

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF A MID-LENGTH STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Jill K. Corbin, B.A., M.H.R.

Dissertation Prepared for Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2012

APPROVED:

Marc Cutright, Major Professor
Bonita Jacobs, Committee Member
Kathleen Whitson, Committee Member and
Program Coordinator for Higher
Education
Janice Holden, Chair of the Department of
Counseling and Higher Education
Jerry Thomas, Dean of the College of
Education
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the
Toulouse Graduate School

Corbin, Jill K. Perceived effects of a mid-length study abroad program. Doctor of Education (Higher Education), May 2012, 126 pp., references, 66 titles.

The focus of the study was the University of Dallas' Rome Program, a mid-length study abroad program on the university's campus in Rome, Italy. The program is designed to provide participants with the opportunity to encounter firsthand Western tradition by integrating the core curriculum through classroom teachings and class excursions, thus solidifying the foundation of the participants' undergraduate education. Beyond this purpose, the Rome Program does not operate from established goals and objectives for student experience.

I consulted relevant research literature to construct a schema of domains of development appropriate to this qualitative study. These domains were intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spiritual development.

I interviewed 20 University of Dallas seniors who participated in the mid-length study abroad program between fall 2009 and spring 2011, using an extended, semi-structured interview protocol. The participants included 11 females and 9 males; 19 White and 1 Hispanic. The findings were supported by subsequent review by 4 of the interviewed students.

I found generally strong but inconsistent support for student development in each of the domains. A number of sub-themes are reported. Through the interviews, an additional theme of personal development emerged and is reported.

Although the findings generally support the conclusion that the Rome Program is successful, good education practice leads to a recommendation of more explicit setting of goals by higher education program planners and administrators. Such goal setting provides rationale for program construction, provides students with their own goal framework, and establishes a tangible framework for ongoing program evaluation.

Copyright 2012

by

Jill K. Corbin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the day I started kindergarten throughout my senior year of high school, every morning before leaving for work my dad would say to me, “Study hard so you can get into the college of your choice which is the University of Oklahoma.” Thirteen years later I did just that—and because of my choice to attend OU—I started on the winding path that would lead me to writing this acknowledgments page today.

First, I would like to thank Dr. Kevin McPherson and Dr. John Plotts, for helping me to recognize my full educational and career potential. I trust that both of you know how much I value your mentorship. To my committee members, Dr. Marc Cutright, Dr. Bonita Jacobs, and Dr. Kathleen Whitson, I sincerely thank you for your valuable time, insightful comments, and guidance while I navigated my way throughout the dissertation process. To the student participants and administration at the University of Dallas, thank you for allowing me the privilege to learn more about each of you and this truly unique study abroad opportunity we call the Rome Program.

And finally, to my family and friends—I cannot thank you enough for the steadfast outpouring of love, support, and compassion as I struggled to cross this epic task off of my perpetual “to-do” list. Thank you for allowing me to be selfish with my time, for listening as I vented my many frustrations, for making me laugh when I needed to, and for letting me cry when I needed to even more. Your unwavering faith in my ability to accomplish this goal will always be appreciated. I am forever indebted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Historical Overview of Study Abroad	4
Trends in Study Abroad	8
Participants.....	9
Destinations.....	9
Duration	10
Program Design	10
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Significance of the Study	13
Purpose of the Study	13
Research Questions.....	13
Definition of Terms.....	14
Delimitations.....	15
Limitations	15
Summary.....	16
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Previous Research on the Effects of Study Abroad	18
Goals of Study Abroad Programs	19
Intellectual Development	19
Global Perspective	23
Career Development	26
Spirituality.....	28
Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHOD	32
Why Qualitative Design?	32
Purpose of the Study	33
Research Questions.....	33
Thematic Analysis	33

Role of the Researcher	34
Research Setting and Context	35
Sample.....	37
Participant Selection	38
Method of Data Collection.....	39
Ethical Considerations	39
Data Collection	40
Interview Protocol.....	41
Rome Program Participant Interview Questions.....	41
Data Analysis	43
Summary	44
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	46
Research Protocol	47
Research Questions and Findings	48
Intellectual Development: Scholarship as a Lifestyle.....	49
Subtheme 1: Appreciation of the Core Curriculum	50
Subtheme 2: New Academic Interests	55
Subtheme 3: Academically Intensive.....	57
Summary of Intellectual Development: Scholarship as a Lifestyle.....	58
Global Perspective: We’re Not in Texas Anymore	59
Subtheme 1: Outside the UD Bubble.....	60
Subtheme 2: In Rome, not of Rome.....	62
Subtheme 3: Cultural Differences.....	66
Subtheme 4: Appreciation for U.S.....	68
Summary of Global Perspective: We’re Not in Texas Anymore	70
Career: Life after UD	71
Subtheme 1: Graduate School.....	72
Subtheme 2: International Affairs.....	73
Subtheme 3: Life of Service	77
Summary of Career: Life after UD	79
Spirituality: Community of Believers.....	80
Subtheme 1: Opportunity for Exploration	81

Subtheme 2: Rejuvenation of Faith.....	84
Subtheme 3: Return to Texas.....	86
Summary of Spirituality: Community of Believers.....	88
Additional Findings	89
Personal Development: Transformed by Rome.....	89
Real World: Rome	90
Face to Face	92
Fall versus Spring	93
East meets West.....	95
Rome-isms	98
Summary of Personal Development: Transformed by Rome.....	99
Summary.....	100
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	102
Introduction.....	102
Implications of Findings	103
Implications and Recommendations.....	106
Conclusions.....	108
APPENDIX A EMAIL SOLICITATION	110
APPENDIX B ROME PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SURVEY.....	112
APPENDIX C UNT IRB APPROVAL.....	114
APPENDIX D INFORMED CONSENT FORM	116
APPENDIX E ROME PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	119
REFERENCES	122

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Study abroad is a well-known educational opportunity available to numerous college students each year as part of their undergraduate education. Studying abroad is an academic experience, whether short term (as short as one week) or longer (up to a full academic year), during which students physically leave the United States to engage in college study, cultural interaction, and other academically-related activities in the host country (McKeown, 2009).

Norris and Steinberg (2008) provided an additional explanation of study abroad:

Study abroad is a holistic educational experience that affords participants opportunities to develop new academic interests, participate in academic internships, establish friendships with host country nationals, explore a new culture, expand their worldview and sense of self, as well as improve their target language skills. (p. 108)

Studying abroad gives students the opportunity to get to know a particular country and its people in-depth and to develop as an individual (Kneale, 2008).

The impact of studying abroad on student development has a worthwhile, but limited, body of research (McKeown, 2009). Research suggests that studying abroad can impact the participant in a number of areas of educational and social development such as personal development (Kauffman & Kuh, 1984; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; McCabe, 1994; Themudo, Page, & Benander, 2007), global perspective (Norris & Steinberg, 2008; Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009), professional development (Norris & Gillespie, 2009), and spiritual growth (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010; Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). This type of holistic focus allows for students to develop their thinking, gain a better sense of self, and engage in relationships with others not like them to a greater degree as a result of attending college (Braskamp et al., 2009).

Education abroad has become an increasingly important educational program (experience) in global learning and development, intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students (Braskamp et al., 2009). Educational justifications for study abroad programs include increases in students' level of awareness of the interdependence of nations, the value of diversity, the development of global perspective and the importance of international understanding (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). An educational opportunity outside the United States can be among the most valuable tools for preparing a student to participate effectively in an increasingly interconnected international community that demands cross-cultural skills and knowledge (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003). It is this type of thinking that has led to a dramatic increase in the number and design of study abroad programs available to undergraduate students today.

Studying abroad as part of an undergraduate education has become common practice since the 1970s when foreign language programs dominated the offerings to students of all majors (Norris & Steinberg, 2008). In 2008-2009, the total number of U.S. students studying abroad was 260,327 (Chow & Bhandari, 2010), a number that equates to less than 6% of the population of U.S. college students (S.3744, 2006). Considering the value placed on study abroad and international experiences from the student perspective, as well as employers, it is disappointing that such a small percentage of college students choose to participate.

Though the overall number of college students participating in study abroad is small comparably, study abroad programs as a whole have seen a significant increase in participation over the past 10 years. With such a staggering increase in participation in these programs, it is essential to further investigate the recent trends and current status of study abroad for American college students (Schroth, 2010). The support for study abroad programs can be found

throughout academia, as well as in the business world. Praetzel, Curcio, and DiLorenzo (1996) wrote “All study abroad programs, whether conventional or following this departmental approach, provide students with an enhanced understanding of different cultures, races, customs, and business practices” (p. 174). Most educators agree that students need to be equipped with the skills to interact and compete effectively in a global environment (Kehl & Morris, 2007).

Although participation in study abroad during a student’s undergraduate career may not be in the majority at most colleges, it is clear there is a need for published outcomes of study abroad programs. Due to a lack of tangible outcomes (Steinberg, 2002), and because students have a difficult time identifying the outcomes they experienced upon participating in a study abroad program (Kowarski, 2010), some individuals declare study abroad to be nothing more than a glorified field trip. Gore (2005) explained that “travel as boondoggle” reflects a longstanding suspicion in the academy about overseas activities. Amid the accusations by fellow researchers stating that foreign language instruction is best left in the U.S., Gore (2005) stated that the “boondoggle” perception is “evidently a well-entrenched view of international education activity abroad and a perception that effectively marginalizes it with the academic community” (p. 67). As the study abroad field matures it bears the responsibility to provide data, facts and analyses that document the value of its endeavors to those both within and beyond the international and higher education communities (Sutton & Rubin, 2004).

Conversely, not all study abroad programs contain established goals and expected outcomes for the students who participate within these programs. Steinberg (2002) argued for more assessment on holistic student development. Simply knowing how many students studied abroad is not equivalent to knowing what knowledge those students acquired (or failed to acquire) as a result of that experience (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Fundamental questions regarding

how study abroad programs affect students' personality, social adjustment, and academic performance need to be more rigorously tested so that program decisions will no longer be based merely on anecdotal evidence (McLeod & Wainwright, 2008). Consequently, the question is raised as to whether student surveys are enough to determine the outcomes of how well the program met the institutions goals.

Historical Overview of Study Abroad

Study abroad of scholars and professionals dates back to, as early as 500 B.C. when educated people gathered in Athens, Greece. Later, academic centers grew in Alexandria, Rome, and East Persia (Sandell, 2007). For U.S. undergraduate students, the opportunity to study abroad primarily originated in the colonial era and continues at numerous colleges and universities today, with most students choosing to study in Europe.

The tradition of the Grand Tour as an essential ingredient of higher education arose within British upper-class culture during the first half of the eighteenth century (Gore, 2005). This type of program was more elitist than the study abroad programs offered today. Most of the participants were white males of the clergy who were attending Harvard College (Bowman, 1987). By the late nineteenth century the demographic had shifted to young ladies touring European museums and cathedrals with their professors (Bowman, 1987). Today, the Grand Tour refers to the providing of opportunities for all students to learn about the art and culture of other peoples (Mistretta, 2008).

One of the first initiatives of organized international study was the Rhodes Scholarship established in 1902. Originally created for students seeking their bachelor's degrees, today the scholarship is typically awarded to those seeking graduate education. Cecil Rhodes had a vision

to create a common learning space at Oxford University for students from around the world to live and learn from each other (Meredith, 2008). Following the stipulations based in Rhodes' last Will, participants are selected based upon outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service. According to the Rhodes Trust website, Rhodes' wish was to "develop outstanding leaders who would be motivated to 'esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim', and to promote international understanding and peace" (Rhodes, n.d.).

Shortly after World War I, the Institute of International Education (IIE) was founded in 1919. This organization recognized the need for a common meeting place between higher education institutions who desired to provide an international abroad opportunity for their students, and the foreign nations interested in hosting these students and developing an educational exchange. The IIE is widely known for its annual *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, the only long-standing, comprehensive information resource on international higher education exchange activity into and out of the U.S. (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).

Research on study abroad dates back to the 1930s, when foreign language majors often spent a year living abroad, studying at a foreign university (Themudo et al., 2007). The University of Delaware is credited with creating the traditional Junior Year Abroad program in 1923. Soon after, Marymount College, Smith College, and Rosary College established programs for students to study in Paris and Switzerland respectively (Bowman, 1987). However, once World War II began these programs temporarily ceased operation.

Study abroad programs resumed shortly after World War II with a major initiative available to graduate students from the U.S. and foreign nations to study and conduct research abroad. The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 by Senator J. William Fulbright (a

former Rhodes Scholar) and his vision for the program was to “internationalize” higher education. The international academic-exchange program offers grants that are awarded by binational Fulbright commissions and financed by the U.S. government and the government of each country in which the awards are available (McMurtrie, 2008). With over 150 countries participating in the educational exchange program today, Fulbright’s vision of internationalizing higher education is rapidly becoming a reality.

In 1947, IIE formed the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). Listed on the CIEE website, its mission is one shared by many in international education: "to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world." To fulfill that mission, CIEE provides both outbound international education experiences for university students, faculty, and administrators, as well as study, work, and internship opportunities for people coming into the U.S.

Study abroad began to see a shift in participation following World War II and the introduction of the GI Bill. Studying abroad for college credit became popular in the 1970s when institutions began offering foreign language opportunities abroad. Once federal aid became available to study abroad students in 1992, a shift towards diversifying participants occurred as a result of the massification of higher education (Bolen, 2001). Eventually, study abroad became integrated into undergraduate education at many higher education institutions thus resulting in a wider acceptance of the potential benefits of study abroad on participants. In fact, Goucher College and St. Mary’s College of Maryland are two examples of colleges to require education abroad as part of a degree requirement (Lincoln Commission, 2005).

As study abroad became available to larger audiences, many recognized the need for general guidelines for study abroad programs on various college campuses. The Forum on

Education Abroad was created in 2001 and is the only organization whose exclusive purpose it is to serve the field of education abroad. The organization is recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad. In 2004, the first draft of *The Forum's Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* was formally distributed (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). Today, the Forum is recognized by its over 450 member institutions and organizations which represent approximately 90% of the U.S. students that study abroad (IIE, 2011).

President Bush, along with Congress in 2005, established a bipartisan federal commission that set a goal of one million students studying abroad annually by 2016-2017 (Lincoln Commission, 2005). To put that amount in perspective, one million students represent approximately half of U.S. college undergraduate students graduating annually (Stroud, 2010). At the time the report was published, less than 10 % of the students who graduated from United States institutions of higher education with bachelor's degrees had studied abroad (S.3744, 2006). The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (17-member Lincoln Commission) was established to discuss U.S. college and university study abroad programs, and how best to expand participation and develop new types of programs.

In order to raise awareness of study abroad programs, the U.S. Congress declared 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad" (Murphy, 2006). In June 2009, the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act was approved by the House of Representatives. The vision of the act was to dramatically increase the number of U.S. students studying abroad by expanding participation in gender, race, and academic major and socioeconomic status. The Simon Act has been presented to the Senate multiple times but has not yet been approved as a law (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2009).

Over the span of 120 years, study abroad participation has shifted from an elitist opportunity to one that is available to the masses. In the past decade, several study abroad organizations and research groups have either been established or have been expanded. In the meantime, the United States government has taken an active role in promoting study abroad opportunities to students in this country (Schroth, 2010). Today, the opportunities to study abroad include all classifications of students, a more diverse student body demographic, and a variety of destinations, program lengths, and programmatic goals. With 20 years of sustained and marked growth in U.S. international education, the study abroad experience has moved well beyond the typical “Junior Year Abroad,” with many students now seeking educational experiences of various durations, at different points, and sometimes more than once, in their academic careers (Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007).

