 1990s. In the current decade, the number of published studies has been projected to exceed 1,000 (Comp et al., 2007; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Research informed by a growing body of work and supported by sound methodology and tested theoretical frameworks is also increasingly available.

Because of a strong undercurrent in the 1990s within the professional education abroad community calling for expanded research on student learning and clearer standards of best practice, a small group of education abroad professionals began to put into place the basic foundation for what would become *The Forum on Education Abroad*. Officially founded in 2001, The Forum on Education Abroad (Forum) has since launched a series of initiatives to support research in education abroad, including publishing *The Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad*, an edited volume of tools for conducting outcomes assessment as a part of education abroad programming (Bolen, 2007). The publication is now widely regarded as an essential resource for institutions and organizations striving to meet the challenges of initiating and sustaining an outcomes assessment strategy for education abroad. The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators have also joined in this effort by identifying emerging research priorities and engaging international educators and scholars alike in knowledge development and dissemination (Deardorff, 2009).

Panels and workshops that reflect critical analyses of issues in the field are increasingly included at the annual meetings of AIEA, the Forum, and NAFSA, as

well as the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), to name only the largest gatherings. Much of this discussion then appears in well respected, peer-reviewed journals, including *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, the *Journal of Studies in International Education*, and the *Comparative Education Review*, to name the journals most commonly associated with writing about education abroad.

As more institutions seek to include education abroad programming in their internationalization strategies and embed within their mission statements the goal to graduate global citizens (Doerr, 2013; Ehrlich, 2000; Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008; Holland & Meeropol, 2006; Langran, Langran, & Ozment, 2009; Rhoads, Shuai, & llano, 2014), the demands for empirical data on what students learn abroad and how they are changed in the process will continue to grow. Overall, the proliferation and diversification of education abroad research are positive indicators that U.S. higher education as a whole is gaining a greater understanding of the learning and growth that results from education abroad programming. Additionally, research is emerging on education abroad as a high-impact experience that improves retention and graduation rates (Redden, 2012), acts as workforce development, meets employer expectations (Tillman, 2005; 2014), and encourages institutional loyalty and alumni development (Paige, 2009). Work is currently being done to document practices that maximize student success within and beyond education abroad while also enhancing institutional effectiveness.

Major Research Trends

Education abroad research has grown increasingly complex and sophisticated in recent decades (Bolen, 2007; Dolby, 2008; Lewin, 2009; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012; Twombly et al., 2012). As Figure 1 illustrates, education abroad research can generally be categorized into six broad categories: 1. single domain, 2. multiple domains, 3. longitudinal studies, 4. internal variables, 5. program/enrollment variables, and 6. predictor variables and outcomes. Although important and relevant work is still being conducted in all six categories, existing research does suggest a progressive or developmental shift toward the later categories.

Single Domain

Early research in U.S. education abroad sought to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge or skills while abroad, with most focusing on skills associated with a single learning domain (Sowa, 2002). In particular, many early studies focused on second language acquisition (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1993; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), and there is still much research being done in this area (Dufon, 2006; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Pellegrino, 2004). A frequently cited resource on student learning outcomes remains *Study Abroad: The Experience of American Undergraduates* (Carlson et al., 1990). The authors examined the type of student who studies abroad, changes and long-term

effects that occur as a result of the experience, and aspects of the individual that might affect outcomes. The results showed that students returning from abroad were more interested in international affairs, had made significant foreign language gains, and often aspired to internationally oriented careers. The authors also discussed the influence of particular variables on student learning outcomes, such as the students' academic motivation prior to study abroad, the interaction students had with locals and fellow Americans while abroad, and the cultural similarities to the host country. This may also have been one of the first analyses to document the extent to which the demographics of the participant population were not, and remain distinct from, higher education enrollments as a whole (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Multiple Domains

While much research before the mid-1990s sought to simply demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge or skills while abroad, later studies began to look at student learning in education abroad in multiple domains such as intercultural sensitivity (Anderson et al., 2006; Paige et al., 2003; Pedersen, 2009; Rundstrom Williams, 2005); global awareness (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004); identity development (Angulo, 2008; Bryant & Soria, 2015; Dolby, 2007; O'Callaghan, 2006); attitude and behavioral change (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Gurman, 1989); open-mindedness (Clarke et al., 2009; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001); intellectual development (McKeown, 2009); and to a much lesser degree, disciplinary learning (DiBiasio & Mello, 2004; Immelman & Schneider, 1998).

Longitudinal Studies

Important longitudinal studies have emerged in recent years. Perhaps one of the most cited studies examining student learning outcomes was conducted by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES Abroad), which surveyed 17,000 alumni of its programs during the previous 50 years (Dwyer, 2004). A second study, thought to be the most comprehensive and in-depth study of the long-term impact of education abroad to date, is *Beyond Immediate Impact: Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE)* (Paige, Stallman, & Josić, 2008). This work sought to examine the long-term personal, professional, and social capital outcomes associated with undergraduate education abroad. A retrospective tracer study involving 22 colleges and universities, the authors surveyed and/or interviewed over 6,000 alumni who studied abroad from as far back as 50 years ago. A third longitudinal study by Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella (2015) found that participation in education abroad significantly impacts intercultural effectiveness over time and enhances socially responsible leadership. Although informative, the utility of such longitudinal studies is weakened by their having mostly utilized student self-reporting methodologies and failing to position their findings relative to comparison or control groups.

Internal Variables

Some attention has been given to analyzing how internal variables (i.e., student demographics, previous experience) potentially moderate learning outcomes. The question of gender has been important, mostly because women comprise nearly 65% of the annual education abroad enrollment (IIE, 2014). Some

research has shown that female and male students experience studying abroad differently (Anderson, 2003; Martin & Rohrllich, 1991; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). Students' proficiency in languages, particularly that of the host country, is considered an important characteristic because of the challenges associated with studying in a country whose dominant language is not one's own (Citron, 1996; Rivers, 1998). Previous international travel experience has also been an important variable. Research has shown that those with more international experience prior to studying abroad show greater independence and international awareness compared to students without such international experiences (Gerner et al., 1992; Martin, 1987; McKeown, 2009). However, the relationship between previous international travel experience and participation in education abroad remains unclear due to inconsistent empirical findings (Carlson et al., 1990; Hembrooff & Russ, 1993; Oppen et al., 1990). Coleman (2009) pointed out two notable gaps in the existing literature: the lack of research examining the importance of religion on developing intercultural competency, and the relationship between sex/romance and language development.