Trends in Study Abroad

The Institute for International Education (IIE), which began collecting and publishing statistical data on U.S. students abroad in international programs in 1954, reported the number of study abroad participants has steadily increased since the end of World War II, from 9,457 in 1954-1955 (IIE, 1964) to 260,327 in 2008-2009 (Chow & Bhandari, 2010). That number marks the first time in 25 years that U.S. study abroad participation experienced a modest decline. The decrease from 262,416 in 2007-2008 to 260,327 is an overall reduction of about .8% (Chow & Bhandari, 2010). It is important to bear in mind this total number is a reduction of less than 1% over the previous year and the documented numbers reflect an overall increase that has more than doubled over the past decade.

Participants

As indicated by the *Open Doors 2010 Report on International Educational Exchange* (Chow & Bhandari, 2010), 87% of study abroad participants in the 2008-2009 cohort were undergraduate students. Of that number, 36.8% elected to study abroad during their junior year. Chow and Bhandari (2010) report that of the 269,874 undergraduate participants, 64.2% were females and 80.5% of participants were of White ethnicity. These numbers have remained somewhat unchanged for the past decade, as the highest percentage of study abroad participants each year is white females studying during the junior year of their undergraduate career. According to the report, the top five fields of study for U.S. students studying abroad were the social sciences (20.7%), business and management (19.5%), humanities (12.3%), fine or applied arts (7.3%) and physical/life sciences (7.3%). The data shows that from 1999-2009 these five fields of study have been the most popular of U.S. study abroad students. The only field of study to fluctuate is the physical/life sciences area, and it replaced foreign languages as fifth highest in 2006 (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).

Destinations

Europe has long been a favorite destination of U.S. students studying abroad. In the 2008-2009 academic year, the top four destinations were the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France, with 38% of the students choosing to study in one of these countries (Chow & Bhandari, 2010). Europe hosted a total of 141,955 students, or 54.5% of those who participated in study abroad in the 08/09 academic year (Chow & Bhandari, 2010). However, that number is a decrease of 3.9% from the previous academic year. Additionally, the *Open Doors Fact Sheet* suggests a distinctive trend towards studying outside of Europe, with countries such as Peru,

South Korea, and Chile showing significant growth in student participation (IIE, 2011). As noted on the leading destinations list, 19 out of the top 25 destinations are those where English is not a primary language (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).

Duration

The most popular lengths of exchanges are: short term (less than six weeks), mid-term (a semester), or long-term (two semesters or more). For a good portion of the 20th century, most programs were set up as a mid-term exchange. Currently, most colleges try to provide the students a chance to study abroad, but in a cheaper and easier format. The Forum on Education Abroad and the Institute of International Education distributed a survey in October 2010 to campus administrators inquiring as to study abroad on their campuses. The results showed that students are increasingly choosing shorter programs (46%), less expensive programs (45%), and programs in which their financial aid can be used (43%), as well as programs going to less expensive world regions (33%) (Chow & Bhandari, 2010). Two week trips with one professor are becoming more and more common. As the student body on college campuses continue to diversify, so do the lengths of study abroad opportunities available to undergraduate students.

Program Design

The field of education abroad has expanded significantly since 1950, diversifying from primarily island and foreign university based programs in the 1950s, to a broader assortment of program choices today (Dwyer, 2004). Today, study abroad opportunities are provided in a variety of formats. Some of the more common program formats are direct enrollment, hybrid and island. Direct enrollment programs allow for U.S. students to attend classes at a foreign

university, in either a one- or two-way exchange of students and/or faculty. Hybrid programs allow for students to be enrolled directly at the host institution and include courses taught by faculty from the student's home institution. Additionally, island programs are typically self-contained, where U.S. students enroll in courses that accommodate only American students. Faculty may be hired locally or travel from the student's home institution (Kehl & Morris, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The University of Dallas Rome Program falls into the grouping of study abroad programs without established goals or expected outcomes for the participants. Nevertheless, the university possesses a mission statement that the Rome Program attempts to honor each semester. By integrating the five core curriculum classes taught during the Rome semester through supplementing the readings with on-site lectures, the Rome Program can be described as actively fulfilling the distinctive mission of the university's commitment to the "recovery and renewal of the Western heritage of liberal education" (Young, 2008). However, because the program lacks specific goals and outcomes; the administration cannot effectively assess and judge what the students experienced both literally and educationally during their time Rome semester.

In an effort to contribute to this body of knowledge, I interviewed a group of students who participated in a study abroad program during their undergraduate careers, and evaluated five areas of growth experienced upon completion of the program. I focused primarily on the global perspective as well as, intellectual, spiritual and career development experienced by the students. An additional category of personal development emerged through the individual interviews. The study abroad program I analyzed is the University of Dallas' Rome Program, now in its 41st year of operation. This program is unique, in that it is University of Dallas

students studying the University of Dallas curriculum taught by University of Dallas faculty on the University of Dallas campus; however it is actually taking place in Rome, Italy, and not Irving, TX. The University of Dallas has maintained an atypical rate of participation among its undergraduate students. It is estimated that over 85% of students study abroad on the University of Dallas' Rome campus. In their 2010-2011 report, *Open Doors* recognized the participation rates and listed the University of Dallas fifth among master's institutions that participate in study abroad (Chow & Bhandari, 2011).

Participating in the mid-length study abroad program on the Rome campus has been an option for undergraduate students at the University of Dallas for more than 40 years. Outcomes of the program from the students' perspective have not been identified. As the number of American college students participating in study abroad continues to grow (Chow & Bhandari, 2010), and as the University of Dallas' Rome Program persists, an understanding of the impact of this program on the participants is highly useful. Understanding how studying abroad impacts intellectual development can help colleges and universities justify the increased focus on studying abroad in new ways, as well as demonstrate the ways in which studying abroad contributes to student success (McKeown, 2009).

Within this study, attention was paid to understanding how the Rome Program specifically impacted intellectual development, expanded the participant's global perspective, influenced their career development, and encouraged spirituality within the participant's daily lives. This study used in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore the impacts of the Rome Program on the educational and social development of the participants.

Significance of the Study

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore the effects of study abroad on the Rome Program participants' educational and social development. By evaluating the documented outcomes of the Rome Program participants, the institution may begin to create and assess goals and expected outcomes in the future. Particularly in light of upcoming reaffirmation processes and an overall call for increased accountability of study abroad programs by accreditation agencies (Rexeisen, Anderson, Lawton, & Hubbard, 2008). This was the first in-depth qualitative study to investigate the effects of participation on the University of Dallas Rome Program participants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the effects of participation in a mid-length study abroad program on the participants intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spiritual growth. This study focused on a group of students from a private liberal arts institution, who studied abroad for a semester on their institution's campus in Rome.

Research Questions

This study explored the impacts of study abroad participation on the lives of those who participate as college undergraduates. Although study abroad participation has steadily increased for the past ten years, only recently have researchers begun to explore the effects of participation on educational and social development. I applied literature on undergraduate participation in study abroad, along with literature on the effects of study abroad participation, to identify four

key areas of impact to further explore. These key areas are broadly categorized as personal development (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; McCabe, 1994; Themudo et al., 2007), cultural influences (Norris & Steinberg, 2008), professional development (Norris & Gillespie, 2009), and spiritual growth (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Using these key concepts as a foundation, the guiding research questions for this study were:

1. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program impact intellectual development as perceived by the students?
2. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program modify global perspective as perceived by the students?
3. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program influence career development as perceived by the students?
4. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program involve spirituality as perceived by the students?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are for the range of key terms referred to in this study.

- Career development- The total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual over the life span (Sears, 1982).
- Global perspective- A global perspective consists of a world view that acknowledges a degree of interconnectedness within and between societies. It suggests the existence of competing world views, ideologies, and beliefs that cross global cultures (McCabe, 1994).
- Intellectual development- (Cognitive development) is typically defined as the process during which the individual actively attempts to make sense out of her or his experience (McKeown, 2009).

- Long-term- A long-term education abroad program refers to a program typically lasting for an academic or calendar year (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).
- Mid-length- A mid-length education abroad program refers to the *Open Doors Report* definition which is one or two quarters or one semester (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).
- Short- term- A short-term education abroad program refers to the amount of time spent abroad; typically a summer, a January term, or a program lasting 8 weeks or less (Chow & Bhandari, 2010).
- Spirituality- Spirituality points to our inner, subjective life, as contrasted with the objective domain of observable behavior and material objects that we can point to and measure directly (Astin et al., 2011).
- Study abroad program- Study abroad programs are defined as all educational programs that take place outside the geographical boundaries of the country of origin (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001).

Delimitations

In an effort to narrow the scope, I intentionally delimited the parameters of this study (Creswell, 1994). This study was conducted at a single four-year institution, and analyzed a single study abroad program. The study only involved current undergraduate students, and excluded alumni and graduate students. The sample consisted of students who freely elected to participate in the mid-length study abroad program.

Limitations

This study has limited generalizability, because it was conducted at a single institution

with an existing high rate of study abroad participation among undergraduate students. The sampling for this study was purposive. Additionally, data was provided from participants' memories and could be selective due to the time that has passed, which can be seen as a potential weakness. The data was provided by senior year students at the institution. Within the expected sample, travel abroad occurred fairly recently thus prohibiting sufficient time to consider the effects of study abroad participation. Finally, the considerable impact of the Catholic intellectual tradition practiced at the University of Dallas must be considered and taken fully into account when interpreting and attempting to disseminate from the results.

Summary

An undergraduate education is not just about growth in intellectual development for the student, but also professionally, globally, and spiritually (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; McCabe 1994; Norris & Steinberg, 2008; Astin et. al, 2011). This chapter has attempted to provide readers with an understanding of the extent and purpose of this research study, which examined four areas of development of undergraduate students who participated in a mid-length study abroad program while attending a 4-year private institution. It offered an overview of the study, including the background to the study, its relevance and purpose, the research questions, definitions to significant terms, as well as the limitations and anticipated delimitations.

The following chapter provides a review of the relevant literature and the results of past research studies related to the fields of study abroad and its effects on intellectual development (Themudo et al., 2004), global perspective (Carlson & Widaman, 1988) career development (Norris & Steinberg, 2008) and spirituality (Astin et al., 2011) in order to establish what is currently known regarding these four topics.

Finally, chapter 3 describes the qualitative methodology of this study, including a rationale for qualitative inquiry as a basis for studying students' perceptions related to the effects of study abroad on intellectual development, global perspective, career development and spirituality. Additionally, it provides information about the role of the researcher, research setting, the population and sample, data collection procedures, data analysis and strategies for validating findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the relevant research on the effects of study abroad on participants, and the perceived benefits of participating in study abroad programs and their outcomes. A review of the literature involving study abroad covers a variety of topics, but the topics examined in this study were drawn from (1) previous research on goals of study abroad programs, (2) assessment of the outcomes of these goals, and (3) and the impact study abroad participation has on global perspective, career development, intellectual and spiritual development.

Previous Research on the Effects of Study Abroad

Encountering another world, immersing oneself in the daily practices of other people, sometimes living and speaking in another language, and learning how others view the world are all touted as the benefits of studying abroad (Dolby, 2004). Research in the field has identified positive impacts experienced by the participant upon participating in study abroad. Through a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, I identified four major areas of growth impacted by participating in the study abroad experience. Areas such as international career development (Norris & Gillespie, 2008), personal development (Kauffman & Kuh, 1984; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; McCabe, 1994; Praetzel et al., 1996; Themudo et al., 2007), an enhanced global perspective (Kitsantas, 2004; Norris & Steinberg, 2008; Braskamp et al., 2009), and spiritual growth (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2010; Astin et al., 2011) are frequently acknowledged by study abroad participants as having been impacted upon studying abroad. These four areas guide

a significant portion of the research questions in the available literature on study abroad outcomes. Therefore, I elected to add to the literature by further exploring each area of growth.

Goals of Study Abroad Programs

One of the goals of any undergraduate education system is developing students as whole human beings (Braskamp et al., 2009). For many higher education institutions, these goals and outcomes can be categorized into areas of intellectual growth, professional development, personal growth, cultural awareness, self-awareness, and internationalization of the student's home institution (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004).

Intellectual Development

The category of intellectual development can be further narrowed into educational and psycho-social. Among the educational benefits of study abroad are specific areas such as academic performance, course and major selection, identity formation, and knowledge of cultural relativism (Kauffman & Kuh, 1984; Carlson et al., 1991; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Sutton & Rubin, 2004). A previous quantitative study conducted on the University of Dallas Rome Program found a “statistically and practically significant positive association” between participation in study abroad and persistence at the University of Dallas (Young, 2008). The psycho-social benefits identified with study abroad are increased self-confidence, self-efficacy, changes in personality, knowledge of self, flexibility, and an appreciation of the arts to name a few (Carlson & Widaman 1988; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Themudo et al., 2007).

Michigan State University implemented a plan in the summer of 2000, to continuously assess the impact of study abroad on students, faculty, and MSU as a whole. The plan was a

result of the institutions' deep commitment to education abroad, and the lack of available information on the impact of study abroad (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). The focus of the research was to measure the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need to live and work in the 21st century. The researchers identified specific areas to evaluate which included intellectual growth, personal growth, intercultural awareness, self-awareness and professional development (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004).

Ingraham and Peterson (2004) elected to employ “multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to assess progress toward attaining each of the goals of study abroad in an effort to triangulate and verify [our] findings” (p.84-85). These methods included student self-assessment surveys, secondary data analysis, faculty observations, and surveys by other campus units. Of the 1104 respondents who completed the post-surveys, 74% were women, and 89% were Caucasian. Their areas of study came from colleges of arts and letters, business, communication, natural science and social science (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). The results of the study show that the five areas examined were all moderately and positively correlated with each other at a statistically significant level.

One of the foremost research projects pertaining to effects of study abroad participation was the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP). Launched in 1982, the study was conducted for the purpose to better understand the role of study abroad and provide guidance to educational policymakers. The SAEP focused on the long-term impact of study abroad on the participants as well as their institutions. Four kinds of effects of study abroad participation were explored: proficiency of foreign language, knowledge of and concern about other countries and cultures and international issues, their knowledge of and attitudes towards their home country, and career objectives and accomplishments (Carlson et al., 1990). Students were administered pre- and

post-test questionnaires, while phone interviews were conducted with alumni who had participated at least five years prior to the study. Four research questions guided the SAEP:

1. Who chooses to study abroad?
2. What transformations occur in the two groups of students over the time span of the junior year?
3. What qualities of the individuals contribute to the transformations that occur?
4. What are the long-term effects of the study abroad experience?

The SAEP used two subject cohorts to address the research questions. The first cohort consisted of the students who chose to study abroad and the second cohort consisted of study abroad alumni to address the fourth question. The SAEP utilized a comparison group design for the first cohort. The comparison group was comprised of students who chose not to study abroad. Of the 1,957 surveys that were distributed, 488 responses were returned by the first cohort compared to 355 of the comparison group (Carlson et al., 1990). The 80% response rate for the study abroad group was uncharacteristically high for questionnaire return rates. The second cohort proved to be more typical with an averaged response rate of 40%.

Regarding intellectual development experienced by study abroad participants, the SAEP resulted in an emergence of interesting data. Systematic thinking, familiarity with different schools of thought, developing one's own point of view, obtaining knowledge from different disciplines, and independent work were all areas considered to be more important after the study abroad experience for the students' intellectual development (Carlson et al., 1990). Further examining the area of obtaining knowledge from different disciplines, the SAEP reported 68% of the participants took classes that resulted in broadening their academic and intellectual horizons, more so than had they taken the classes at their home institution. An almost equal amount of participants reported taking classes that either would not have been offered or they would not

have been interested in taking at home, and 57% reported discovering new areas of interest (Carlson et al., 1990).

Kauffman and Kuh (1984) stated, “Because many aspects of a foreign culture pose unique and potent challenges, it is likely that studying and living abroad for an extended period of time is conducive to personal development” (p.1). Prior to the SAEP, Kauffman and Kuh administered the Omnibus Personality Inventory to a group of students attending three separate colleges, all whom were preparing to study abroad during 1980-1981. The study focused on social, emotional, and intellectual development and their functions as interaction between the person and environment. Three research questions guided the study: (1) Did the direction and degree of personal development of study abroad participants differentiate from those who did not participate? (2) Which of these changes, if any, persisted one year later? (3) What particular experiences abroad were associated with personal development? The researchers mostly utilized pencil and paper instruments, though interviews were used to either supplement the results or in place of the pencil and paper inventories. Kauffman and Kuh (1984) found changes in three dimensions of personality functioning associated with study abroad: increased interest in reflective thought in the arts, literature, and culture; increased interest in the welfare of others; increased self-confidence and sense of well-being than those who did not study abroad. The kinds of personality development documented through interviews were consistent with the results measured by pencil and paper instruments.

A primary expected outcome of many students’ time abroad is a growth in intellectual development. McKeown (2009), for example, believed that a well-run semester study abroad program has many intentionally designed components that provide a suitable venue in which to study intellectual development in college students. These studies are necessary, especially when

trying to determine the level of intellect that has been further developed. What is much harder to ascertain is whether students learned “more or differently academically” and matured “more or differently intellectually” while studying abroad than they would have if they had studied the same material on-campus (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004.)

In an effort to contribute to the limited amount of data available on learning outcomes of study abroad education, the University System of Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) was created in fall 2000 (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). The GLOSSARI project employed a participant and non-participant control group, with each group comprised of about 250 individuals. The group members were administered the same survey instrument. The five content domains to determine potential learning outcomes were: (a) knowledge of strategies and skills for functioning in other cultures, (b) knowledge of intercultural interaction techniques, (c) global interdependence, (d) knowledge of comparative civics, and (e) knowledge of world geography (Sutton & Rubin, 2004).

Upon conducting a factor analysis, four survey items emerged as clustered under Factor 3, which pertained to knowledge of cultural relativism. Significant differences between the group of study abroad participants and non-participants were evident. Sutton and Rubin (2004) define cultural relativism as “the cognitive realization that one ought not judge other cultures or respond to individuals from those cultures based on one’s own ethnocentric values and practices” (p.78). The results indicated a 10% variance in knowledge of cultural relativity between those that did participate in study abroad and those that did not.

Global Perspective

A significant outcome of the study abroad experience often mentioned by researchers,

educators, and those working in the education abroad field is the participant's development of a global perspective. The concept of a global perspective has been loosely described by researchers as a combination of social, psychological and environmental understandings within an individual's life which are world-wide in scope (McCabe, 1994). Astin et al. (2011) state:

Study abroad is designed to help students develop an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures and peoples, broaden their horizons, and recognize the importance of thinking globally and of becoming more world-centric in their outlook by challenging the limited perspectives of nationalism and ethnocentrism. In light of our rapidly developing global community, the development of such qualities in the student has never been a more important goal for colleges and universities. (p. 145)

Kitsantas and Meyers (2001) examined the role of study-abroad programs on students' cross-cultural awareness. The sample consisted of 24 students; the experimental group was comprised of 13 students enrolled in a three-week summer study abroad course, and the control group consisted of 11 students enrolled in a course on their home campus. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a study abroad program on students' ability to adapt to living effectively in another culture and to interact effectively with people of the dominant culture (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). The methodology for this research was a personal questionnaire (distributed to both control and experimental groups) as well as a self-scoring, valid and reliable instrument called the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) to assess their cross-cultural effectiveness and self-awareness. The results indicated study abroad programs significantly contribute to the participants' cross-cultural awareness and promote cultural empathy for both the local and the American students (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001).

Additional literature on expanded global perspective was published by McCabe (1994) who conducted a qualitative study on 23 Semester at Sea participants. The purpose of the study was to identify the type and course of development of global perspectives of college-age students participating in a comparative global education program (McCabe, 1994). The study looked at

the students' positions on one or more of five dimensions of global perspective at the beginning and end of a Semester at Sea program. The data was collected through interviews, as well as journals and field notes from participant observations. Upon receipt was then classified using descriptive codes. The results revealed that the program positively influenced the students' development of the global perspective. Upon reviewing the data, McCabe (1994) found that the student's degree of openness increased as the voyage at sea progressed, classified people from other cultures as being the same and/or different, moved from naiveté towards cross-cultural understanding, developed a strong sense of nationalism, and upon conclusion of the voyage all possessed a higher level of globalcentrism.

Throughout the empirical research on study abroad, a common term associated with global perspective was referred to as "worldmindedness." Jones-Rikkens and Douglas (2001) defined worldmindedness as the extent to which individuals value perspectives on various issues. Worldminded individuals have an easier time accepting viewpoints that differ from their own. This type of outlook is highly encouraged of students who wish to pursue an international career. A pre- and post-test study was conducted on a total of 120 individuals; 59 students made up the experimental group of study abroad program participants, and 61 students made up the non-study abroad control group. Through their analysis of the relationship of study abroad programs and worldmindedness, Jones-Rikkens and Douglas (2001) found evidence that indicated a greater increase of worldmindedness by students who participated in study abroad programs of greater cultural difference than their existing point of origin.

Braskamp et al. (2009) conducted research based upon a single research question: Do students enrolled and engaged in education abroad express changes and growth in their self-reports of their global learning and development? In an effort to answer this question, a pretest-

posttest design measured the changes in students' global perspective over the period of a semester. The students completed the same survey before leaving or shortly upon arrival, and shortly before leaving or upon returning home from the semester spent studying abroad. Braskamp et al. (2009) promote the use of the pretest/posttest design due to ability to note changes over time and provide evidence about possible causal connections between education abroad environments and desired dimensions of student global learning and development. Findings from the study indicate students expressed an increased global perspective on areas measuring increased awareness of intercultural affairs, greater self-confidence in living in new surroundings, and greater commitment to cultural empathy (Braskamp et al., 2009).

The research provided above supports the belief that an educational opportunity outside the United States may be among the most valuable tools for preparing a student to participate effectively in an increasingly interconnected international community that demands cross-cultural skills and knowledge (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003).

Career Development

Rapid global development and growing demand for cross-cultural adaptability in employee's places increased pressure on study abroad programs to provide high quality outcomes for their growing student enrollment (Kitsantas, 2004).

The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) instituted the first large-scale survey of alumni who had participated in all IES Study abroad programs between 1950 and 1999. The study explored the long-term impact of study abroad on a participant's personal, professional, and academic life (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Over 3,400 participants responded (a 23% response rate) and data from the survey indicates that studying abroad is a defining moment

in a student's life and continues to impact the student well into their future. The results of the study were categorized into areas of academic impact, career development, intercultural development, and personal and social growth. Dwyer and Peters (2004) reported three-quarters of participants claimed they acquired skill sets abroad that influenced their career path, and 62% said that studying abroad ignited an interest in a career direction pursued after the experience. Of the responses, 80% listed study abroad as an influence in enhancing their interest in academic study. Additionally, 87% reported study abroad being a strong influence on their subsequent educational experiences (Dwyer, 2004). Norris and Gillespie (2008) further examined the data collected from the IES survey and supported Dwyer and Peters (2004) findings from four years earlier.

Orahood, Kruze, and Pearson (2004) conducted a study at the Kelley School of Business (KSB) on the Indiana University campus in 2004. The KSB implemented an international dimension requirement (IDR) in 1998 to all business students, resulting in approximately 48% of students participating in a study abroad experience. The goal of the study was to determine the impact of a study abroad experience on alumni's career paths. A web-based survey instrument was distributed to approximately 3,000 KSB alumni. Participants were asked to self-assess the impact of studying abroad on their career interests, plans, and choices. Upon analysis of the 417 valid survey responses, Orahood et al. (2004) found study abroad participants to be significantly more interested in working for a company with an international focus. These students also demonstrated a larger desire to work in a foreign country than those who did not study abroad. The results also indicated that while the students were abroad, the experience allowed them to clarify their future career goals. Finally, the researchers concluded from the results that business

students who chose to study abroad are more likely to adapt to new and unfamiliar situations than those who did not participate in a study abroad program (Orahood et al., 2004).

The research strongly supports the idea that as interaction with individuals from around the globe becomes more of a rule, rather than the exception, there is a recognized need for international understanding and a vision to understand the global society within the workplace.

Spirituality

One area of development that has recently drawn interest from researchers is the impact of study abroad participation on the spiritual lives of the participants. Though available research on the topic of spirituality is extremely scarce, it was applicable to my study because the University of Dallas is a faith based institution. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) found that college students are becoming more involved in matters of religion, faith, and spirituality as it relates to their life purpose and sense of completeness.

In 2002, the researchers conducted a longitudinal study on the development of faith, identity, and life purpose in a random sample of 300 college students entering a private, Christian, liberal arts university in Southern California. The sample comprised of 74 students between the ages of 18 and 22 years. Of the 74 students, 28 were males and 46 were females (Miller-Perrin and Thompson, 2011). To assess the three elements of student growth examined in this study, the researchers employed multiple research methods including self-reporting and student surveys.

Upon analysis of the data, Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2011) reported an increase in the application of faith to daily living and decision-making of the students who did elect to study abroad. Also in support of their hypothesis, the discernment of vocational calling, and having the

tendency to serve others, were both significantly impacted by a study abroad experience. Regarding the element of identity development, those who studied abroad experienced a significantly greater change than those who did not. One area that showed a decrease from freshman year to senior year was that of religious behavior, though a decrease in religious behavior was present for those who studied abroad and those who did not. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2011) reported these findings as being consistent with previous research on this particular topic.

Within the field of spirituality, Astin et al. (2011) identified a need for additional research on this topic. The researchers created the College Student's Beliefs and Values (CSBV) Survey and first administered it to a pilot study so as to gain an understanding of the religious and spiritual measures to be evaluated. In 2004, the researchers administered a revised version of the CSBV as an addendum to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey to college freshman entering 236 baccalaureate granting institutions. The survey consisted of 160 questions and was two pages long. The five spiritual measures include Spiritual Quest, Equanimity, Ethic of Caring, Charitable Involvement, and Ecumenical Worldview (Astin et al., 2011). To receive somewhat equal representation of institutions (private vs. public, college vs. university, Roman Catholic vs. Evangelical, etc.), and to effectively measure change in students' spiritual and religious qualities during college, a third and final administration of the CSBV was sent in 2007 as a follow-up to students from 136 of the 236 original institutions. Astin et al. (2011) reported a total of 14,527 students from 136 institutions completed the survey, an overall response rate of 40%.

The researchers were supportive of the impacts of participating in study abroad has on academic outcomes and spiritual development. Upon analysis of the results, Astin et al. (2011)

found that students who participate in a study abroad program exhibit higher levels of Equanimity, Ethic of Caring and Ecumenical Worldview. Equanimity typically refers to one's capacity to "see the silver lining" during difficult or trying times (Astin et al., 2011). Study abroad is considered an excellent opportunity to increase equanimity as it exposes students to people who are different from themselves and may encourage self-reflection. Study abroad was found to have a positive relationship in the area of Ethic of Caring and Ecumenical Worldview. Described as a sense of caring and concern about the welfare of others and the world around them, and seeing the world as an interconnected whole respectively, participant's noticed an increase in both areas upon participating in study abroad (Astin et al., 2011).

For many college students, dealing with issues such as Religious Struggle and Religious Skepticism on some level is not uncommon. When placed in situations where new theological ideas are presented, their religious foundation may not be as solid, and they are encouraged to question everything, many students begin to question their beliefs. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2011) stated, "This decrease in the importance of faith and religious practice are no doubt due to the intellectual challenges present in the college experience..." Astin et al. (2011) found that students who do participate in study abroad demonstrated a higher level in both Religious Skepticism and Religious Struggle, which the researchers believe is a result of being directly exposed to different religions and cultures, as well as believers and nonbelievers in other countries. When students are academically engaged and/or encountering diversity, it allows for students to begin thinking on a global level thus questioning their current beliefs system.

Conclusion

Due to the rising trends in study abroad participation and increased availability of

program types, a greater understanding for anticipated learning outcomes and benefits of the study abroad experience is necessary. Study abroad research indicates significant benefits exist for students who elect to participate in a study abroad program during their undergraduate years. As previously stated, the prevailing research questions in the literature are related to impacts on study abroad participants in areas such as: intellectual development, global perspective, career development and spirituality.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter introduces the research setting, method, and analyses employed in the study of student perspectives and the impact of participation in a mid-length study abroad program on their intellectual, social, and educational development.

Why Qualitative Design?

A qualitative design for this study is fitting for several reasons. First, Creswell (1994) defined a qualitative study as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 2). This definition can be applied to this study, as primarily there is little research on the effects of study abroad on intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spirituality of participants. Second, a theory does not exist to explain these types of effects. Qualitative researchers tend to conduct qualitative studies due to the lack of existing theories that sufficiently explain an experience (Merriam, 2009). Third, the nature of the research questions suggests a qualitative approach. The objectives of the research questions are to attempt to understand how the experience abroad impacted the participant in each of the above mentioned areas. According to Patton (2002), “Qualitative data describe. They take us, as readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to have been there” (p. 47). As this study determined the effects of participating in a study abroad program by the participant, it is evident that using qualitative methods to evaluate these effects was the most appropriate choice.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the effects of participation in a mid-length study abroad program on the participants intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spiritual growth. This study focused on a group of students from a private liberal arts institution, who studied abroad for a semester on the institution's campus in Rome.

Research Questions

As detailed in chapter 2, this study posed four research questions:

1. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program impact intellectual development as perceived by the students?
2. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program modify global perspective as perceived by the students?
3. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program influence career development as perceived by the students?
4. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program involve spirituality as perceived by the students?

Thematic Analysis

King and Horrocks (2010) describe thematic analysis as “often used in a common-sense way to refer to patterns in the data that reveal something of interest regarding the research topic at hand” (p. 149). Thematic analysis is an inductive process of collecting qualitative data through interviews and identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010). For this study, I followed Braun and

Clarke's (2006) guidelines for executing thematic analysis. Their six phases consist of (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Qualitative inquiry requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 2009). As qualitative research is interpretive research, it is suggested that the researcher choose a topic of particular interest to the researcher (Creswell, 1994). My interest in the effects of study abroad stems from my own experience as a participant in a short-term study abroad program during the summer of 2003. In May of 2003, I graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Film and Video Studies, and a minor in African/African-American studies. The following month I participated in a five-week African History course based in Bakau, The Gambia. My time abroad ultimately instilled a drive and desire to continue my path in higher education. While working as the assistant vice president of enrollment, I often speak with parents who participated in the Rome Program while they attended the University of Dallas as students, and they are now encouraging their own children to participate in the program. Observing the anticipation and excitement of the program and all it affords for the student who has yet to experience it, as well as by the parent who has, makes my own memories and related life lessons come to life again.

My own experience, and these interactions with other returnees, has prompted this research. As a former study abroad participant, I identify with the intellectual development, shift in career development and modified global perspective associated with studying abroad. During

the data collection process, I followed the guidelines set by the American Psychological Association (APA) and by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) in matter of confidentiality and ethical issues. Though I may have personal convictions related to study abroad and its effects, I made every effort not to lead the participants as they described how the study abroad experience had impacted their lives. I explained the purpose of my research and did not put my research subjects under any risk. Finally, I maintained total confidentiality in all data I collected.

Research Setting and Context

The University of Dallas Rome Program has been in existence since 1970. The site of the current campus was established in Rome, Italy in 1990. In 1994, the inaugural sophomore class was welcomed to campus. Rome was selected as the location of UD's second campus for many reasons; the location of the Vatican, the strong ties to UD's Core curriculum, and additionally because of the language spoken. The Rome Program was created as a means to further enhance the teachings at the University of Dallas by providing students an opportunity to experience firsthand Western tradition by ultimately synthesizing the core curriculum thus cementing the foundation of their undergraduate education (University of Dallas, 2011).