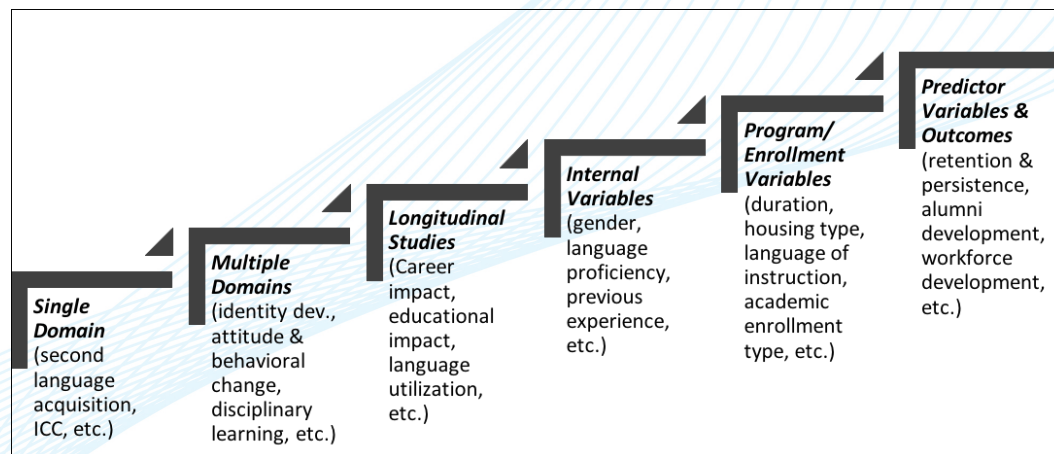
Program/Enrollment Variables

Recent research has begun to link key programming features with targeted learning outcomes. This approach has been focused on examining the relationships between student learning and specific program features such as program type, duration, housing type, and student characteristics like gender and prior education abroad experience. A number of studies have focused on the extent to which program-specific variables can mediate student learning, such as the language of instruction or the context of the academic program (Engle & Engle, 2003; Norris & Dwyer, 2005; Cohen & Shively, 2004), how home institutional grading policies influence academic motivation (Trooboff, Cressey, & Monty, 2004), the relationship between student housing and language learning (Gutel, 2008; Iino, 1996, 2006; Martin, 1985; Rivers, 1998; Schmidt-Reinhardt & Knight, 2004), and the relationship between the amount of contact with host country nationals and intercultural learning (Vande Berg et al., 2004). Many of the more recent studies have used Engle and Engle's (2003) classification system of program elements, which the Forum's Committee on Outcomes Assessment has endorsed for research purposes (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). The most notable study in this regard is perhaps *The Georgetown University Consortium Project* (Vande Berg et al., 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). This study sought to examine relationships between student learning and specific program features such as program type, duration, housing type, and student characteristics such as gender and prior education abroad experience, and may be the first large-scale study to correlate specific learning with key program variables. Though not without methodological challenges, these major contributions to education abroad research have not only begun to link key programming features with learning outcomes, but they also call attention to the growing need to better understand the dynamics of how specific program design features influence student learning and how best to intervene to enhance intended outcomes (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012).

Predictor Variables & Outcomes

As U.S. institutions direct more attention to documenting practices that maximize student success, institutions such as the University System of Georgia (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) and Michigan State University (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004) have begun to independently conduct large-scale self-assessment studies of student learning outcomes. Utilizing data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has also become an accepted way for institutions to suggest correlations between participation in education abroad, academic and social engagement as students overall, loyalty to the home institution, and active engagement as alumni (Ogden, Sideli, & Wiseman, 2013). Related institution-specific datasets are leveraging education abroad as a high-impact experience that correlates with retention and persistence to graduation (Kuh, 2008). Studies have looked at graduation rates (Barclay-Hamir, 2011; Sutton & Rubin, 2004), time to degree (Barclay-Hamir, 2011), and grade point averages (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) to determine how education abroad is linked to targeted outcomes. Although such research cannot claim causality, it can be used by SIOs for advocacy with faculty and administrators and to suggest questions for further inquiry.

Figure 1. Categorization of education abroad research trends.



The expansion of U.S. education abroad enrollment in recent years has moved away from the traditional junior year abroad experience to allow greater numbers of students to participate in semester-length and other, much shorter experiences (Hoffa, 2007; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010; Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007). Although some critics argue that the shift to shorter experiences is more institutionally-driven than student-driven (Woolf, 2007), roughly 60% of U.S. education abroad now lasts eight weeks or less (IIE, 2014). Thus, a new body of research and scholarship examining program duration and student learning outcomes has emerged (Johnson Brubaker, 2006) and expands all six categories identified in Figure 1. Much of this research challenges the conventional wisdom that a meaningful education abroad experience needs to be at least a semester in duration, if not a traditional year abroad (Gudykunst, 1979; Kinsella et al., 2002). In other words, the longer the students are abroad does not necessarily correlate with significant advances in academic learning, intercultural development, and personal growth (McGourty, 2014).

While some international educators still advocate that longer experiences abroad lead to more transformative learning, particularly in the areas of intercultural competency development and second-language proficiency, emerging research has shown that program duration may not be as neatly predictive of learning outcomes as once suggested (Dwyer, 2004; Erwin & Coleman, 1998; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Johnson Brubaker, 2006; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005b; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). With regard to program duration, the aforementioned SAGE study (Paige, Stallman, & Josić, 2008) concluded that the length of time students are abroad has no meaningful impact on whether they become globally engaged later in life. Students who spend two weeks abroad are just as likely as those who spend several months abroad to be globally engaged during their lives (Fischer, 2009). As more faculty members develop faculty-directed, short-term education abroad programming to offer discipline-specific instruction abroad, it is important to recognize that certain program goals can be achieved in shorter durations abroad (Wagner & Christensen, 2015). The traditional focus on intercultural competency and second-language proficiency is being augmented with other learning goals.

Further, existing research does suggest that short-term programming has the potential to enhance students' interest in foreign languages, improve their knowledge of other cultures, and transform their perspectives on the world. Moreover, students report becoming more attracted to interdisciplinary studies and more interested in understanding costs and benefits of globalization as a result of short-term education abroad experiences, and many state that the experiences abroad have helped them to question their assumptions, gather and interpret data, and use the data to navigate their places in a globalizing world (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004, 2009; Hulstrand, 2006; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005a). As the proportion of students who participate in short-term programming increases, more research is needed to understand how short-term programs benefit students' intellectual development, how short-term programs contribute to producing global citizens, and how these programs' learning outcomes differ from those who study on longer programs. Further, the relation of such programming to other aspects of students' education also needs attention. This research specifically needs to move beyond the traditional outcome variables of intercultural learning and language proficiency to investigate outcomes tied to discipline-specific learning and other kinds of academic growth, as well as personal development.

Methodological and Design Challenges

There remains a discernible shortage of critical and systematic research on education abroad, especially when compared with scholarly output in other areas of higher education (Streitwieser, 2009; Woolf, 2007, 2009; Deardorff, 2012). That is, while existing empirical research provides a better understanding of the impact of education abroad, rigorous research is still needed that interrogates widespread assumptions of the outcomes that result from education abroad participation. Moreover, much of the existing research has been undermined by common and often serious methodological and conceptual shortcomings. For

example, education abroad research has often relied on student self-reports or solicited statements from students of the impact the experience abroad experiences have had on predetermined outcome variables (Singleton & Straits, 2005). This approach potentially exposes data to bias because participants may feel pressured to report socially desirable gains from their experiences abroad (Messick, 1979; Nunnally, 1978). Criticisms have also been made that the existing research has been largely parochial, that it lacks an international comparative base, and that there has been a major disconnect between the prioritization of scholars and the needs of education abroad professionals (Ogden, Streitwieser, & Crawford, 2014). This section thus briefly outlines some of the major methodological and design challenges in the existing literature.

Self-Selection & Sample Size

Because education abroad is an elective activity, it is reasonable to anticipate that education abroad students have an intrinsic interest in learning about other cultures and studying languages, or have a higher degree of global citizenship, in comparison to their peers who do not study abroad. In other words, students who are already internationally oriented may be more likely to study abroad. In fact, previous research suggests this is indeed frequently the case. For example, Rundstrom Williams (2005) found that education abroad participants have higher pre-test scores of intercultural communication than students who did not plan to study abroad. Goldstein and Kim (2005) found that education abroad participants were significantly different in terms of their levels of ethnocentrism and prejudice, and that these variables were significant predictors of education abroad participation. Douglas and Jose-Rickers (2001) have shown that education abroad participants have a stronger sense of world-mindedness than nonparticipants. In an early study, Carlson et al. (1990) found that education abroad participants differed in their desire to improve their foreign language abilities. Ogden (2010) demonstrated that education abroad participants have significantly higher pretest scores for global citizenship and academic development. Numerous others have noted key demographic differences between student populations, with many pointing to gender, age, race/ethnicity, class standing, academic discipline, GPA level, and previous international experience.