The core curriculum at UD typically concludes in the spring semester of the sophomore year. It is for this reason that the administration elected to provide the students the opportunity to study in Rome during their sophomore year. In fact, students at UD are encouraged to wait to declare their major until after they have participated in the Rome Program because they are exposed to countless unique and thought-provoking experiences during the semester abroad. Marcum and Roochnik (2001) suggest that the sophomore year is when many students begin to

identify their interests, tastes, and intellectual strengths. “They begin to form relationships that originate in their academic work, not just their social life. Professors identify students of real promise, and the unique bond between student and teacher starts to develop” (p.7). As stated on the UD website, the vision of the Rome Program is to “deliver a superior curriculum of studies and educational travel to students who are seriously committed to the liberal arts, to the ideals of western civilization, and to the Catholic intellectual tradition.”

In keeping with the popular belief that study abroad should be accessible to all students, the university does not charge additional costs to the student who elects to participate in the semester abroad. He or she must pay to fly to Rome and back, and pay for any personal travel or purchases incurred throughout the semester. However, room, board, tuition, and fees are virtually the same if the student lives on the Rome or Irving campus. Thus, this affords UD students the opportunity to study abroad in the second most popular destination of study abroad participants, as listed in the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (IIE, 2011).

The program itself has adapted to change over the past 40 years, but it continues to be a favorite experience of University of Dallas students during their undergraduate careers. Though the Rome Program does not fit into one specific category, it contains learning community and island program qualities. It is very much like a learning community as there are only 120 students participating in the program per semester. For these students, the semester in Rome is an opportunity to interact with their 6 professors in a relaxed environment. The students and professors share meals together, attend class together; live, sleep, and spend free time as a cohesive unit on the Rome campus. The Rome Program is similar to an island program in that the students are taught by English speaking University of Dallas faculty and are not immersed

with Italian students. The students are not housed with Italian families, and do not attend classes at an Italian university.

Group travel into Rome, the Vatican, Greece and Northern Italy occurs each semester, along with a 10 day break where students are forced to leave campus to explore the surrounding cities, countries, and the culture they have to offer. During the Rome semester, the students are required to take Philosophy of Man, Art and Architecture of Rome, Literary Tradition III, Western Theological Tradition and a Western Civilization class. The UD faculty incorporates various learning activities specific to where the class is traveling that day. For example, reading *The Merchant of Venice* while touring Venice, or reenacting an Olympic race while in Olympia. Participants of the Rome Program must be full-time students at the University of Dallas, of sophomore standing, have spent at least one full-time semester on the Irving campus prior to participation, have a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5; and be in good academic standing at the University of Dallas. Maximum capacity on the Rome campus is 150. It is required that participants must apply to be considered for the program and complete an extensive pre-departure orientation program.

Sample

The sample for this study was chosen using a purposeful sampling approach. Merriam (1998) states, “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 63). The purpose of purposeful sampling is to identify information-rich cases whose results will shed light on the research questions in the study, and not to generate data that can be generalized to a greater population (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) describes information-

rich cases as those “from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p.230). In purposeful sampling, Patton (1990) recommends “specifying minimum samples based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study and stakeholder interests” (p.246). With this in mind, the sample consisted of 20 university undergraduate senior students, 18 and older; who were participants in the mid-length study abroad Rome Program at the University of Dallas.

I solicited the study participants by sending an email to all current senior students who participated in the Rome Program. Appendix A contains a copy of the email solicitation letter. Students who elected to participate in this study had two “tasks” to complete: (1) fill out a short survey, and (2) complete an in-depth semi-structured individual interview. Appendix B contains a copy of the survey. Upon completion of the two tasks, it was communicated to the participants that a follow up focus group session could be scheduled for some, but not all, volunteers.

Participant Selection

I interviewed 20 former participants of the University of Dallas Rome Program during the spring of 2012 for this study. Participants were selected based on a variety of criteria including gender, major, semesters since participation, high school education, and religious background in order to provide a wide spectrum of participant responses. Those selected possessed criteria that directly reflected the purpose of the study, thus assisting in the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009). I sent interview invitations to recent participants of the program that lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to allow for person-to-person interviewing. The students interviewed were undergraduates of University of Dallas and no alumni were interviewed. Names and addresses of the students who fit the profile were provided

by the University of Dallas' Office of Institutional Advancement.

Method of Data Collection

I collected qualitative data in the form of semi-structured interviews by asking open-ended questions based on the themes present in the current research literature regarding the impact of study abroad on intellectual, personal and spiritual development in an effort to collect rich, descriptive data. Merriam (2009) states, "interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (p.88). Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton, 2002). Semi-structured interviews are steered by questions and issues to be investigated, but the order of the questions and exact wording is not predetermined (Merriam, 2009). Because of the structural freedom in the semi-structured interview, it allows for greater flexibility of coverage, for the interview to go into novel areas, and it tends to produce richer data (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data through Rome Program participant surveys, interviews, and the focus group session, I received permission to conduct the study from the dissertation committee. Once permission was granted, I sought the approval of the University of Dallas Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the University of Dallas Provost. Additionally, the study was approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) to help guarantee protection of the participants. Appendix C contains a copy of the University of North Texas IRB approval form. Participants were made aware of the nature of the study and any possible risks (though

low) they could encounter by participating. They were provided the option of not participating in the study without any consequence to their well-being.

Tape recording is one of the most common forms of recording data (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009; King & Horrocks, 2010), and I informed each participant that the interview would be recorded but that the tapes would be destroyed once they were no longer needed. Every participant was required to sign an informed consent form granting permission to record the meeting and publish the information, prior to the interview. Appendix D contains a copy of the informed consent form. To maintain confidentiality; I asked each individual to choose a pseudonym as a means of protecting their identities and their right to confidentiality throughout the research process.

Data Collection

Data collection commenced with an initial interview using the interview questions mentioned in the following section. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to one hour on the University of Dallas campus, with the specific location being the participant's choice. According to researchers, physical space may impact on how the interview progresses (King & Horrocks, 2010). The interviews were both tape recorded and transcribed in order to capture the complete statements made by the interviewees and to reduce the amount of distractions throughout the meeting. I followed up each interview with time spent writing out any significant details from the meeting. Once I finished conducting all interviews I synthesized the data and identified all major themes from the information collected. Themes are recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts, characterizing particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question (King & Horrocks, 2010). This essentially

means analyzing the core content of interviews and observations to determine what is significant (Patton, 2002). The information collected during the taped interviews primarily focused on the overall experience, the participant's personal background, and any conclusions they have reached on how the study abroad program has impacted their intellectual, social, and educational development since returning to the US.

Interview Protocol

As previously stated, the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured protocol. This protocol used open-ended questions to allow the researcher to “respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1998, p.75). The initial interview protocol questions (see appendix A) were asked with participants being encouraged to speak freely and not let the questions dictate the conversation. The primary purpose of these interviews was to identify the ways in which the Rome Program offered by the University of Dallas promotes a deeper understanding of the liberal arts, provides a solid foundation of the ideals of western civilization, and further explores the Catholic intellectual tradition. These are institutional expectations of the Rome Program and were used to guide the interview process. Questions were designed to address specific research themes; (1) intellectual development (Themudo et al., 2004), (2) global perspectives (Carlson & Widaman, 1988), (3) career development (Norris & Steinberg, 2008), and (4) spirituality (Astin et al., 2011), while being aware that additional themes could transpire.

Rome Program Participant Interview Questions

- Which semester did you participate in the Rome Program?

- Why were you interested in participating in this mid-length study abroad program?
- What was your level of Italian language proficiency before going? How did it change?
- Do you feel that your time abroad improved your language proficiency?
- Which area (listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing) was impacted the most?
- What activities impacted the specific area the most?
- How has the academic experience in Rome differed than your academic experience in the US?
- Did the semester in Rome impact your academic development?
- In what ways did the Rome Program affect what you might like to study in the future?
- How would you describe your international experience before the Rome semester?
- If you traveled abroad prior to the Rome Program, where to and for how long?
- How immersed were you in the Italian culture during the Rome semester?
- How could you have benefited more in terms of immersion from your time in Rome?
- What activities had the most effect on your cultural immersion?
- Did you experience any changes about how you think of the US? Of the world in general?
- What was your major/concentration at the time of participating in the Rome Program?
- What is your major/concentration now?
- Explain how the semester abroad has impacted your career aspirations?
- Your education goals?
- What types of future international involvement do you hope to be involved in after spending a semester abroad?
- The Rome Program includes the Vatican and other religious components. In what ways did the experience change your religious or spiritual feelings?
- Tell me about how you noticed the changes in your spiritual changes.
- Have you noticed a difference since returning to Texas?

- What advice would you give someone considering participating in the Rome Program?
- Describe an area that was affected by the semester abroad than the four listed above.
- How did the mid-length study abroad program meet your expectations of study abroad?
- How was the Rome Program different than what you expected?
- What advice would you give someone considering participating in the Rome Program?

Data Analysis

Prior to analyzing the data, I conducted a general review of the information collected in order to gain an overall sense of the data (Creswell, 1998), or as Patton (2002) suggests to, “get a sense of the whole” (p.441). This included the review of all interview notes, observations, and Rome Program participant survey responses. Additionally, transcription of all interviews and field notes was completed prior to analysis. Transcribing provides the researcher with an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that Patton (2002) believes can “generate emergent insights” (p. 441).

Upon completion of data collection, the data was reviewed and evaluated for corresponding themes that emerged after speaking with the participants on the major areas of the effects of study abroad participation. This occurred using an inductive analysis approach. Braun and Clarke (2006) state, “inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (p.83). Data interpretation and analysis involve making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said (Patton, 2002). The themes identified in the research

were compared to the available research regarding the effects of study abroad in terms of impact on intellectual development (Themudo et al., 2004), global perspective (Carlson & Widaman, 1988) career development (Norris & Steinberg, 2008) and spirituality (Astin et al., 2011). The results of the interviews are presented in chapters 4 and 5.

A member check of the data was conducted by leading a focus group discussion to confirm with the participants that the conclusions reached through analyzing the taped interviews was plausible. Merriam (1998) describes member checks as “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (p. 204). The common themes that emerged from the participant surveys and individual interviews were validated during the focus group session, thus eliminating the need for further investigation. The common themes are presented in chapter 4 of this study. The students I interviewed for this research were not biased in their responses.

Summary

This chapter outlined the proposed qualitative research design appropriate for this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of participating in a mid-length study abroad program on the intellectual, global, professional and spiritual development of the undergraduate participants. This chapter included information about the role of the researcher, research setting, the population and sample, data collection procedures, data analysis and strategies for validating findings.

A qualitative methodology was selected for this study, and participants were chosen using a purposeful sampling method. Data was primarily collected through in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interview protocol with 20 recent participants of the University of Dallas’ Rome

Program. Additional data was collected from interview notes and surveys. Thematic analysis was the primary means of data analysis. Member checks were conducted following data collection to ensure credibility of the themes presented.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the participants and discuss common themes that emerged through conducting the interviews and data analysis. Chapter 5 compares the results of the interviews to the relevant literature. Finally, implications for future research are discussed and any conclusions reached are presented.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

I collected data regarding the impact of study abroad on participants of the UD Rome Program. UD students reflected on their thoughts and opinions about their mid-length study abroad experience during their semester spent on the Rome campus. Their reflections of the Rome Program provided a glimpse into the areas of development experienced as participants in a unique mid-length study abroad program. The overall reactions, criticism, and praise of their experiences also allow for greater comprehension of the effects of study abroad on participants, contributing to the literature in the areas of development frequently associated with study abroad programs; academic, global, career, and spiritual. This study attempted to address whether the University of Dallas Rome Program is providing an opportunity for growth in the above mentioned four areas by asking the participant's the following research questions:

1. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program impact intellectual development as perceived by the students?
2. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program modify global perspective as perceived by the students?
3. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program influence career development as perceived by the students?
4. In what ways did participating in the Rome Program involve spirituality as perceived by the students?

Responses to these questions were provided through a brief survey, hour long individual interviews, and a voluntary focus group session. Each of these resources provided ample insight into suggesting that participating in a mid-length study abroad program did have an impact on

the participant's intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development. The data from the interviews and focus group session were analyzed using an inductive, narrative analysis, thematic approach. Through the analysis of the study abroad participant interviews, four categories of interest were solidified and one additional category emerged.

This chapter is divided into three segments that examine the data gathered through the individual participant interviews, analysis and coding of the data, and ultimately the validation of focus group participants. To begin, the first segment summarizes the research protocol. The second segment addresses the four research questions and additional findings that emerged through the study abroad survey responses, as well as comments during the individual interviews. The emergent themes were validated during the focus group session. Finally, the last segment provides a summation of the findings.

Research Protocol

The University of Dallas Rome Program has been in existence since 1970. The site of the current campus was established in Rome, Italy in 1990. The inaugural sophomore class was welcomed to the Rome campus in 1994. Rome was selected as the location of UD's second campus for many reasons: the location of the Vatican, the strong ties to UD's core curriculum, and because of the language spoken. The Rome Program was created as a means to further enhance the teachings at the University of Dallas by providing students an opportunity to experience firsthand Western tradition by ultimately synthesizing the core curriculum thus cementing the foundation of their undergraduate education (University of Dallas, 2011).

The sample consisted of 11 females and 9 males. All were in their senior year of study at UD. The median age of the participants interviewed was 23 years old. The participants came to

UD from all regions of the U.S., but most were originally from the Midwest. All but 1 of the participants was of Caucasian descent. The major areas of study pursued by the participants consisted of a wide variety ranging from art history to economics and finance, to physics and classics.

Following a semi-structured interview protocol, 20 UD students were interviewed about their semester spent studying abroad on the UD Rome campus and their subsequent experiences. Eleven of the students interviewed participated in the Rome Program in the fall of 2009, 8 participated in the spring of 2010 and 1 participated in the spring of 2011. All but 4 participants had experience traveling internationally prior to spending the semester in Rome. Six of the participants had traveled to Rome prior to the study abroad semester with a couple having visited the campus previously. One student had previously studied abroad on the Rome campus as a participant in a high school program offered through UD. Following transcription and coding of the data, a focus group session was held to validate the findings from the Rome Program participant surveys and individual interviews.

Research Questions and Findings

Upon an inductive analysis of the transcribed data, the four research questions addressed to the Rome Program participants provided examples of outcomes associated with intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development. The outcomes were grouped into similar categories and through further analysis of those categories four main themes emerged. The themes were: (i) *scholarship as a lifestyle*; (ii) *we're not in Texas anymore*; (iii) *life after UD*; and (iv) *community of believers*. Each of these themes is addressed in the following sections; descriptions of sub-themes and supporting data from the interviews are included in the discussion. An additional

category of significant transformation experienced by the interviewed participants involved characteristics of personal development. This prevalent theme was labeled as (v) *transformed by Rome* and is examined as well.

Intellectual Development: Scholarship as a Lifestyle

The first question of the research study invited the participants to provide examples where their intellectual development was impacted by the study abroad experience. This question was presented due to the vast amount of literature published citing intellectual development as an area of considerable impact for many study abroad participants. IES Abroad conducted a large scale quantitative survey and found that by studying abroad, most participants were influenced in subsequent education experiences. For many, it reinforced a commitment to learn a foreign language, and others reported experiencing an enhanced interest in academic study (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Kauffman and Kuh (1984) found that “experiential learning greatly increased students’ motivation for learning and appreciation for reflection, necessary for intellectual development and subsequent academic learning” (p. 16). Ingraham and Peterson (2004) listed intellectual growth as an outcome of the study they conducted, “Students and faculty believed that the students learned more and more deeply while studying abroad” (p. 93).

The participants supplied a number of specific examples as to how they experienced intellectual growth as a result of spending a semester in Rome through responses to the participant survey, individual interviews, and during the focus group session. The primary intellectual development sub-theme centered around the reaffirmed appreciation of the core curriculum at UD. From many of the conversations, this reaffirmed appreciation of courses being studied evoked an interest in an area of study not previously considered. The new areas of

academic interest made up the second sub-theme discussed later in this section. Finally, the reiteration of the academic intensity of the semester spent abroad on the Rome campus makes up the third sub-theme of the intellectual development: scholarship as a lifestyle category.

Subtheme 1: Appreciation of the Core Curriculum

Many of the participants commented on how the program enhanced their appreciation of the core curriculum taught at UD, as well as a classic liberal arts education. For many, it was due to the interconnectedness of the courses being taught at the same time during the Rome semester. The time spent on the Rome campus allowed for greater insight into the pursuit of higher education for a number of the participants. John Paul did an excellent job of summarizing his perspective on the objective of a study abroad education:

It has given me a new perspective on education. That education isn't just books, which I knew before. It's also experience. But that, that personal experience is just as important as education and the things you learn, practical things, personal things, spiritual, all different levels, occur while you're traveling and while you're being forced into new and different situations.

An additional topic that supplemented the appreciation of the core was an overall reinforcement for the pursuit of a solid liberal arts education, and satisfaction for the chance to engage in “learning for the sake of learning.” Paul was especially reflective on the purpose of a liberal arts degree:

I think I realized for the first time in Rome what it meant to be a student at UD—at a liberal arts university—in that it was not so much taking classes because I had to take the classes to graduate, or because someone decided that this was an important thing for me to learn in college. I was taking classes and I was really applying myself—not to get a [good] grade—but because it was really interesting.

Frank commented on the impact of visiting the ancient works of art in person after studying them earlier that morning on the Rome campus. As a result of this revelation, he echoed Paul's

sentiments about gaining an appreciation of the cohesiveness of the classes offered and ultimately, the purpose of the core curriculum:

I mean it really does give you an appreciation of what you're studying for when you're looking at it and when you see why it's so important and see how it's lasted this long. Evidently, if millions of people go to look at these things every year and it's lasted this many generations then it has some kind of significance to it.

Lance had a related response regarding how the Rome Program “connects perfectly with the vision of the core that the school has.” He went on to explain:

I don't think many of us would want to read Plato on our own if we didn't have to. You read all these old guys and then it just seems kind of abstract. It seems like yeah, maybe take something worthwhile away from it, but you go there and realize this is the foundation of the last few thousand years. We owe so much to these people that we're studying right now. It makes it a lot more gripping and you want to go back to it. It makes a lot more sense why these are important to study.

Another participant commented on the increased desire to focus on the classes while in Rome, “It's more exciting and it kind of just seems bigger than you. So you try and pay attention more.”

Kate went into further detail about how the semester altered her motivation for pursuing an education:

It definitely changed my education goals. It really pushed me to take my studies much more seriously. Freshman year, I was fine with B's. I never really aimed—I did basically the minimum because I transferred here and then spent a semester here—and then I went to Rome. Every night before you go to bed, there's [sic] people studying all around you. Every discussion you have is based off of what you're studying. We were all together and pushing each other to make our education the best it could be. And I think that's what separates [it] from other study abroad programs.

Frank had a similar experience:

I wasn't as committed to the core curriculum and the liberal arts part of it. I was more interested in just getting into what I wanted to do and to my career. So, it did give me—like I said—it gave me an appreciation for that part of my education and it made me realize that it's important to put forth effort in those classes in addition to the other ones.

A comment from Emily's interview followed up on Frank's previous statement:

You just have an appreciation...for everything you're studying, everything you're reading, and it just kind of like has a purpose finally. Because you've been studying the history of Rome since you were in middle school, grade school, and it never really had any relevance until you...stepped foot in the Roman Forum or the Coliseum or in Delphi, things like that. So I think it just had a huge impact on all of us.

Classes Complement Travel

Indisputable support of the unique approach of amalgamating everyday class teachings into a way of life for an entire semester was apparent throughout many of the participant interviews. The Rome Program does not bill itself as an immersion program, nor does it attempt to place itself in a particular category of study abroad programs. However, it does attempt to provide a similar experience as to that of an immersion program, but in a more unified format. By participating in the Rome Program, the student is presented with the unique opportunity of integrating classroom lectures with hands-on activities during class field trips to ancient Greek sites, the Vatican, and numerous museums throughout Italy and Greece.

As stated in the University of Dallas Bulletin (2011), "the purpose of the Rome Program is to work in concert with the core curriculum to intensify the students' appreciation and understanding of Western civilization through the transformative experiences that thoughtful and informed travel can bring" (p.228). A Rome Program participant noted, "...the travel makes the classes more interesting; the classes make the travel more interesting and in the end it's so much more fruitful for both." Another student described the curriculum as "mirroring" the experience perfectly. One participant provided an example as to how the curriculum "mirrors" the out of class activities:

I think it just has given me a greater appreciation for things like history and literature because it was so cool to study those things and then go see where they took place. We would be reading something for Lit Trad and then we'd visit that place and some of the

students would get up and act out scenes exactly where they happened. That was just really cool.

John Paul stated, “I think it’s been one of the most educationally pertinent semesters where you’re learning stuff that’s like, ‘well, this is good to know, but when will it ever apply in my life?’ And then it applies immediately.” He provided an example as to how the information he was absorbing in his classes would later materialize during a field trip activity:

I’d say it was an intense semester, but the coolest part about it was the fact that you were studying stuff until you were sick and tired of it. Like Greece; you know their battle formations, their great speakers, their comedies and tragedies, and you know their philosophy. You know where they went to war, with whom, on what time, on what date. You know every single piece of sculpture and what its significance was and what date it was built and just so much that you were just tired of it. You were completely done with Greece. And after you get to take all your midterms, which every subject is something about Greece, you have a 10-day break in Greece with no homework, no anything. Where you run on the first Olympic track, where you go to Mycenae where Agamemnon would have lived and led the troops out to Troy to fight the Trojan War. You go see the steps where Socrates would have been conversing with Euthyphro, and the place where Pericles would have given a speech, and you know everything about the place, and it’s just the coolest thing.

David provided input on the experiential learning that took place during his semester in Rome:

It’s definitely a more hands-on experience...Dante kind of comes a bit more alive in Rome. Plato kind of makes a bit more sense somehow in Greece, but you’re not really sure how. Homer just kind of feels a bit more real while you’re in Delphi. So it’s just kind of like experiencing what you’ve been learning.

Jim Bob also described the academic experience in Rome as a “hands-on” experience:

It was a lot of hands-on experience. You’d go to the places that you studied in history or in art, especially Art and Architecture class in Rome; we would go and we’d have a lecture at this site. If we were studying the architecture of The Vatican we’d go to The Vatican and have a lecture there about it; we could see it and we could walk around it and we could really study it a lot more. Whereas if you were taking Art and Architecture class about Rome in the United States you’d just have to look at slides on the Internet. So, that’s like the real hands-on, personal experience that you’d get over there.

A comment from Derek’s interview supported David’s statement:

Not only are you studying it and reading it in your textbook, I mean, if you read, but you also see it on your own; you also see it with your class. Like certain things you would

have seen three or four times and talked about them three or four times and read them probably twice.

Proximity to Professors

One benefit to the Rome Program is the learning community environment that is experienced through the intimate living situation on the Rome campus between students and professors alike. The 6 faculty on the Rome campus are hired through UD and interchange with professors on the Irving campus every few years if they wish. Frank commented on the class size and accessibility of his professors on the Rome campus, “I think that the important aspects of having small classrooms were still met there and that the professors were extremely approachable; even more so because they lived right across the way from you.” A separate participant had a similar example to support what Frank had said:

Interaction with professors is definitely different because outside of the classroom, you spend so much time around them, you’re traveling with them and you’re around their kids. Even in the classroom you get really comfortable with them and that’s great because if you have a question you’re not always afraid to go up to Dr. Hatlie and be like, “Hey, I don’t understand this.” And so that’s definitely a part of it.

Though it is common practice for students enrolled in study abroad programs to be educated by faculty who are not employed by their home institutions, that is not the case with the UD Rome Program. The professors on the Rome campus have taught on the Irving campus, and vice versa. Those that wish to teach on the Rome campus rotate out every two years. Rebecca also found the professors in Rome to be more accessible, more so than the professors she had on the Irving campus. She explained, “Your professors were usually right there. So that was nice. You could just walk down the roadway and knock on their door.” Another participant commented on the similarity between the Irving and Rome campuses, and the unique aspect of having UD employed professors teaching her on the Rome campus:

The campus is really like UD transported to Rome and duplicated. And I think that it's incredible that they have all the same professors like interchanging between here and Rome because it really does solidify that relationship that we have to the campus and Rome and it's not just random professors. [But] that they have them changing out.

Georgina appreciated the attention received by the professors especially on days when major assignments were due:

Because they live there and you would be turning papers in say, at like 5:00 p.m. was the due time and you'd be out of class at 1:00. They knew everyone's gonna be doing this paper or finishing this test or whatever so they'd be in their office. Even with that last hour—which you really shouldn't wait that long—but they were there because they knew, “Oh, I'm gonna be having students coming in asking questions.” It's a lot more casual because of the setting I think.

Subtheme 2: New Academic Interests

One area involving intellectual development that is mentioned throughout the relevant study abroad literature is that of providing an opportunity for exploration of new academic pursuits. Through analysis of the participant conversations, a common topic was how participation in the Rome semester reaffirmed the decision for many of the participants to major in a particular subject. Yet for a small number, it led them to change their major upon returning to the Irving campus. Still for others the Rome semester incited newfound academic interests. Georgina stated, “I feel like I appreciate antiquity a lot more. I hated history before but now I'm finding history is one of my more favorite things.”

The students at UD are not required to choose a major until after they have completed the core curriculum. For the majority of UD students, the conclusion of the core curriculum occurs at the end of their sophomore year and after traveling to Rome for a semester. For a number of the students that declared a major prior to their Rome semester, it simply reinforced their decision to pursue that particular field of interest. Frank stated, “I knew I wanted to be an economics major.

I decided that it was time to start focusing, or start tailoring my college career towards achieving those career goals.” Another student mentioned that, “[it] reaffirmed that I love philosophy.” One participant changed majors upon returning to Irving from Italy:

I didn’t actually make that decision until somewhere over in Rome. And I don’t know if that’s as much a product of Rome, but it definitely is one of the side effects of just considering a lot of things when you’re over there, and that’s when I ultimately knew that I was gonna switch when I got back.

Emily had a similar experience:

When I went over to Rome I was convinced that I wanted to be a psychology major. And then I returned and I was really undecided. I considered art history for a while. That was the first art history course that I had taken in Rome and I loved it. I just thought it was incredible. So I’m still considering that, but I basically departed from both of those ideas and chose to be economics for whatever reason. I guess I just took an economics class here and I just really enjoyed it, and I thought that maybe I could go to grad school and possibly teach just because I really enjoyed a lot of my experiences with the teachers in Rome.

For others, the semester provided an opportunity to discover new areas of academic appeal. Anne put it well, “It’s just like almost fun in Rome, and so since then I think I’ve picked classes that I knew I would actually be interested in and I would like going to, and so I actually like going to class now.” Allie spoke of her interest in pursuing Spanish as a concentration once she returned from Rome:

I did take two Spanish classes when I got back from Rome...it was really fun just getting to speak my Spanish in Spain. It was really enjoyable to be like “yeah, I know enough Spanish to kind of get by in this country,” and to put into practice a little bit of what I had learned. So that did make me more motivated to learn more Spanish when I got back.

One of the participants reflected on a conversation he had with one of his professors while in Rome. The result of this conversation led him to consider adding classics to his academic resume, thus declaring a double major in philosophy and classics. Had he not had the conversation with his professor, he believed that he would not have considered the benefit of studying Classics in addition to the philosophy major he had already selected.

Subtheme 3: Academically Intensive

While discussing how the semester abroad impacted their intellectual development, a sub-theme of academic intensity became evident. Frank explained that his academic experience in Rome was significantly different than his time on the Irving campus. “It was a lot more focused. There wasn’t anything else going on except for academics.” Because of the amount of focus required by the Rome participants, a number of students referred to their Rome semester as being their “hardest” semester at UD. When the participants were questioned about what they meant by the Rome semester being their “hardest” semester, for some it was the challenge of the academic course load, and for others it was finding a balance between sight-seeing and studying. John Paul explained what he meant by the Rome semester as being a “hard” semester:

I’d say it was the most challenging semester since high school, and I had some pretty challenging semesters in high school. And I think that’s not necessarily purely the education. It’s also the fact that you’re trying to travel and trying to do other things. But it is a serious part of the education because they do not give you any breaks. You’re reading a Shakespeare play over two days—over and over and over—or a Greek comedy or Greek tragedy. Read this by the next class. And so you learn to ride a bus and read, or be on an airplane and be outlining an essay.

One student had a different outlook on the difficulty of juggling studying and travel:

[It] taught me a good lesson that it is okay sometimes to—in a semester juggle your classes—based on what else you’re doing in your life. I don’t regret not putting as much effort into some of my classes because I wouldn’t want to trade those experiences, or the conversations on the train that I had, rather than reading my Shakespeare.

For a lot of the students, this was the first time in their academic career where they had to develop skills to be academically successful, since many did not have to apply themselves in their high school classes. They also had to learn how to excel in class while balancing their time between coursework and enjoying their time on the weekends or during class field trips. Many commented on their struggle to prioritize between class readings and spending a day touring

Rome. During one interview, a Rome participant reflected on the difficulty of balancing her academic course load while struggling with adapting to new surroundings:

I didn't feel like we ever really stopped to rest, because it was always... if you didn't have a test you were going on a trip that weekend. And you had to balance being reacquainted with a culture that was completely different, and being in that close of a community and always studying.

Several of the students noted the importance of developing time management skill—as well as the advantage of being able to multi-task while still finding time to experience a culture—as outcomes they experienced related to intellectual development and their study abroad experience.

One participant provided an in-depth description of her account with this realization:

We would start to bring books on the metro because it would take about half an hour or so to really get into the city, but once you were there, forget it. You weren't gonna sit around and do homework while you were in the city; it wasn't gonna happen. So you had to be very aware of time; very aware of if you want to [be] like traveling, you'd have to be aware of that as well for doing work.

One student likened the process to a cost-benefit analysis:

You learn how to juggle a lot more on your plate than you ever thought possible. Because you get to a certain point where it's like, I value—it's a whole list of values. I value going into Rome and being with my friends, I value my grade in Dr. Hatlie's class but which one—and you might value them both the same so how are you gonna make them both happen? It's kind of a cost-benefit analysis every day.

The comparison of homework as a priority over travel to a cost-benefit analysis was strongly endorsed when presented to the members of the focus group.

Summary of Intellectual Development: Scholarship as a Lifestyle

Though the Rome Program semester is a unique format of study abroad, many of the outcomes experienced by students in the intellectual development: scholarship as a lifestyle theme echo the outcomes reflected in the literature involving intellectual growth and development. The students gained a stronger appreciation for the core curriculum taught at UD,

for the new academic subjects they were being exposed to along the way, and for the rigorous nature of the Rome Program. These outcomes were made possible due to the small community of students and professors on the campus, as well as carefully thought out lesson plans that paralleled the class outings later that week. The students were able to apply what was being taught in the classroom to what they were seeing on the streets of Rome or during the 10 day trip to Greece. All within a few short hours or days, of gaining the knowledge. The experiential learning activities combined with the repetition of topics being taught in each of the 5 classes allowed for an increase in academic growth.