Although such issues of self-selection are frequently mentioned throughout the literature (Hadis, 2005b), few studies have accounted for self-selection through the use of control groups or statistical measures that control for difference between samples. According to Dwyer (2004), this is mostly due to the difficulty of obtaining control groups that are truly comparable with education abroad treatment groups (i.e., coursework completed, previous international experience, socioeconomic level, etc.). Also, Chieffo and Griffiths (2009) have pointed out that much of the outcomes assessment research is small-scale, thus making it very difficult to have sample sizes large enough to control for an array of variables. All in all, self-selection remains a methodological roadblock in education abroad research, and future research should explore methodologies and statistical measures that better account for self-selection.

Experimental Research

There is no doubt as to the value of empirical research of education abroad outcomes (Deardorff, 2009; Steinberg, 2007; Streitwieser, 2009). Although the volume of research that utilizes pre- and post-test design methodologies and other experimental research methodologies appears to be increasing, few studies have been able to use control groups effectively as it is usually not possible to randomly assign students within education abroad contexts. Thus, it has been difficult for researchers to infer definitively that any measurable changes over time were due to or caused by the intervening or mediating variables. Maturation, for example, has been a particularly troublesome threat to the internal validity of education abroad research (Hadis, 2005a; Sutton, Miller, & Rubin, 2007). According to Krathwohl (2004), *maturation* refers to any naturally occurring growth or change in individuals that affects the measured outcome. While a control group typically provides protection against this threat, students participating in education abroad programs are self-selected students who are often already highly achieving, internationally oriented students. It would not be unreasonable, then, to assume their rate of development or growth would surpass that of the students in control groups. As such, Singleton and Straits (2005) suggest exercising caution when attributing outcomes solely to the treatment variable, or in this case, education abroad participation.

Another noteworthy threat to internal validity in experimental research is pre- and post-*testing*. According to Krathwohl (2004), testing occurs whenever two or more administrations occur with the same or a closely related instrument. Because of this, change may actually be brought about by reactions to the process of measurement. In other words, it is possible the first administration affects the choices made on the second administration, especially when there is little time between administrations. For example, the students may recall the questions and answer without carefully reconsidering their responses. In addition, the questions on the first administration may encourage respondents to reflect on the content and subsequently engage in different behaviors. In this case, however, the questionnaire itself may be instrumental in encouraging students to move toward the measured outcome or to pursue new approaches that enhance their development. Moreover, Singleton and Straits (2005) have suggested people will score better or give more socially desirable responses the second time a scale is administered to them. As research on short-term programs using pre- and post-test measures increases, this threat to internal validity will become even more important to note.

Fortunately, a number of innovative research designs are being utilized in experimental research. For example, Ogden (2010) utilized a nonequivalent control group design as part of a large, quasi-experimental study. Barclay-Hamir (2011) utilized a unique approach to minimize self-selection bias as a threat to reliability by investigating the behaviors of those who applied but did not eventually study abroad. Similarly, Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2008) have pursued an innovative line of research that looks at the statistical likelihood of participating in education abroad. It is interesting to note that a significant body of empirically based literature is emerging in unpublished dissertations, which should be further stimulated and made accessible. This further supports the notion

that the field is in transition in terms of the kind of research that is deemed relevant and useful (Hoff, 2008; Sindt, 2007).

Generalizability

Although there are notable exceptions, existing research in education abroad has predominantly been institution-specific and small-scale in the sense that the research has had small sample sizes or is qualitative by design. Thus, much of the research is not widely generalizable to U.S. undergraduate education abroad, though there is arguably a case for theoretical generalizability. An institution-specific approach potentially reduces confounding effects related to institution type. For example, barriers to education abroad vary across institutions, such as curricular restraints, tuition and financial aid policies, and programming limitations. Unfortunately, such research may only apply to very similar institution types. There is no known meta-analysis of existing quantitative studies that could infer generalizability. Funded by the Department of Education's Title VI International Research and Studies Program, the aforementioned *Georgetown University Consortium Project* (Vande Berg et al., 2004, 2009) is perhaps the best known multi-institutional collaboration focused on student learning in education abroad. The Wabash National Study on Liberal Arts Education (WNSLAE), funded by the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College, is similarly a well-cited, multi-institutional study that included students from colleges and universities that vary extensively in size, selectivity, institutional type, and geographic location (Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2008). Funding should be dedicated to support such research.

Data Accessibility

As the internationalization of higher education continues around the world, more large datasets on student mobility are being developed and made publicly available. However, there are many challenges that complicate the utilization of these datasets, as there is little consensus on how to define and count mobile students (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009; de Wit et al., 2008; de Wit, Hunter, Johnson, & Liempd, 2013; Macready & Tucker, 2011). In the United States, the Institute for International Education (IIE) has conducted an annual statistical survey, now officially known as *Open Doors*, of the international student and scholar flows to and from the United States since 1949. While the annual *Open Doors* report arguably provides the most widely known and reliable dataset on U.S. education abroad enrollment trends and student demographics, it neither interprets the data nor positions the data within the broader U.S. higher education landscape. For example, the report provides information on how student demographics have changed over time, but does not show how these same demographics have shifted in relation to the overall demographic changes in U.S. higher education enrollment. This is much the same with other national datasets and international reports on international education mobility, such as those produced by OECD and UNESCO. Although the data collected by IIE over the years has become more sophisticated, there do not yet exist large data sets that researchers can employ for sophisticated large-scale studies on topics

beyond mobility flows and enrollment trends. The current IIE *Open Doors* database is not linked as such to other national datasets to allow for more complex statistical analyses or computations.

Terminology

In both the professional practice of education abroad and the field of education abroad research, the lack of standardized terminology often leads to confusion and the inability to relate across institutions. This leads to conceptual limitations with regard to operational terminology (Peterson et al., 2007). In 2008, the Forum issued the first edition of the Education Abroad Glossary with the goal that the Glossary be used for conventional practice in both the profession and research. Using this glossary consistently would allow for subsequent research to build upon current research without confronting issues of semantic ambiguity or institutional parlance.

Major Theoretical Models & Conceptual Frameworks

Due to the interdisciplinary and multidimensional nature of education abroad, it is not surprising that there is a great variety of theoretical models and conceptual frameworks underpinning education. The existing research has generally utilized an array of theoretical models that can loosely be grouped into five broad lines of research: *student learning*, *intercultural learning*, *student development*, *student engagement*, and *communication*. Table 1 provides a listing of some of the major theories within each of these lines of research. Key references for each have been noted.

Student Learning Theories

Student learning theories have generally been used in education abroad research to describe how information is absorbed, processed, and retained. Building upon the pioneering work of Rogers, Jung, Piaget, and Dewey, Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) is arguably the most-often cited learning theory in education abroad research. Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) is frequently used by practitioners in ongoing orientation programming. To a lesser extent, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory has informed student learning behavior in education abroad (1983). Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1991, 1996, 2000) has increasingly been utilized in education abroad research to explain changes in students' preconceptions and worldviews.

Intercultural Learning Theories

Intercultural learning has been the focus of considerable interest in education abroad research, particularly in the assessment of student learning outcomes. Culture shock (Oberg, 1954), curves of adjustment (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963), transition shock (Bennett, 1977), and related cultural adaptation theories have long been pervasive and powerful concepts in the existing research on intercultural learning in education abroad. Much of the research has also been informed by Bennett's (1993) Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which describes the different ways in which people can react to cultural differences. Similarly, Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory and Pettigrew's (1968, 1998) addendums have been utilized in education abroad research to better understand the contact between international groups. A definition of intercultural learning has been refined by Deardorff (2004), and rubrics for assessing students' intercultural knowledge and competence (whether developed abroad or in the United States) have been developed by the AAC&U (n.d.)