The idea of study abroad is sometimes written off as a glorified vacation, or a blow-off semester for the students enrolled (Steinberg, 2002; Gore, 2005; Kowarski, 2010). As mentioned in the section above, the Rome Program is very much not a semester of “more travel, less homework” for the students. Many of the participants reflected on the difficulty of juggling class and travel, because they were held to a certain academic standard. They acknowledged that the Rome semester is a critical component to the core curriculum foundation.

Global Perspective: We're Not in Texas Anymore

A widened global perspective is a common outcome reported by study abroad participants. Common attributes reported by study abroad participants associated with global perspective are increased awareness of intercultural affairs, greater self-confidence in living in new surroundings, and greater commitment to cultural empathy (Braskamp et al., 2009). Moreover, results from the IES survey reported growth related to intercultural development and study abroad by understanding own cultural values and biases, seeking out a greater diverse set of friends, and influencing interactions with people from different cultures (Dwyer & Peters,

2004). I selected global perspective as an outcome of study abroad to explore in the interviews and subsequent focus group session. Through the numerous conversations, the Rome participants provided examples as to how they experienced a modified global perspective as a result of spending a semester on the Rome campus.

The four sub-themes are closely related and act as a result of the previous sub-theme. The first sub-theme to emerge involved the realization of life outside of the “UD bubble.” The second sub-theme explores the participant’s perspectives on the level of immersion they experienced while in Rome. From many of the conversations, this recognition led to a greater understanding of cultural differences which is the third sub-theme explored. The observations made by the Rome Program participants are included in this section. Finally, consideration of those cultural differences led to an enhanced appreciation for the common comforts of home which makes up the third sub-theme of the global perspective: we’re not in Texas anymore category.

Subtheme 1: Outside the UD Bubble

For many of the Rome Program participants, this was not their first time to travel abroad. However, it was the first time for many of the participants to spend an extended amount of time on foreign soil. During the individual interviews, a number of students mentioned the realization they experienced of the world being “bigger” than just the U.S. while on the Rome campus. In response to noticing any changes regarding how she thought of the world in general after spending a semester abroad, Erica stated, “I think I realized it’s a lot bigger than what I think it is. That it’s not the UD bubble and it’s not my hometown; it’s much larger than that, much larger than life.” Alice explained why she thought the Rome Program was beneficial in terms of global

perspective, “I think what’s necessary is getting people out of the UD bubble and to realize that most of our peers don’t think conservatively.” Alice further stated:

It’s necessary that UD students get out and learn that people don’t think the way you think and they have to—the sum of people’s experiences make them into entirely different people who think rationally, but come to different conclusions and to figure out why.

Allie provided her thoughts, “After you go, you don’t view other parts of the world as so foreign, which I guess is an obvious statement, but it feels closer and it’s more at your fingertips now.”

Frank offered an explanation of his attempt to comprehend life outside of the UD bubble:

It’s just kind of crazy to think that we’re sitting in here, we’re in this isolated—like DFW’s a huge area—yet we’re still just a small, little corner of the globe with all of these other people so far away and all of this other stuff happening around the world. I have a lot more interest in reading world news after that semester. Whereas in high school and stuff I would never—you know, it just didn’t interest me.

For some of the students, that realization meant an examination of fellow Americans. Weezer stated:

Being abroad you realize how Americans are pretty closed-minded sometimes. We kind of live a paradox in that we think we’re such like boundary breakers and so revolutionary, but we really don’t see past our own borders for the most part. We really don’t have a clue what’s going on outside our four walls. In Europe, everything’s so compact; Italy’s up in Spain’s business, Spain knows what’s going on in France, French are—you know, it’s all this interconnectedness—and they’re very aware.

A few of the participants mentioned an increased interest in learning about the world outside of the U.S., as a result of spending their semester on the Rome campus. The Rome participants mentioned having conversations with individuals (not just Italians) about foreign policy in more than one interview session. Liz spoke of her experience:

It puts it in perspective that it’s not just a scrolling bar at the bottom on CNN that you’re not really watching in the Capp bar or in the Rat. It’s real when you’re there, and it’s real to other people. And honestly, it’s made me a lot more globally conscious. I actually care now when I hear about things that are going on in Ireland or things that are going on in Rome.

Another participant explained how she was embarrassed about not knowing who Italy's ruler was, because she was confronted by many Italians about President Obama and former President Bush. She stated, "I think it's good that they do know that much, but it's also kind of—it's a little bit dangerous too when you realize how much you don't know about the rest of the world."

Subtheme 2: In Rome, not of Rome

Because the students spent a good deal of time outside of the classroom and off of the UD campus, I asked them to comment on the level of immersion they encountered while abroad. This question provoked a variety of answers. As evidenced by the established purpose of the Rome Program, the term immersion is not specifically mentioned. The Rome Program is an island program, not an immersion program as some believe. The reflections of participants on their level of immersion during their time on the Rome campus reflect the qualities of most island programs. The students and faculty live together on a campus provided by UD, and the students do not interact with students from other colleges. In addition to being located on an American owned campus, surrounded by 120 of their "closest" American friends and professors, many participants commented on the campus being located 15 minutes outside of Rome and how this impeded their ability to become more immersed in the Italian culture. Anne provided her thoughts on the campus setting:

I don't think that I was immersed very much, actually, because like I said, the UD program does—they bring like 100 American students over there and they all stick together the whole time. All the classes are in English, everywhere we go we speak English to each other so I don't really think we were very immersed in the culture.

Michael Collins also spoke on the "commune" that the Rome campus creates:

...to have that commune is something that is awesome, but you do miss to a certain extent that "oh my gosh, it's one in the morning; I want to go find something. I just want

to walk outside and experience Rome at night.” It’s much more difficult to experience the early and late hours of Rome. You don’t get to spend many mornings in Rome. So it’s definitely something that you miss that to a certain extent but you know you can’t do.

For those that were less adventuresome, this type of setting was perfect. David provided insight to his lack of immersion:

I came back wishing I had pushed myself more out there. I mean, I did go out on my own from time to time but when I traveled I admit I would look for the McDonald’s sometimes. I wish I had really thrown myself out of my comfort zone a little bit more. I know it was possible; I know some people really just delighted in doing all things foreign and I wish I had gone for that a little bit harder.

However, living abroad for close to four months lends itself to the prospect of immersion whether on a superficial or profound level. Liz described how she applied the term immersion to her semester abroad, “Immersed enough to affect my wardrobe and my outward appearance and the way that I conducted myself in public. So the immersion I would say was more out of cultural respect for the fact that I was a visitor.” But for those that truly desired a semester of cultural immersion, they quickly found that the Rome semester is not set up for that type of experience. Jim Bob provided his view on how well he was immersed during his semester:

Not fully. In terms of food, in terms of learning about wine, in terms of learning about their music and how people interact, up to that level but nothing like major, culturally or socially or politically or anything like that. Just kind of at the basic level. Like you’re in Italy, here are some things about it.

A student went into further detail on the topic of the Rome Program as an immersion program:

If you ask any Rome student, it is not an immersion program. It’s like not the point of it to make you understand popular Italian culture. I think that’s part of it and available to you, but the point is for the academic, spiritual-like growth combined with the traveling that you do together in a tight community. I think that if they tried to make it—if they wanted it to be an immersion program, they wouldn’t have their own campus; they wouldn’t have scheduled buses for everybody to go together; they wouldn’t do things the way they do.

For Georgina, the lack of immersion stemmed from her focus on school. “I didn’t go into Rome a lot; part of that was I was so much older than the rest of my classmates and that was a hard

school semester, so I tried hard to stay on top of my schoolwork.” Frank explained his struggle between studying and the distance into Rome:

They’ll pitch to you, “You can have class at 1:00 and you spend the whole evening in Rome.” I did that maybe the first two weeks and then you never see Rome again until that Wednesday that you go in there on a field trip for your class. Yeah, and I mean some people still did go into Rome and I don’t know how they performed academically, but me personally, I could not go into Rome during the week really because I had to study. And it’s just too far.

Steven described his struggle with his desire to be immersed, but ultimately choosing to focus on his studies instead:

Unfortunately, I didn’t learn or experience Italian culture as much as I could have. I don’t really want to say I regret that; I wish I had that, but like I said before, I would have had to sacrifice in some other area to so do that.

A comment that was made more than once during the interview sessions and which was later supported in the focus group session was the need for students to be pushed off the UD campus and into Rome. As mentioned above, the distance from the campus into the city hindered some of the students from making the trip. Rebecca provided a suggestion as to how the administration could preclude this from being an issue:

In the first couple of weekends, maybe bus us into Rome a little bit more often. I say that only because it becomes very cumbersome to always know that you have to take the bus and then take the metro just to get into Rome. It would have been nice sometimes to have had a more immediate way of getting in there.

A particular recommendation for how this can be achieved was to have more class assignments related to the students exploring the city of Rome for credit, thus incentivizing their motivation for leaving campus. Michael Collins explained his thinking regarding the incentivizing of trips into Rome:

Any way that you can make it more beneficial to go into Rome—for people to realize that these incentives are great and everything—but it’s the time in Rome that’s really the incentive and they’re trying to help you recognize that.

One student suggested working out an arrangement with a hotel in the city for students who miss the last train to campus, or do not have enough Euros for a cab. By working out an agreement for a room in Rome at a reduced price, it might provide more of a “safety net” for students, which could encourage more time in the city and off of the Rome campus.

Many of the participants felt that in order to be “immersed” in the Italian culture they needed to speak the language, yet many did not elect to take the language course during their time on the Rome campus. Derek spoke to why he didn’t take the language course offered, “There was an Italian class, but it was at 8 a.m. It was called...it wasn’t even beginner Spanish. Oh, sorry, Italian. Survival Italian and the class actually moved too slow [sic] for me. Most people thought the same thing.” A few students who did not take the course wished they had.

Lance provided his thoughts:

One thing I wish I had done more was spent a little bit more time with the natives. You’re on the Rome campus, you’re surrounded by Americans and they kind of cater to your culture a little bit. I wish I had gotten lost in the Italian life a little bit more.

Alli described her aversion to immersing herself in the Italian culture, “I wanted to keep my French language so badly that I wouldn’t attempt, I wouldn’t try.” She felt the largest source of immersion during her semester were the Mensa ladies in the cafeteria, using public transportation, and the exposure to Italian plumbing and heating. When asked her how she could have become more immersed, she explained, “By my own choice, I could have chosen to go into Rome more often, or I could have tried to speak Italian instead of French.” By requiring the students to take a language course while abroad, it could result in their being more comfortable to engage in conversation with the locals, thus providing the opportunity to become further immersed in the Italian culture.

Subtheme 3: Cultural Differences

Many of the participants reflected on the differences between daily life in the U.S. and daily life in Italy. A common example of the differences noted by the participants was that of “siesta.” One participant explained it as, “The Italians have siesta every day and it’s that you’ll work hard, but don’t kill yourself. You’re living life. Whereas, the American attitude is a lot more work hard, work hard, work hard and that will pay off.” Liz commented on the midday break in Rome:

They eat later than we do typically, so they eat from 8 to 9:30 instead of 7. They take time off for lunch to have their siesta, and so they eat really, really big lunches. And I always think about my times in Italy, they were like aghast at people who eat and walk at the same time. Because it’s like why are you doing that? Enjoy your food. It’s bad for the stomach.

Rebecca had a similar comment to Liz’ observation of the Italian’s disapproval of not sitting down to enjoy a meal:

You always had to budget time to sit down and have a sandwich, even if it was just a sandwich, because they didn’t really want you to get it and just leave. You weren’t really even given that option. So you always had to eat inside so you had to give yourself enough time for that because they were just running on Italian time, and took their good ol’ time getting their stuff ready.

Another participant elaborated on meals in Italy:

The eating experience is something that’s very different. The way a restaurant here in the U.S. is set up; pretty much you get everything on one plate. It’s just, give me my food. I want to eat and then I want to be done with food. In Italy, it’s kind of weird if you go to a normal restaurant and you don’t have four or five courses.

Many participants commented on the difference between Americans and Italians in respect to space, however some referred to space in terms of distance, and others in terms of personal space. Michael Collins spoke of space in relation to distance:

So there’s definitely the feeling that here if you need to find something you have to go to somewhere that’s 20 miles away. It’s kind of the connection from one place to another is so less significant here. In Italy, people wouldn’t really kind of go to the next city over to

go shopping there. It would be a very rare thing; I would say that they would have to go to another city over.

As for personal space, Georgina commented, “There’s no personal space so I kind of avoided—I didn’t go into Rome as much as a lot of the other students ‘cause I’m a space person. I like my bubble.” Emily supported Georgina’s comment, “They have no personal space whatsoever. So you’ll be sitting there, and they’ll sit real close to you, or stand very close to your face when they’re talking to you.”

Finally, I grouped together a number of observations of cultural differences from Rome participants. These differences were noted through various interactions with the Italian citizens such as conversations at bars, watching passengers on the metro, or standing in line at Mass. Liz’ interview provided the most specific observations on differences of Italians:

We were astounded by how few overweight people there were in Italy. Also, very freaked out by the negative birth rate there. We never saw babies. We used to have a tally of how many kids we would see. Even if you go to New York, you see parents with two kids just like walking. And man, the streets, there were never any kids.

Another observation of cultural differences made by Liz:

Italians don’t wear antiperspirant deodorant because they believe that the aluminum in the antiperspirant—to prevent you from sweating as much—they think that it gives you Alzheimer’s and cancer. So they think it’s really, really bad for you. So they don’t use it. It is tough to get used to, as well as they think air conditioning is bad for you. It’s because they think it’s unnatural to change your equilibrium temperature from inside where it’s really cool to walking outside where it’s really hot. They think that you should just always be at the seasonal equilibrium temperature.

Steven’s interview provided an interesting perspective on Italian and American identity, and the pride that each nationality experiences for their homeland. He explained:

Spending that much time around it, realizing that not only are people different but people don’t want to be the same as you. That’s kind of like me saying I want to keep living in the U.S. I don’t want to be Italian; I’m American. And they think the exact same way. I mean the French and the Italians have this thing against Americans—especially the French—and they would want to be nothing other than Italian or other than French and that’s—I mean, there’s a certain value in understanding why. Understanding why they

value their culture so much; part of it's just habit, but another part of it's that there's something they see about their culture that is just better. Like the fact that they get a three-hour break in the middle of the day; that would be awesome, but on the other hand that makes Italy a little behind. You know that attitude. It's give and take, so you have to realize that other cultures have things they can offer and just finding out what it is.

Subtheme 4: Appreciation for U.S.

Almost every participant interviewed commented on a feeling of gratefulness as an outcome experienced from spending a semester abroad on the Rome campus. For some it was an increased appreciation for their family and their home. For others it was an acknowledgement of simple comforts such as reliable transportation, a sense of order, and familiar food. Below is a statement made by a participant on appreciating family as a result of spending a semester abroad:

I thought I would be a lot more maybe homesick. And I was really homesick, but it helped me appreciate what home was. I was able to kind of, again, see everything from a different perspective, really appreciate... I don't know... my family a lot more. I think it's weird again, but I think it's good to miss things and to be able to come back to them and appreciate them a lot more than maybe you did before you left.

Paul provided a similar view:

I became a lot more grateful for the place I grew up, which maybe sounds like a weird thing. Like Kansas is kind of flat and you know, pretty simple and pretty basic and I loved, loved, loved, Italy. It's beautiful; so beautiful. Just beyond description but I was really grateful to be home, too, when it came time to go home. Guess I developed an appreciation for the place that I came from, for the people that I grew up with.

The relationship between sense of time and transportation was mentioned by more than one participant. Lance explained, "It's much more like, 'Well, if the trains are running that day they'll probably be on time. Maybe not.' That's a little bit tough for me to grasp when I'm over there." Weezer described her experience, "It's hilarious because they're go-go-go-go. In traffic, they're always yelling and having a hissy fit, but at the same time trains never leave on time,

buses never leave on time; there's like a skewed sense of time. It's interesting..." Derek provided an alternative perspective:

Everything is so, so convenient here and it's weird. Even though it takes larger work ethic, I almost prefer the lack of convenience because it makes you respect your time and makes you prioritize better. Like you can't be like "oh, I'm going to blow this off because I just go do it whenever." In Europe, you're like "if I need to ride the train there it's going to take me an hour to do that, so I can get this when I go there and then circle back and then I can catch this train and get back to the campus before dinner."

As mentioned above, a common characteristic cited in the interviews was that of "order," and how Italians seemed to be lacking it:

If someone upsets the mob, then the trash doesn't get collected and there's a lot more chaos and a lot more I guess—I mean, not security but just the idea of never having to question whether the trash is going to be picked up.

Lance also commented on the lack of order he experienced while in Italy for the semester. "I think we're a little bit more orderly. It's kind of shocking when you start to form a line and everyone else just kind of like pushes around you and it just becomes this sort of like bubble of people." Another participant commented on lack of order related to lines, "Everywhere you went outside of campus, there was a little piece of Italy and that was great because you had to realize that Italians don't understand lines the same way we do."

Many of the participants reflected on American food as being the number one thing they missed about home. Lance was concerned that listing food as what he missed most about home while in Italy would sound shallow. However, he went on to say, "Chipotle burritos and real juicy burgers and stuff. That was the biggest thing." David had a similar response:

I started noticing how dependent I was on American food. Like halfway through, I started getting really bad craving for Taco Bell, which is unusual. I don't really like it that much, but just not getting that really salty kind of artificial taste in my life. Yeah, 11 o'clock at night rolls by, you want a cheap burger, and you can't really get that in Italy. Bars are open [sic] up. You can buy a pizza, but that's going to cost you like 7 euro.

As previously mentioned, many of the Rome Program participants volunteered information on whether they would consider living abroad after college. Frank provided an honest response as to whether he would consider living abroad:

Although I love traveling abroad, I would never want to live abroad; I would always want to live in America. I could never do that. I just like everything. I just like our sports, I like our foods better. I hated the food over in Italy.

John Paul provided a succinct perspective of living abroad:

I think before I went on the Rome Program I understood that there were pluses and minuses about being in the U.S., and being outside the U.S., but still kind of felt like the U.S. is the best in everything. The order, the people being on time, the professionalism, the fact that you can drive a car and not have to worry about going in straight lines, just a lot of stuff. But in my travels over the Rome semester, I got to see that I still—I mean, if I could choose any place to live, I'd still choose the U.S.

Emily stated similar feelings during her interview:

I realized that I probably could never actually live abroad permanently. Definitely more of a respect for America and appreciation for little things that we take for granted. Just like common decency, respecting people's boundaries, and just respect I think was the main thing.

Summary of Global Perspective: We're Not in Texas Anymore

Because the Rome Program semester is a unique study abroad program, some of the outcomes experienced by students in the Global perspective: We're not in Texas anymore theme do not mirror the outcomes reflected in the literature involving global perspectives. Throughout the interviews, it was evident that many of the participants acknowledged that a world outside of the UD bubble did exist, as a result of their time abroad. The participants spoke of the level of immersion they expected to experience, and what they actually encountered. They recognized the convenience of everyday life in America, but accepted the value of experiencing cultural differences while in Italy. Finally, the participants shared a common appreciation for the

comforts of home. Common outcomes related to global perspective as reported in the relevant study abroad literature include increased knowledge of intercultural affairs and a greater commitment to cultural empathy (Braskamp et al., 2009), seeking out a greater diverse set of friends (Dwyer & Peters, 2004), and cross-cultural effectiveness (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001).

One reason I believe most of the Rome Program participants did not mention this type of growth related to global perspective was simply because it was not experienced. I believe it is due to the framework of the Rome Program. The students are housed thirty minutes outside of the city on an American campus operated by UD. The staff speaks English, the professors speak English, and the 120 plus students speak English. The experience of engaging with Italian citizens was not a requirement of the program. A number of the participants did mention that since they were not required to take an Italian language course, they easily avoided having to learn the language, thus preventing a significant amount of interactions with the locals. As a result, the participants were not able to relate to a modified global perspective like participants of true immersion programs. Instead, their global perspectives were modified in a more superficial sense, as noted in the section above.

Career: Life after UD

The category of career development was included in this study because it is often cited as an area that is heavily impacted by study abroad participants. Orahood et al. (2004) found that students who studied abroad were significantly more interested in working for an international organization, and had a strong desire to work in a foreign country. Norris and Gillespie (2008) reported that 70% of the 707 IES Alumni survey respondents with a global-career listed study abroad as a strong influence in their decision to attend graduate school. For the respondents that

reported having a non-global career, 57% attributed study abroad as influencing their decision to study abroad. Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2010) found that students who participated in study abroad experienced an increased sense of vocational calling and desire to serve others than for those who did not study abroad.

When asked to respond to how the semester abroad impacted their career pursuits, many of the Rome Program participants responded with answers along the lines of, “it didn’t,” “not at all,” and “I already knew what I wanted to do.” Through speaking with each of the 20 Rome participants about their career aspirations since participating in the semester abroad, three sub-themes emerged. The first career development sub-theme involved the continued pursuit of higher education. For many of the participants, applying to graduate school was a natural next step in their professional pursuits. The second sub-theme to emerge was that of International affairs, as the Rome semester led about half of the participants to consider a career that required living abroad. And for those that did not want to live abroad, at least pursue a career that allows for international travel. A commonly mentioned career pursuit involved teaching—either at the domestic level—or on the international level. Additionally, a few of the participants are considering pursuing a life of service both on the international and domestic level, which makes up the third sub-theme of the career development: life after UD category.

Subtheme 1: Graduate School

Almost all of the participants interviewed discussed their plans to continue their education either directly following graduation or soon after by attending graduate school. Though many of the participants had plans to attend graduate school prior to the Rome semester, for many the decision of educational pursuit was influenced by their time on the Rome campus.

One participant stated:

Then I went to Rome and I decided what I wanted to do. I'm actually looking at a master's in business economics—which is slightly different than economics, but it's more of the practical business application of it—and then get my Ph.D. later on down the road.

Weezer mentioned her immediate graduate school plans, “I want to get into this program that offers an RN and a master's degree in two years. It's pretty intensive and it's non-stop basically for two years.” When asked to elaborate on the impact of her study abroad experience on her graduate school decision, she explained:

I think that my time studying abroad was my time to really find out who I am and what my goals were. I know that [the Rome Program] impacted the decisions that I [have] made that have led up to where I'm going to school, or like, what I'm going to do after school.

Liz discussed her graduate school aspirations:

I'm looking at some Ph.D. programs [in epidemiology] to kind of give me a leg up for med school. A lot of people do it after their residency, and I'm kind of looking at some Ph.D. programs and master's degree programs if I decide I just don't want to do it because the way that [some of] the Ph.D. programs work, if you just finish a year and then decide you're ready for med school you can just hop right into their program.

Though Steven's plans have since changed, he was initially influenced by his time abroad to consider graduate school upon his return to Texas. He commented, “When I came out of Rome, I was looking into getting my Ph.D. in ancient philosophy but...the Ph.D. route and what it entails, it's just—that line of academia isn't what I wanted; I wanted to teach.” One participant noted how the Rome semester impacted his future career aspirations:

I mean, yeah, it was like going out to Rome and then the next semester I took a class in biblical Greek. I think just those two together kind of made me feel like I should go into graduate school. I mean, now I'm considering doing missionary work for a couple of years before going to graduate school.

Subtheme 2: International Affairs

The topic of career impact as a result of their time spent on the Rome campus was met

with mixed feedback from the participants. Lance stated, “I wouldn’t say it had a dramatic effect.” Derek mentioned, “It didn’t make me say I don’t want to be a PT or oh, I want to be a PT even more.” Liz had a similar response to Derek’s comment, “I mean, going to Rome has not made me want to be a doctor any more or less and has not made me want to practice medicine in Europe. But it honestly didn’t affect it in any way.”

For students like Alli, “Rome was an opportunity for me to discover more of what I’m good at and who I am...that I guess helped lead me to my career. But no particulars, more shaping what I’m good at and who I am.” When asked if the Rome Program impacted her career, Kate had a similar response to Alli, “Oh, no. I still don’t really have an idea. I’m still figuring that out, but I think that it definitely helped me learn a lot more about myself and kind of my relation to the world.” A few of the participants commented on the semester allowing for the opportunity to identify personal traits and characteristics that would be beneficial in a future workplace setting. Some even felt the time abroad ignited a sense of courage for pursuing jobs outside of the U.S. Weezer provided additional insight on this pursuit:

Well, I guess just the semester abroad opened up my mind in a lot of ways. I ended up having two jobs last summer in Spain, and had I not had that experience abroad previously with the school where it was, kind of like a baby step to being on your own, I don’t think I would’ve had the guts necessarily to do that.

Another student spoke of courage to pursue a life outside of the U.S.:

I could see myself living abroad and doing all right. I don’t know if it’s for me, but you recognize that yeah, I mean, you just recognize your way of life is one of many and that you’re more flexible than you think you are as a person. You can live in another way even though we had a lot of comforts while we were there. But you can live in a different way, and eat different food, and travel differently and be perfectly happy, maybe even happier.

Not surprisingly, the semester spent abroad on the Rome campus led many of the participants to consider working for a global company, at least in some capacity. Some of the participants

expressed interest in living and working abroad, while others intend to remain stateside but travel internationally for work. Michael Collins was one participant who expressed a very strong desire to work and live abroad:

Having spent about four months in Europe, I've absolutely looked for possibilities of job opportunities abroad. I've looked at the possibility of doing research with physics abroad, participating in graduate programs there, fellowships abroad...I've also looked at some larger business opportunities abroad with software companies, particularly with IBM.

An alternative perspective was provided by Erica, who spoke of traveling abroad for work, while residing in the U.S., "If I was going to write for a magazine, I would want it to be a travel magazine. I would never want to write in fashion or anything like that, because of living there and spending so much time there." Frank stated, "I would love to work in an international organization 'cause I think that would fit into my career very well, for consulting governments and things like that." Jim Bob spoke of his desire to work on an international level after graduation, "One of the things I just looked into, actually, was working for the CIA and their clandestine services, which is kind of like an international agent I guess you could say." John Paul mentioned that he has an internship set up after graduation. He plans to live in Sydney, Australia for two years in order to further his career in Commercial Real Estate Appraisal. He stated, "I think the Rome semester gave me a real yearning for more adventure as opposed to kind of figuring out what I want to do and start making my way right now."

More than one student mentioned applying for a Rome Resident Advisor (RA) position in the near future should a position become available. One participant commented, "I would go back as an RA for sure; I would do Rome RA..." Georgina voiced her thoughts on applying for the position:

I'm still toying with the idea actually of being a Rome RA. I mean there are a lot more factors at that point 'cause it is like at least a year contract, and of course my friends and family were like, "Don't ever leave that long again." I would be working over there and

having to make money instead of being a student and having that comfort. I liked Europe a lot and I...I don't know where my life is headed.

Paul provided an explanation as to why he would like to serve return as a Rome RA:

If there's an opening for the Rome RA position in the next year or two, I'd really consider applying for that. I just think that would be an awesome opportunity to—I mean, just what an amazing job to help young UD students have something similar to the experience that I had. [It's] really a transformative experience, and you talk to alumni for the last four years and everyone—it's amazing the number of lives that have been changed by that program. The opportunity to help with that is so cool.

Within the career category a common career pursuit mentioned was that of teaching, both at the domestic and international level. A number of the participants mentioned they were considering teaching English in non-English speaking countries while pursuing a graduate degree. A couple of the participants expressed personal surprise when they announced teaching as their decided career path. Steven discussed his plans after graduation, “Recently, I decided that I want to teach in secondary education. Teach high school students Latin and Greek, and if I can find an outlet for it, philosophy.” For some participants, it was the opportunity to teach their fellow classmates about areas of personal interest that generated an interest in teaching. One participant went into detail about his experience:

Rome really helped that a lot because I was one of only three philosophy majors there and I was the only one that cared to explain things to people, so I ended up tutoring people a lot in philosophy. And I really enjoyed it; I really loved it. So that really just reinforced the fact that I do want to teach; I'm good at conveying information like that, and I really enjoy it.

Emily spoke of her newfound desire to teach upon spending a semester on the campus in Rome.

The program she mentioned is a one-year program located in China:

You teach there for that time in exchange for earning your master's in international studies. Which is kind of cool because that way I'd be able to be teaching English—seeing if I like teaching—but I'd also be acquiring my master's. Which is kind of nice, and I'd have international experience.

A particular activity that resulted in educational career development for many of the

participants was the opportunity to volunteer in a local 5th grade classroom. Referred to as the Marino Service Program, the students received credit in exchange for working in the classroom with Italian students. A participant explained the nature of the program, “It’s where you teach schoolchildren English. You go once a week to Italian schools in Marino right near our campus.” Anne participated in the Marino Service Program and explained how it had an impact on her decision to ultimately pursue teaching as a career:

I did the service program where you tutor Italian elementary students in English, basically. You meet with them once a week and you play games and they read to you, and they just practice their English. After doing that, I kind of started to be interested in maybe teaching abroad after I graduate. So, kind of looking into some of those kinds of programs; the two-year programs where you teach abroad and they give you housing, and pay you and you get to travel and stuff.

The Marino Service Program had such an impact on Frank that he said he mentioned it in some of his graduate school application essays:

I learned more about Italian culture in doing that volunteer project than in any of my classes. Just because we just go into a classroom and we’re sitting there with these Italian kids who don’t speak English. The teacher doesn’t even speak English very well, and it’s just us and we’re just kind of hanging out with them, teaching them whatever we want.

Rebecca commented on her experience of participating in the Marino Service Program:

It was quite the experience to interact with some of the Italian school children. It was a little bit different, but the classroom sizes were still pretty similar to what we have in America, the group desks and posters on the wall of the world, and all that. But it was a different way of teaching because obviously they don’t really know any English. So you had to go about things in a different way. I think that that kind of helped broaden my horizons I guess, and really think about how to teach kids.

Subtheme 3: Life of Service

A noticeable outcome of the semester abroad on the career direction for Rome Program participants was the desire to pursue a faith-based vocation upon graduation. More than one student mentioned discerning the Lord’s will by joining the seminary or convent upon

graduation, or doing mission work on both an international and domestic level. Michael Collins stated:

I went into Rome having no clue where I was in life, and I came out and I was filling out an application to the seminary...I would say that I was affected in a way that will be present for the rest of my life. It was the first time that I ever seriously had considered the religious life as an option.

Another participant, Alice Sheldon, spoke at length over her decision to become a Nashville

Dominican:

I called one of the sisters that were there and we got together several more times... and that was the first time I had been exposed to them that...on a one-on-one basis to join in their life a little bit and see them regularly. I realized that I really am attracted to it... even though it was a discerning process; it still is a discerning process.

David spoke of how the semester spent studying in Rome had an effect on discerning to become a missionary:

I'm thinking of going into Jesuit Volunteer Corps. They have an international program. It would be education. And the second one I hope to get into is St. Paul's Outreach, which is a campus ministry, relational ministry. So I'd be on a school campus. I would be in charge of a household and the formation of the men in my household. And then during the day, I would go out and do Bible studies or relational ministry, form retreats and stuff on campus for the rest of the students.