Table 1

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks Common to Education Abroad Research

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	Key References
<i>Student Learning</i>	
Experiential Learning Theory	Kolb, 1984
Multiple Intelligence Theory	Gardner, 1985
Transformative Learning Theory	Mezirow, 1991, 1996, 2000
<i>Intercultural Learning</i>	
Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity	Bennett, 1993
Intergroup Contact Theory	Allport, 1998; Pettigrew, 1968, 1998
<i>Student Development</i>	
Theory of Self Authorship	Baxter Magolda, 1992
Zone of Proximal Development	Vygotsky, 1978
Theory of Identity Development	Chikering and Reisser, 1993
Reflective Judgment Model	King and Kitchener, 1994
Women's Development Theory	Love and Guthrie, 1999
Scheme of Intellectual and Ethical Development	Perry, 1970
Theory of Moral Development	Gilligan, 1982
<i>Student Engagement</i>	
High Impact Educational Practices	Kuh, 2008
Model of Student Retention	Tinto, 1987
Input-Environment-Output	Astin, 1993
Situate Learning Theory	Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989; Lave and Wenger, 1991

Communication

Social Exchange Theory
 Social Learning Theory
 Symbolic Interactionism Theory
 Theory of Research Action

Thibault and Kelley, 1952
 Bandura, 1986
 Blumer, 1969
 Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977

Student Development Theories

The treatment of student development theories in education abroad research, whether cognitive (Chikering & Reisser, 1993; King & Kitchener, 1994; Love & Guthrie, 1999; Perry, 1970), psychosocial (Chikering & Reisser, 1993), identity-based (Gilligan, 1982), or otherwise, has been less explored. When development theories have been discussed, the focus has usually been on programming innovations that potentially propel student movement through stages in their development (Savicki, 2008, 2013). Understanding the many positions, stages, or levels of these theories presents researchers and practitioners alike with opportunities to utilize development theory creatively and strategically to promote holistic student development. Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self Authorship (1992) and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) are also beginning to emerge in education abroad research for their aid in understanding how to intervene or enhance student development through education abroad programming.

Student Engagement and Retention

Understanding and creating conditions that foster student success in college is increasingly important. In recent years, SIOs are increasingly pointing to Kuh's (2008) theoretical model on student engagement and Tinto's longstanding model of student retention (1987). Tinto provides a student retention model that hinges on students' academic and social integration. Kuh points specifically to global learning as a high-impact educational experience that increases rates of student retention and engagement. Astin's (1993) conceptual Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) model has also been used to position education abroad in discussions related to retention and persistence. Situated Learning Theory has also been used to understand how to facilitate experiences that foster authentic conditions in which students can experience and reflect on the complexity and ambiguity associated with living and studying in a new culture.

Communication Theories

There has been no shortage of communication theories utilized in education abroad research to define how information is conveyed and received between two parties in intercultural contexts. Social Exchange Theory, Social Learning Theory, Symbolic Interactionism Theory, and Theory of Research Action are just a few theoretical models that have been used to understand verbal and nonverbal

communication in education abroad settings. Kinginger's (2009) *Language Learning and Study Abroad: A Critical Reading of Research* is an excellent source for research in this area.

Research and Analysis Instruments

The increasing interest in understanding and documenting outcomes associated with education abroad (Bolen, 2007; Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009; Steinberg, 2007; Talburt & Stewart, 1999) has intensified the need to identify accessible and affordable instruments that are valid and reliable. This section briefly highlights some of the most commonly used instruments that have appeared in education abroad research.

Perhaps the most elaborate account to date of the instruments used in education abroad research appeared in Mell Bolen's edited volume (2007) *A Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad*. In this publication, Paige and Stallman (2007) conducted an exhaustive review of the literature and ultimately narrowed the field of relevant instruments to fifteen. Moreover, the authors identified the five most common reasons why institutions choose to assess education abroad outcomes. They noted that the most commonly cited purpose has been to assess student learning, which has been primarily focused on assessing the level of cultural knowledge and language learned. Another purpose has been to assess the traits of personal growth that students achieve through education abroad, such as leadership, independence, creativity, and maturity. Participant satisfaction, program development, and the need for institutional data were other noted purposes. Paige and Stallman (2007) organized the selected 15 instruments into three broad categories: *language learning and development*, *culture learning and intercultural development*, and *disciplinary learning*. Fantini (2009) has similarly conducted an exhaustive search of instruments used primarily in the assessment of intercultural communicative competence.

A number of other instruments have since begun to appear in education abroad research, notably in experimental research design studies as norm-referenced inventories wherein researchers are able to position one relative to a predefined population with respect to the trait being measured (McCauley & Swisher, 1984). This approach identifies whether the test taker performs at a higher or lower level over time or better or worse relative to the broader population. Moreover, data from well-known national surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), are being reframed at the broader institution level for advocacy and program development purposes. Among the newer instruments are a number that are more broadly focused on aspects of global learning, including the *Global Perspectives Inventory* (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009), the *Global Citizenship Scale* (Morais & Ogden, 2011), and the *Global Competence Aptitude Assessment* (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006).

1. The *Global Perspectives Inventory* (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009) is a self-assessment tool that seeks to measure how a student thinks; views him-

or herself as a person with a cultural heritage; and relates to others from other cultures, backgrounds, and values. The inventory measures a student's outlook related to cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development. Although the GPI can be useful for persons of all ages, it has been used primarily with college-aged students because evidence of students' global perspective is particularly useful for education abroad programming.

2. The *Global Citizenship Scale* (Morais & Ogden, 2011) measures global citizenship in terms of three dimensions consistently noted in the literature on the topic: social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement, each with their own subcategories of inquiry. As a free instrument with multiple dimensions, the scale is successfully being used as a pre- and post-test instrument in education abroad research (Ogden, Dewey, & Kumai, 2011).
3. *The Global Competence Aptitude Assessment* (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006) specifically measures the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences necessary to become globally competent. Although the GCAA seems ideally suited for corporate settings, the instrument has been used in education abroad research (Greunke, 2010).

Expanding on the broad categories identified by Paige and Stallman, Table 2 provides an updated listing of the 15 instruments, a selection of the instruments noted by Fantini, and a selection of newer instruments that have begun to appear in education abroad research. Key references for each have been noted.

To be sure, there are many instruments that are readily accessible to those conducting research on education abroad; Fantini identified 140 just in the assessment of intercultural communicative competence. Beyond instruments, education abroad research has seen over the years the utilization of a wide array of other assessment measures, including traditional forms such as student surveys, direct evidence of student learning through critical reflection papers, and observation of students' interactions. More recent studies have included assessment approaches that have used rubrics, such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities' intercultural knowledge value rubrics, and the use of e-portfolios, such as the approach endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2010). When conducting research, it is critical to select the appropriate measure and not be swayed by what is most convenient or affordable. Deardorff (2011, 2015) cautions researchers to spend sufficient time to understand exactly what is to be measured and only then determine the appropriate assessment methods or instruments to be used. Otherwise, the data collected could be invalid regardless of how valid and reliable the assessment measure may be. There must be clear alignment between the research objectives and the measurement used for the results to be valid. Deardorff and others have also cautioned that as research objectives become more complex and multidimensional, one measure alone may be insufficient (Krathwohl, 2004). Further, if you do not have the time and skills to interpret the data collected with externally (or internally) developed instruments, you should reconsider using them, and reconsider whether you are doing "big" research or "small-scale" assessment.

NAFSA's *Assessment and Evaluation for International Educators* provides an overview and comprehensive resource guide for international educators

participating in assessment and evaluation (Braskamp et al., 2009). Similarly, Deardorff's *Demystifying Outcomes Assessment for International Educators* is an excellent new resource (Deardorff, 2015).

Table 2

Education Abroad Assessment Instruments

Adapted from Paige and Stallman (2007) and Fantini (2009)

Category & Instrument	Key References
<i>Language Learning and Development</i>	
Language Strategies Survey Oral Proficiency Interview Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview Speech Act Measure	Cohen & Chi, 2001 ACTFL, 1999 ACTFL, 1999 Cohen & Shively, 2003
<i>Culture Learning and Intercultural Development</i>	
Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire	Shealy, 2004 Szapocznik, Kurintes & Fernandez, 1980
Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory Cross-Cultural World-Mindedness Scale Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory Intercultural Development Inventory Intercultural Effectiveness Scale Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure Multi-Index Ethnocultural Identity Scale Sociocultural Adjustment Scale Strategies Inventory for Learning Culture	Kelley & Myers, 1999 Der-Karabetian & Metzger, 1993 Matsumoto et al, 2001 Hammer, 2002 Hammer & Bennett, 1999, 2002 The Kozai Group, Inc. Phinney, 1992 Horvath, 1997; Yamada, 1998 Ward & Kennedy, 1999 Paige, Rong, Zhang, Kappler, Hoff, & Emert, 2003
<i>Disciplinary Learning</i>	
Disciplinary Learning Interview Protocol Academic Development Scale	Hammer, Malone, & Paige (in press) Ogden, 2010
<i>Global Knowledge & Awareness</i>	
Global Perspectives Inventory Global Awareness Profile Global Citizenship Scale	Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill, 2009 Corbitt, 1998 Morais & Ogden, 2011; Ogden, 2010
Global Competencies Inventory Global Competence Aptitude Assessment	The Kozai Group, Inc. Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006

Notable Gaps and Needed Research

Given the dramatic changes in the internationalization of HE in recent decades coupled with advances in technology, transportation, and communication, it is essential that untested claims and long-held assumptions of the value of education abroad programming continue to be tested, especially in light of the absence or generalizable nature of the existing research. Although certainly not exhaustive, this section briefly discusses the following notable gaps in the existing literature:

1. *Programming*
2. *Program mobility models*
3. *Experience types*
4. *Curriculum integration*
5. *Career integration*
6. *Technology*
7. *Host community impact*
8. *Institutional impact*
9. *Financial issues*
10. *Participation*
11. *Global citizenship*
12. *Push and pull factors*
13. *Institution type*

Programming

The existing research on the traditional programmatic components of education abroad programming, namely *student accommodation*, *academic programming*, *experiential learning*, and *student services*, does not fully support the many long-held assumptions of the value of education abroad programming (Ogden, Streitwieser, & Crawford, 2014). For example, one traditional—and one of the most venerated—way for students to interact with the host culture is through a homestay with a local family. Although many education abroad programs proffer the homestay as an optimal living situation, the evidence to support student learning outcomes as a result of a homestay is inconclusive at best (Castiglioni, 2012; Hansel, 1986; Iino, 2006; Laar & Levin, 2003; Mancheno, 2008; Rivers, 1998; Shiri, 2015). Evidence in support of housing in private apartments, living and learning programs, or shared housing with local students is similarly inconclusive (Mancheno, 2008; Minson, 2000; Morais & Ogden, 2011; Ogden, Dewey, & Kumai, 2011; Saidla & Parodi, 1991; Vande Berg et al., 2004, 2009). Student accommodation certainly has the potential to support student learning, but more research is needed to understand what learning occurs and how it can be fostered.

The purpose and focus of academic programming also needs further attention and repositioning, particularly in light of the trend toward education abroad experiences of shorter durations and the increase in faculty-directed programming. In spite of the increasing variation in the modes of academic delivery, a differential understanding of student learning, whether it takes place

through direct enrollment at local host institutions, island programming or via some other variation remains inconclusive, needs further research (Norris & Dwyer, 2005; Vande Berg et al., 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Some research has suggested a “Boomerang Effect” in that education abroad programming, particularly faculty-directed programs, leads to initial gains in intercultural competency, but the gains decline in the months following return (Rexeisen, 2012). There has been considerable research on language learning in education abroad settings (Kinging, 2009), but more work is needed to understand how language learning can be further enhanced through the manipulation of programmatic components. Moreover, the proliferation of English-taught programming in non-English speaking countries presents a new area of research into student learning.

National datasets such as the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) (Green, Hesel, & Bartini, 2008; NSSE, 2008) suggest that students are coming to higher education with interests in pursuing internships and field experience opportunities as well as community service and volunteer work. Colleges and universities have responded with a proliferation of programming innovations that provide international internships, ethnographic field placements (Jurasek, 1995; Ogden, 2006), international service-learning placements (Chisholm, 2005), and various other forms of international experiential learning opportunities. While domestically oriented research provides compelling evidence on the worth and value of experiential learning, available research on international experiential learning has not yet demonstrated a clear link between experiential programming and student learning (Dwyer, 2004; Franklin, 2010; Haeckl & Mandwell, 2009; Honigsblum, 2002; Jones, 2011; Kruze, Orahood, & Pearson, 2004; Lutterman-Aguilar, 2002, Steinberg, 2002).

The learning that takes place outside of the classroom can be among the most rewarding and empowering experiences that a student will have during an education abroad experience. International educators have long emphasized the importance of field trips and excursions; language exchanges; ongoing orientation programming and related co-curricular and extracurricular activities; as well as informal, unstructured contacts with non-education abroad individuals and groups. In recent years, third-party program providers such as Arcadia University and the Institute for Study Abroad (IFSA) at Butler University have codified co-curricular offerings to offer cross-cultural learning certificates. Unfortunately, there is very little research on the impact of these many services on student learning beyond student satisfaction surveys.

Program Mobility Models

Because the vast majority of U.S. students seeking international education opportunities do so through programming offered as part of their home degrees, a variety of modes of student mobility have naturally emerged over time. The most commonly utilized modes include *bilateral* and *multilateral student exchanges*, *faculty-directed programs*, *consortia programming*, and *third-party provider organizations*. The exchange of students has a long history in U.S. higher education reaching back to 1909 (Hoffa, 2007). Shortly after WWII, regional and national interinstitutional consortia began to emerge, such as the *Institute for the*

International Education of Students (IES Abroad) and the *Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)*. In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of for-profit and non-profit, third-party provider organizations that offer education abroad program services to students. Among the most rapidly growing mode of mobility today are faculty-directed programs through which a faculty member (or members) from the home campus accompany students abroad (Spencer & Tuma, 2002). In spite of this long history and evolution of program mobility modes, there remains little comparative research that examines the relative value of each or differentially assesses outcomes.

While research on faculty-directed programming is expanding, much of the existing research is situated in the area of short-term programming outcomes or studies examining program duration (Kehl & Morris, 2008) and not necessarily focused on the program model itself. More research is needed in this area generally and in understanding the emerging variations of faculty-directed programming, such as semester-embedded education abroad, or short abroad experiences that form an integral part or optional add-on to courses offered on the home campus (Peterson et al., 2007). Research in this particular variation, for example, has begun to show beneficial learning outcomes in areas related to global knowledge, academic development, and intercultural learning (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Bond, Koont, & Stephenson, 2005; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005b; Ogden, 2010). Moreover, the growth in faculty-directed programming, in which students have sustained contact with faculty members, presents unique opportunities to test Tinto's theoretical model of student retention (1987) and Astin's (1993) conceptual Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) model.

As education abroad is increasingly leveraged as a high-impact experience to boost retention and graduation rates (Redden, 2012), new program mobility modes are emerging. In particular, first-year education abroad seminars are being strategically utilized in the recruitment and admissions process as a means to attract and retain the best and brightest students. Although some institutions have reported evidence to suggest that such programs contribute to retention rates (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2009; Steglitz, 2010), more generalizable research is needed.

Experience Types

While "study abroad" was once the catch-all term for outbound mobility, the term "education abroad" is now preferred as a broader category consisting of at least five distinct experience types of outbound study: *study abroad*, *research abroad*, *intern abroad*, *teach abroad*, and *service-learning abroad* (Ogden & Brennan, 2014). While much of the existing research has focused on study abroad, there has been relatively little research on these other experience types. However, there has been a growing interest in undergraduate research abroad (Streitwieser & Sobania, 2008), international internships (Honigsblum, 2002), and student teaching abroad programming (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Cushner & Brennan, 2007). Research particular to international service-learning has been mixed, ranging from positions advocating service-learning as a laudable and creditworthy endeavor in education abroad (Steinberg, 2002) to intense criticism of misguided American students trying to soothe their troubled consciences by

“doing something nice” for the poor (Ilich, 1968; Van Engen, 2000; Woolf, 2006, 2008).

Curriculum Integration

The concept of *curriculum integration* of education abroad has begun to take hold (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Woodruff & Henry, 2012). Whereas education abroad may have once been understood in terms of international travel, curricular integration efforts have stressed the importance of engaging the faculty in positioning international education as an integral part of academic degree programs and tied to the measurable learning outcomes of the disciplines. Such integration involves may involve changes to teaching and advising to prepare students for education abroad, advise and teach them when they are abroad, and help them build on what they learned and how they developed upon return to campus. The University of Minnesota's pioneering work in curriculum integration beginning in 1995 has served as a model for other institutions around the country on integrating international perspectives into on-campus instruction and developing major-specific advising tools by identifying courses taken abroad that will count toward degrees at home institutions. As education abroad programming becomes strategically aligned with the curriculum and leveraged in support of intended outcomes, more research will be needed that assesses the efficacy of these efforts. As research on education abroad has not been limited to any specific academic discipline, research can happen across multiple fields of higher education.

Career Integration

Employing an approach similar to curriculum integration, *career integration* efforts focus on integrating educational experiences abroad into student career and life planning. Similarly championed by the University of Minnesota, efforts have included partnering with career centers and related stakeholders to integrate education abroad into career advising structures designed to help students choose opportunities to explore, articulate individual learning goals, build career skills, and maximize career reflection. While strategically leveraging education abroad for long-term career goals isn't new, the research in this area is scant. What research that does exist has primarily been focused on long-term career impact and employer expectations (Andenoro et al., 2015; Blahnik, 2010; Curran, 2007; Dwyer, 2004; Franklin, 2010; Hannigan, 2001; Hart Research Associates, 2015; Kruze, Orahod & Pearson, 2004; Mohajeri & Gillespie, 2008; Molony, Sowter, & Potts, 2011; Paige, Stallman, & Josić, 2008; Norris & Gillespie, 2009; Potts, 2015; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007) and workforce development (Tilman, 2005, 2014). A related body of research is beginning to form that looks at how undergraduate education abroad participation affects graduate school admissions decisions. For example, Johnson (2013) and others have sought to understand how education abroad experience influences the likelihood of being admitted into a selective graduate program (Dwyer & Peters, 2013).

Technology

The arrival of new technologies is directly impacting the nature of international student mobility and points to the need for new research on communication and intercultural engagement. John Urry speaks to the implications of improved communication flows and technological advances that allow for “hugely enhanced capacities to simulate the spaces of nature and culture” (2002, p. 14). Social networking sites and communication media such as Facebook (Huesca, 2013), Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Skype, to name just a few, have reduced barriers to person-to-person contact by diminishing temporal and geographic boundaries. The emergence of new forms of distance learning, MOOCs, and “virtual classrooms” has similarly altered the traditional classroom (Langran, Langran, & Ozment, 2009; Yuan, Powell, & Olivier, 2014). Arguably, as social and technological networks evolve, so will people’s perceptions of cultural differences and their encounters within them. Research investigating the impact of new technologies and their application to education abroad programming development and implementation is needed. The extent to which new and emerging technology enhances or distracts from student learning abroad has yet to appear in research related to U.S. education abroad.

Host Community Impact

The extent to which host communities are impacted by the presence of visitors has long been the focus of both anthropologists and tourism scholars (Allen et al., 1993; Doxey, 1976; Geertz, 1973; George, 2005; Greenwood, 1977; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; MacCannell, 1992; Meethan, 2003; Shouten, 1996), but this question has only recently been asked in relation to education abroad programming. Although a number of critical and timely essays have discussed notions of reciprocity (Castiglioni, 2012; Doerr, 2013; Gillespie, 2003; Johnson, 2009; Ogden, Streitwieser, & Crawford, 2014), there has been little research that has specifically examined how the prolonged and recurring presence of U.S. students impacts local communities over time (Levy, 2002). For example, education abroad practitioners regularly claim that education abroad programming positively impacts local economies, but tourism literature in the area of economic leakage suggests this may not necessarily be the case (Supradist, 2004). Along the same lines, a growing number of students who are pursuing careers in health care professions are conducting medical rotations and clerkships abroad in local health care contexts as part of their educational training. While there has been considerable public discourse on the ethics of providing health care services through short-term programming abroad, there has been little research on host community impact, or similarly, on the educational benefit these experiences have for the students involved in them.

Institutional Impact

As institutions direct more attention to documenting practices that effectively maximize student success, SIOs are increasingly being asked to

provide evidence of the extent to which internationalization efforts potentially enhance and extend institutional missions, values, and priorities (Altbach & de Wit, 2015; Ogden, 2014; Robson, 2011). In addition to providing accurate and reliable enrollment data, SIOs are being asked to show how education abroad, as a high-impact undergraduate experience, supports institutional retention and persistence efforts (e.g., time to graduation, graduation rates), maximizes student success (e.g., student learning outcomes, job placement rates), enhances comprehensive internationalization efforts (e.g., campus climate, credit transfer rates), and advances alumni loyalty and development. Senior administrators are eager to understand the efficacy of institutional policies governing international education and the utilization of institutional resources, how faculty members benefit from leading student groups abroad (Woodside, Wong, & Wiest, 1999), and the effectiveness of campuswide curriculum integration efforts (Hulstrand, 2008; Finkelstein, Walker, & Chen, 2009; Sandgren et al., 1999). To be sure, SIOs across the country share similar challenges with respect to effectively collecting and utilizing data for strategic institutional planning and advocacy. Research that advances and supports this growing demand is essential.

Financial Issues

All too often, international educators are reminded that studying abroad is expensive and that either students or institutions cannot afford it. Such claims are frequently countered with information on scholarship opportunities and the like, but the reality is that little is known about how financial need impacts a student's decision making process. In fact, there is very little generalizable data available which show the degree to which student financial need actually impacts participation and program choice. Although there are institution-specific studies in this regard (Ogden, 2010; Brux & Blake, 2009), most of these studies account for only those students who did in fact successfully study abroad and were thus represented in the sample. They usually do not account for students who opted out of studying abroad due to financial need or related reasons. Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2009) chose to instead look at the likelihood of studying abroad. By examining likelihood ratios, these authors were able to draw some conclusions with regard to how financial capital influences the likelihood of participation in education abroad even in the earliest stages when the beginnings of predisposition, plans or intentions to study abroad are first being formed. Another way of understanding the extent to which financial need impacts education abroad participation has been to investigate the behaviors of Pell-eligible students or actual Pell recipients (Chan & Cochrane, 2008). In a related study, Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2011) used odds ratios to look at how institutional financial aid policies and the availability of institution-specific scholarships impact the likelihood of studying abroad. Such innovative approaches to data collection and evaluation are essential to further understand how institutional policies and approaches impact diverse student participation. Research is also needed on the relationship between spending on institutional spending on study abroad and institutional financial and educational health.

Participation

Based on *Open Doors* data, the typical education abroad student profile is white; female; without any disability; majoring in the humanities, social sciences, or business; and studying in Europe on a program of fewer than eight weeks' duration (IIE, 2014). This student profile is perhaps most helpful when comparing education abroad enrollments to other national enrollment trends in U.S. higher education. For example, female students account for roughly 65% of the total education abroad enrollment according to the *Open Doors* report for the 2012/13 academic year. This percentage may appear disproportionately high. However, knowing that female students account for 56% of the total enrollment in U.S. degree-granting institutions (NCES, 2015) helps to better understand just how disproportionate these enrollment patterns in education abroad actually are. It is important that education abroad professionals not only understand national enrollment trends in education abroad and higher education but also the enrollment trends within their own education abroad sample relative to the home campus population (and that of comparable institutions). Failure to understand who is underrepresented within one's own programming, and to strategize accordingly, can lead to missed opportunities for particular populations to realize the benefits of education abroad.

Moreover, it is not enough to understand who is participating in education abroad programming, but to understand the differential outcomes of participation for particular groups, especially traditionally underrepresented populations such as first generation students, Pell eligible students, nontraditional students, graduate students (Dirkx et al., 2014), males, STEM majors, etc. there is a growing body of research on the participation trends of these populations, there is less research specifically on the outcomes associated with their participation. Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2008, 2009, 2011) have perhaps done the most in this area to date by applying an integrated student choice model to examine gender and racial differences in the education abroad decision-making process. There is no known research on the outcomes associated with international students who participate in traditional U.S. education abroad. Gender as an area of inquiry is also much in need.

Moreover, only recently have transfer students entered the professional discourse, and still only a few institutions are tracking these students in their enrollment reports (CIC, 2012; Davidson, 2015). Along these same lines, more research is needed on understanding the impact of diverse faculty and staff on education abroad participation of traditionally underrepresented populations.

Global Citizenship

In its 2008 and 2012 editions of *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses*, ACE reported that an increasing number of U.S. institutions now explicitly mention internationalization and/or global learning in their mission statements, include it in their strategic plans, and formally assess their internationalization efforts (ACE, 2012; Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008). The concept of *global citizenship* has prominently emerged in much of the language that is being used to prioritize the internationalization of higher education and the

undergraduate experience. Although it remains a highly contested concept that scholars continue to discuss and debate from a variety of theoretical and philosophical perspectives, many agree that graduating global citizens has become central to the many goals of contemporary higher education (Achterberg, 2002; Belamy & Weinberg, 2006; Brustein, 2007; Falk & Kanach, 2000; Hartman & Kiely, 2013; Langran, Langran, & Ozment, 2009; McCabe, 2001; Schattle, 2009; Stearns, 2009; Woolf, 2010; Zemach-Bersin, 2008). There are numerous ongoing attempts to define and operationalize this term, with the goal to enable more institutions to assess the extent to which they are graduating students that have indeed made progress in their development as global citizens and the efficacy of the methodologies chosen to do so, of which education abroad programming has been central (Andrzejewski & Alessio, 1999; Carens, 2000; Dobson, 2003; Doer, 2012; Lagos, 2001; Langran, Langran, & Ozment, 2009; Morais & Ogden, 2011; Noddings, 2005; Parekh, 2003; Urry, 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Push and Pull Factors

In comparison to the large number of international students seeking degrees in the United States, only about 46,000 U.S. students studied abroad to obtain degrees from foreign institutions in 2013 (IIE, *Project Atlas*, 2014). Although there has been considerable research on understanding the many push and pull factors associated with educational mobility, particularly on international students coming to the United States, there has been little research on push and pull factors of U.S. outbound mobility (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009; de Wit et al., 2008; Guruz, 2008; Macready & Tucker, 2011; Ogden & Brennan, 2014). Anecdotal evidence suggests that among the varied reasons U.S. students pursue international degrees are avoiding the increasing high cost of U.S. tuition and hopes that a degree from a prestigious institution abroad will help differentiate graduates from their peers. There is some evidence to suggest that heritage is a significant pull factor for particular populations to study abroad in specific locations (Comp, 2008; Ogden, 2010). Whereas international students are primarily drawn to the United States to earn degrees, U.S. students appear to be more motivated by the idea of experiencing other cultures and fostering mutual cultural understanding. Along these lines, U.S. students are often pushed abroad to learn languages in context, experience world cultures at first hand, develop marketable skills for career enhancement, expand their worldviews, and simply mature. As international perspectives have increasingly been embedded into the curricula, students are increasingly pushed abroad to supplement or complement their academic studies. More research is needed to investigate the push and pull factors associated with U.S. education abroad.

Institution Type

Much of the existing research has been based in the context of four-year universities and colleges. Although there has been some research focused on education abroad programming at the community college level, more work needs to be done in this area, especially as community colleges educate many

traditionally underrepresented populations in education abroad, including minority students, first-generation students, and students with financial need (Green, 2006). In recent years, community colleges have achieved considerable success in providing students with education abroad opportunities, and 75% of these institutions see short-term education abroad programs as their primary growth area (Gutierrez, Auerbach, & Bhandari, 2009). It would be useful to conduct further research on community college students who study abroad, how they have fared in their international experiences, the influence of such experiences on their educational progress, and the approaches community college-based international educators have taken toward working effectively with these students (Raby & Sawadogo, 2005; Robertson, 2014). Similarly, research is scant on education abroad programming with other institutions serving specific populations, such as historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions.

This section has provided brief descriptions of some of the most notable gaps in the existing literature on U.S. education abroad and has indicated needed directions for future research. Table 3 summarizes the notable gaps, identified as sample research questions.

Table 3

Summary of Notable Gaps in U.S. Education Abroad Research as Sample Research Questions

Programming

- How do student learning outcomes differ based on housing type (e.g., homestay, apartment, dormitory, etc.)?
- How do student learning outcomes differ based on the mode of instruction (e.g., faculty-directed, direct enrollment, island programming, etc.)?
- How does experiential learning programming enhance student learning (e.g., internship, service-learning, field placement, etc.)?
- How do student services enhance student learning outcomes (e.g., field trips and excursions, language exchanges, ongoing orientation programming, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, etc.)?
- How are language proficiency gains influenced by the manipulation of programmatic components?

Program Mobility Modes

- How does student learning vary by education abroad program modality (i.e., student exchanges, faculty-directed programs, consortia programming, and third-party provider organizations)?
- How does the student profile vary by education abroad program mobility mode?
- How does faculty engagement in education abroad programming impact curriculum internationalization on the home campus?
- To what extent are first-year education abroad program participants retained into the second year and how many persist to graduation?

Experience Types

- How do student learning outcomes differ by experience type (e.g., study, research, intern, teach, service-learning, etc.)?

Curriculum Integration

- To what extent are curriculum integration efforts influential in the student decision making process?
- To what extent are curriculum integration efforts internationalizing the home school curriculum and the student learning experience?

Career Integration

- How does education abroad participation increase employability and shape career development?
- How do campus recruiters understand and view education abroad participation?
- How does education abroad participation considered in the graduate school admissions process?

Technology

- How have new communication technologies impacted intercultural learning and socialization patterns?
- How are new instructional technologies impacting the learning environment in an education abroad context?

Host Community Impact

- What are the economic effects on local communities that have host education abroad programs?
- How are local communities impacted by the prolonged presence of American students?
- How are local communities served by the presence and services of short-term clinical rotations?

Institutional Impact

- Does education abroad programming have a causal relationship to retention and persistence?
- Does education abroad participation impact alumni loyalty, giving, and development?
- How does faculty engagement in education abroad program development and implementation benefit local faculty and promote curriculum internationalization?
- How do institutional policies (e.g., financial aid, credit transfer, fee structures) impact education abroad enrollment?

Financial Issues

- How does student financial need impact the likelihood of study abroad?
- How does the presence of institutional aid impact education abroad enrollment demographics?
- To what extent does program value as opposed to program cost factor into the program selection process?

Participation

- Does contemporary education abroad remain mostly an opportunity for white, middle-class, female students majoring in the social sciences?
- How do program demographics vary by program mode or program experience type?
- To what extent are families of first generation students involved in and impacted by the education abroad experience?
- What are the obstacles that face transfer students?

Global Citizenship

- To what extent does participation in embedded education abroad programming mediate changes in students' development as global citizens?
- To what extent are intercultural competency gains retained after returning from abroad?
- How does education abroad participation impact one's sense of social responsibility?

Push & Pull Factors

- What is the profile of those U.S. students seeking degrees abroad and what factors impacted their decisions to seek degrees abroad?
- What push and pull factors are at play for non-degree seeking education abroad participants?

Institution Type

- How have short-term, faculty-directed programs impacted enrollment trends by institution type?
- How do education abroad enrollment patterns differ between 1850s and 1890s public land-grant institutions?

Publication Venues

Publishing findings is important and contributes to the advancement of the field. The choice of a venue for publication of a manuscript is important. Several factors should be considered in this decision, such as the target audience, the topic of the manuscript, publisher guidelines, and publisher timetables. Below is a sample listing of journals and publication venues in which scholars may want to pursue publishing their research, especially as it relates to education abroad. Choosing the right publication venue may be as important as doing the work itself.

- *Comparative Education Review*. Founded in 1957 to advance knowledge and teaching in comparative education studies, the Review investigates education throughout the world and the social, economic, and political forces that shape it. CER is the official publication of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES).
- *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. IJIR is dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of theory, research and practice

in the field of intercultural relations. *IJIR* is the official publication of the International Academy for Intercultural Research.

- *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*. Founded in 1994, *Frontiers* publishes research articles and essays that focus on the intellectual and personal development of students in international and intercultural contexts. *Frontiers* is the official publication of the Forum on Education Abroad.
- *Journal of Studies in International Education*. JSIE is a forum for articles that discuss theoretical, conceptual and practical aspects of internationalization including regional, national, and institutional policies and strategies; internationalization of the curriculum; issues surrounding international students; and cross-border delivery of education. JSIE is the official publication of the Association for Studies in International Education (ASIE).

Depending on the nature of the research, discipline-specific journals may also be viable venues. There are similar venues for research on international students in the United States, such as the *Journal of International Students in Higher Education*. Such journals may be particularly suitable for research on exchange students, for example. In addition to peer-reviewed journals, there are a number of reputable publishers of educational research and related fields that have recently published books or edited volumes on important topics related to education abroad, including Agapy LLC, Intercultural Press, Sage, Sense Publishers, Stylus, and Symposium Books. Professional associations also regularly publish solicited manuscripts on education abroad topics, including the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), NAFSA: Association of International Educators, and the Forum on Education Abroad. A number of higher education organizations have also long supported the dissemination of research on U.S. education abroad, such as the American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), and the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Conclusion

As U.S. institutions direct more attention to documenting practices that effectively maximize student success, the influential role of the senior international officer will be to encourage rigorous and systematic research and scholarship; disseminate and leverage findings to demonstrate how education abroad enhances and extends institutional missions, values, and priorities; and use findings to improve education abroad practice and student learning outcomes. SIOs need to be informed by international education research and be active partners in guiding and directing scholarship that has useful and practical implications for the profession. Building on the 1996 AIEA publication, *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States*, this

paper has aimed to continue that initial work by working toward a research agenda that can guide and inform the direction and focus of research and scholarship on U.S. education abroad. Thus, the paper has attempted to provide a brief overview of research in the area of U.S. education abroad over time, the major methodological and design challenges, the theoretical models that have traditionally informed education abroad research, and the instruments commonly used in assessing and measuring outcomes. Some of the many noteworthy gaps and needed directions in the emerging area of research were also discussed with the goal of generating key research questions that require further consideration and inquiry.

About the author

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The AIEA Research Agenda Series

In 1996, AIEA published a *Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States* in response to post-cold war concerns about the future of internationalization. Continuation of federal supports for internationalization was uncertain, and leaders in internationalization were justly concerned that the outcomes of internationalization were neither clear nor well-documented. Despite changes in funding, the internationalization of higher education has taken on even greater prominence in the U.S. and elsewhere since the report's publication, and research on internationalization has burgeoned. The aim of AIEA's new series is to reflect on existing research, identify gaps, and encourage new research to address the gaps. Further, while the series begins with two papers focused on questions pertaining primarily to the U.S. context, perspectives from outside the U.S. are very much needed and welcomed. Submissions may be sent to the AIEA editorial committee via aiea@duke.edu.

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Key Terms and Definitions

The following is a list of U.S.-specific terminology used in this article and related definitions that have been adapted from the Forum on Education Abroad Glossary. For a more expansive list of key terms and definitions commonly used in U.S. education, see the Glossary at www.forumea.org/resources/glossary.

- *Consortia*. A group of institutions and/or organizations that share one or more education abroad programs within a membership group in order to provide greater access, quality control, and/or cost efficiency in education abroad programs to students.
- *Curriculum Integration*. Incorporating coursework taken abroad into the academic context of the home campus. It involves weaving education abroad into the on-campus curriculum through activities such as course matching, academic advising, and departmental and collegiate informational and advising materials; and more ambitiously, by changing teaching, advising, and learning on the home campus.
- *Direct Enrollment*. Study at an international institution in which students enroll directly as exchange or visiting students in courses offered by the host institution.
- *Education Abroad*. Education that occurs outside the participant's home country. Education abroad can include study abroad, research abroad, intern abroad, service-learning abroad, teach abroad, and other program modes as long as these programs are driven to a significant degree by learning goals.
- *Embedded Education Abroad*. A short education abroad experience that forms an integral part of, or an optional add-on to, a course given on the home campus. Most commonly, the education abroad portion of the course takes place during a midterm break or after the end of the on-campus semester.
- *Faculty-Directed Program*. An education abroad program directed by one or more faculty members accompanying students from the home campus as they study abroad.
- *Pell Grant*. Created by the U.S. Higher Education Act of 1965 and now sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the Pell Grant is money the U.S. federal government provides for students with financial need to attend higher education. A Pell Grant is generally considered the foundation of a student's financial aid package, and unlike loans, need not be repaid.
- *Open Doors*. Compiled by the Institute for International Education (IIE), the *Open Doors* report is the annual statistical survey of international student and scholar flows to and from the United States.
- *Program Provider*. An institution or organization that offers education abroad program services to students from a variety of institutions. A program provider may be a college or university, a nonprofit organization, a for-profit business, or a consortium.

- *Student Exchange*. A reciprocal agreement whose participants are students. This may include bilateral exchanges and multilateral exchanges. Exchanges allow students to trade places with students at partner institutions abroad.
- *Study Abroad*. A subtype of education abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student's home institution. Students generally enroll in academic coursework for a traditional classroom-based experience abroad. Depending on the selected program, academic credit will be earned via the host institution or via the home institution.
- *Underrepresentation*. Categories of students who study abroad in fewer numbers than they represent at their home institution. Underrepresented populations may include ethnicity, gender, discipline of study, first generation, etc. The term is often used erroneously to refer to diversity issues.

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