Georgina explained how the semester in Rome impacted her future career aspirations:

I mean obviously you're in Rome, and especially as a Catholic, my faith grew so much just because there was so much at my fingertips. And since I want to work with youth in the church settings, obviously I have to know my stuff and I have to know—almost have like my own testimony. So it helped in that aspect. I still don't nec—I don't have a specific career, necessarily. I kind of want to go back to mission work, too.

Weezer discussed her consideration of a service-oriented career, “and so now I'm going into nursing—God willing—and I would love to take that abroad if I get the opportunity. Like maybe do missionary nursing—I have no idea—but go work in an orphanage.” Allie spoke of a similar desire to volunteer in Mexico:

I want to be a counselor. Well, I'd love to once I'm a counselor go to Mexico and do like—I don't know if they even have that—but like immersion where you go and you do free counseling for people. Or just some sort of thing where you're there for a year or something like that. I'd be more open to doing that now.

Another student decided to apply to AmeriCorps and teach in Portland, Oregon. She explained her two main reasons for pursuing a service-oriented career upon graduation:

One is the isolation aspect in that, I knew that I grew so much from isolated [sic] myself from what was comfortable for me. So, being in an environment that is not easy, I could see that if you isolate yourself like that and go abroad—I think this is why lots of people do the Peace Corps is because it's kind of not easier—but it's more dramatic when you serve outside of your environment. And then I also participated in the Marino Service Project. I met with the Italian students once a week and helped them learn English, and I really enjoyed that, meeting with people that were like, meeting that language barrier and being of service in that way was really neat.

Summary of Career: Life after UD

Career aspirations influenced by study abroad participation are commonly reported outcomes found in the relevant literature involving professional development and study abroad. For the UD Rome Program participants, the development of solid professional pursuits was not as prevalent as some of the other topics covered in the Career: Life after UD theme. Presumably, this has to do with the age of the participants interviewed. Had the study occurred 2, 5, or 10 years after graduation, it is possible that a stronger response would be provided. Though the responses from many of the participants reflected limited impact on how the Rome Program affected their career aspirations, it did provide more awareness on their place in the world or solidify the plans they have already made for graduate school and after. The interview participants did mention intended plans of pursuing international careers, teaching in the U.S. and abroad, as well as pursuing service-oriented vocations. As mentioned above, these are common outcomes associated with study abroad participation.

For those who participated in the Marino Service Program, it is evident that experiential learning can have a significant impact on career development. Internships, service-learning, and field placement require students to learn independently and reinforce this aspect of the study abroad mission (Steinberg, 2002). By providing this type of opportunity to the Rome Program students, it places the responsibility of their own learning in their hands. As illustrated in the commentary above, the program is a key tool in encouraging the participants to not only continue their education, but to share what they have learned in the form of pursuing a career in education.

Spirituality: Community of Believers

The category of spirituality as an area of growth impacted by study abroad participation is not generally found in the relevant literature. However, the connection between an increase in spiritual growth and participation in study abroad has generated recent interest resulting in notable findings. Spirituality points to our inner, subjective life, as contrasted with the objective domain of observable behavior and material objects that we can point to and measure directly (Astin et al., 2011). Through speaking with the interview participants, the latter portion of the previous definition of spirituality is commonly expressed by the participants in the following section. Though many of the students spoke of both subjective and objective impacts regarding their spiritual growth while on the Rome campus, it was evident that the participants had a less difficult time in communicating the objective impacts versus those of a subjective nature.

Throughout this section, the term spirituality is primarily identified as Catholicity. I elected to include the topic of spirituality in this study for the reasons that UD contains a student body that is 80% Catholic, and the location of the Rome campus in proximity to the Vatican. Recent findings demonstrate an increase in the application of faith to daily living and decision-

making; as well as the discernment of vocational calling, and possessing the tendency to serve others, as areas impacted by a study abroad experience (Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2011). Study abroad is considered an excellent opportunity to increase equanimity as it exposes students to people who are different from themselves and may encourage self-reflection (Astin et al., 2011). Additionally, study abroad was found to have a positive relationship in the form of participants reflecting on what they have in common with others, but it also lets them recognize their oneness with others and the world (Astin et al., 2011).

The Rome Program participants eagerly contributed a plethora of illustrations as to how the semester spent on the Rome campus included spirituality as a major component of development. The Rome participants all validated a significant correlation between their time abroad and an increase in spiritual exploration. Through evaluating the survey responses, coding the data, and speaking with the students during the focus group session, three common sub-themes of spirituality surfaced.

The primary spirituality sub-theme alluded to the effortless experience by the participants in being “Catholic” in Rome. This effortless experience was attributed to the numerous opportunities for participation in faith exploration. As a result of the abundant opportunities to participate in this spiritual examination, the second sub-theme emerged in the form of a reinvigoration of faith as experienced by the participants. In conclusion, the changes in spiritual participation as experienced by the Rome participants upon their return to the Irving campus comprised the third sub-theme of the spirituality: community of believers category.

Subtheme 1: Opportunity for Exploration

When asked to explain how their spiritual development was impacted by study abroad,

many participants commented on a deeper or strengthened sense of spirituality as a result of their semester on the Rome campus. Frank elaborated: participate

I would say I strengthened in my faith but I would like to say that I'm constantly strengthening my faith. I mean, I don't think that I necessarily am but that's what I'm always striving for. I think Rome definitely exposes you to it more and provides that opportunity to do that. I think that you're definitely immersed in the Catholic faith and spirituality.

When further probed on why their spirituality felt stronger or more “nuanced,” a handful of participants related it to the “ease” of being Catholic in Rome. Liz provided an explanation for why being Catholic on the Rome campus seemed effortless:

It's easy because you're in a small community; to go to church with everybody. There's very little space to make excuses, because they really do allot you a lot of time to pursue religious aspirations. It's not necessarily like the Rome Program shoves Catholicism or spirituality down your throat, but they just give you so much time to do it, that you just fall naturally into it.

Anne had a similar experience:

When you're in Rome it's so easy to be catholic because there's a Catholic Church everywhere; there's mass going on all day long. Everybody is enthusiastic about their faith when they're there and then when you come back—it's not like disappointing but it's just back to the regular routine and going to mass in ugly American churches.

A separate Rome Program participant commented on their increased Mass attendance due to the convenience of accessing Mass on campus:

I think I started going a little bit more frequently when I was in Rome. It became like your routine in Rome...it was a little easier to get to Mass more frequently. I went maybe like definitely every Sunday, and then I would go at least two to three other times a week.

Lance made a similar remark about the “convenience” aspect:

Daily Mass just fit very naturally into my schedule and I would help set up Mass sometimes. It was very convenient for me, actually. I guess I went like—some weeks it was every day, some weeks it was two or three times. I'd say three days was probably the average.

The semester spent on the Rome campus affords participants the opportunity to develop

their faith life in a setting that is truly unique. Through individual opportunities such as prayer, or through attending Mass as a community, the participants are offered a multitude of opportunities to participate in further exploring their faith. One student spoke of how the semester spent abroad on the Rome campus impacted her prayer life:

Rome really provided me, and all students, with plenty of opportunities for quiet prayer, which I think impacted my prayer life since then, in understanding how important that can be and what a difference it can make in your own inner peace...quiet time is really the biggest spiritual aspect I took from Rome.

The Rome campus is less than two miles away from the Pope's summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, and includes a small chapel where daily Mass is held. Because of this, the Rome Program participants have access to a high concentration of chapels found throughout Rome proper, and the small towns that surround the UD campus. Rebecca stated, "Churches were so prevalent in Italy. They were gosh, tucked in every nook and cranny. There were churches pretty much everywhere. We don't really have that in America, because we are more spread out."

Aside from having the option to pray alone in the chapel, or by attending Mass numerous times throughout the day, the students found that their friends were actively exploring their faith as well. All of these opportunities allowed for the Rome Program participants to further examine their faith life. Paul commented on the sense of community he encountered while on the Rome campus:

There's a little community that would like—we'd go to Mass and there's probably like 10 of us that would stay and pray the rosary after Mass. Just having that kind of experience is like—because you're kind of living in community, too. You're so close to everyone; you're eating all your meals together, and like spending a lot of time together, so it's neat to be praying together, too. So, I think I started making a habit of going to daily Mass a lot more frequently.

Emily shared a similar experience, "It's totally up to you if you want to go to Mass or not, if you want to actually practice your faith. It was really inspiring being in that environment and being

around other people that were pushing you spiritually.” John Paul described how the communal aspect of the Rome semester reinforced his Catholic faith:

Having been there before, a lot of those feelings I had already experienced. I think the biggest difference was experiencing them in a community and having a hundred other people making the realizations that I’d made, and also still making. The spiritual experience was more of a rejuvenating reminder, than a kind of revelatory [sic] experience.

Subtheme 2: Rejuvenation of Faith

For a number of students interviewed, the semester on the Rome campus allowed for the opportunity to solidify their Catholic faith. Steven mentioned in his interview, “I’m Catholic, and I mean Rome’s the center of the church. I can’t imagine any devout Catholic not wanting to go see Rome, at least. See the Pope...such a cool experience.”

For a couple of participants, visiting St. Peter’s for the first time had a significant impact on the examination of their faith. Jim Bob shared his experience:

Every time I’d go it gave me a sense—definitely a sense of pride of being catholic. You know we have this long legacy, for thousands of years, and it’s just really incredible. I just absolutely loved it, and I fell in love with my faith and with Saint Peter’s and everything that it means to be catholic. It helped me think about it more.

Georgina had a similar revelation, “Just walking into Saint Peter’s was like “Oh, my God, this is Saint Peter’s. This is the belly button of my faith.” Like, this is where my Catholic faith stems from and it’s so beautiful.” Frank explained how being in a setting where the seemingly intangible Catholic faith mixed with the tangible works of Catholic art had an impact on reaffirming his belief system:

Even seeing these unbelievable structures and unbelievable works of art that have been inspired by the Catholic faith—by my faith—it did give a little bit of I guess solidarity or like—I mean, you know there’s a reason why I believe in this faith. There’s a reason why so many people have converted to this faith and so much unbelievable works of art—I mean just everything has come out of it because people have sincerely believed it and

seen it. And it gave me a little bit of a padding; like a cushion. Like, it's real. You're not just over here—you haven't been convinced of something, this is something worldwide. You know, I feel more comfortable believing in something that so much has been built around. I felt that structure there, I guess, a little bit more.

Allie described a similar experience:

In a way, it was just kind of confronting both the concreteness and the not concreteness of my faith and how they fit. I did struggle sometimes, but that was good. Being at the Vatican and realizing how much Catholic history has taken place right there at that building, it made me realize how big, how influential the church is.

Lance used the same term when describing his spiritual revelation while abroad, "To see it as like a real, historical—real people, real events, it just adds one more layer of concreteness to your faith. David provided a more descriptive explanation on the realization that his faith is more real:

It's not as mythical anymore. While you're there, you read the Bible and it's like, "Jesus walked around this ancient place in this ancient world with ancient people." Well, I'm in that same ancient place just in a more modern setting two thousand years later. It's not like Troy. We can't go back to Troy because it's not really there anymore. You can go to the site where they think Troy was, but it's still kind of mythical. But we can go back to Israel and see Galilee, see Jerusalem, see where he's crucified, see where he was laid to rest, see the road he walked on his way his crucifixion. It kind of demythicized [sic] the whole thing and kind of made it a bit more historical in a sense.

Paul explained how the semester abroad rejuvenated his faith, "Spiritually, I encountered God in a new and powerful way." Alli reflected on how she experienced spiritual growth abroad, "It was growing in my stability, security, and being able to rely on that. I became more spiritually involved with the Blessed Sacrament and with leaning on God for support, because I didn't really have a lot of support." Kate explained how the semester abroad established the drive to explore her faith as a personal desire, not as something she felt required to pursue:

It took me out of thinking that things were obligation. Like I had to read that book, or I had to go to Mass on Sunday; to I kind of wanted to, wanted to know more about the book and I wanted to develop a deeper relationship with my faith.

Emily had a very similar experience to Kate's realization that the pursuit of faith had shifted

from a responsibility to a choice, “You find that you’re not going to Mass because you were told to go to Mass. It’s more you making a decision and you realize the importance of it. I think it’s definitely become more of my own since Rome.”

Subtheme 3: Return to Texas

For the majority of the Rome Program participants, the biggest change related to spiritual growth they noticed from leaving the Rome campus and returning to Texas, involved the amount of times they attended Mass each week. Quite a few participants expressed an increase in attending Mass while on the Rome campus. As noted in the sections above, this increase can be attributed to the close proximity of the chapel on campus, and by the number of their friends and classmates that also attended. Upon returning to the Irving campus, many participants commented on the diminution of Mass attendance, or at the very least, a return to the amount they attended prior to spending a semester on the Rome campus. Liz compared her time to Rome as being on a “high.” She explained, “Rome was exhilarating religiously because you are so ignited by the flame that is there. It’s really ridiculous. And I definitely have come down off of that religious high that I was on while I was there, which is unfortunate.” Michael Collins provided a specific example of how the compulsion to be heavily engrossed with pursuing a significant spiritual life had waned upon his return to the Irving campus:

Being in Rome, definitely the experiences I had made me very seriously consider entering the seminary. After getting back, it was something that I realized may have been kind of a little bit of a high, to a certain extent. It’s something that you do experience on such an incredible level, that it’s almost impossible not to experience some form of conversion whether it’s religious or just internal.

Rebecca explained that she attended Mass “probably more,” as a result of studying abroad on the Rome campus. She elaborated further:

When I got back from Rome I had never gone to 5 pm Mass, the daily Mass here on campus. There were people from my Rome class that I became friends with and some of them would go to 5 pm Mass, and so I'd join them.

Paul explained why he felt driven to continue attending Mass upon returning to Texas:

It's just a neat experience to go to Mass there; it's really, really cool. And so we would do that, too, and I think the summer—and that kind of translated the summer after I came back; I was like “Okay, I want to keep going to daily Mass” so I started going once a week 'cause that's kind of how I could schedule it with work.

Steven provided an alternative perspective to why his physical participation decreased upon returning to the campus in Irving:

My freshman year I went to daily Mass all the time. I went probably two or three times a week and I think part of that was just because I was—part of me was trying to fit in. That's kind of the culture at UD, is you want to go to daily Mass so you seem more Catholic. And then I guess being in Rome I came back and I stopped going to daily Mass. At first I thought maybe I just got lazy—I don't know. But then I realized that it was just because I was more comfortable; I was more comfortable with my faith. I didn't feel that I needed to impress anyone. I felt like I was definitely part of the community by that point. I'll go from time to time if I feel compelled but it's because of me now, and not because of any insecurity that I have.

Lance described how his Mass attendance lessened since returning from his semester abroad:

Campus is gorgeous. You want to get out there; you want to go. Plus, your classes are getting out; most of your friends are going there. It's very natural, it fits into the day very well so, it wasn't as much of a—it didn't seem to be as much of a chore for me. Which is exactly right, I think that's how we're supposed to see it, and then I got lazy when I got back.

Georgina provided her explanation, “You get kind of burnt out when you come back 'cause—after having been there and seen—I mean every Catholic wants to have Mass at The Vatican, and after having done that, it's like nothing here is good enough.” Derek explained why his attendance diminished upon returning to the Irving campus from his semester abroad:

I think because the United States life has much more pace to it, you kind of lose sight of that strong, faithful feeling you had while you were in Europe. Being back in the United States has actually negatively impacted my religious life, which is kind of sad, but there's so many things going on in the United States.

Summary of Spirituality: Community of Believers

The relationship between spiritual growth as an outcome of study abroad is relatively undeveloped; therefore published research on this area is not widespread. However, through the data collected in this study, I hope to contribute to the growing field. Spirituality points to our inner, subjective life, as contrasted with the objective domain of observable behavior and material objects that we can point to and measure directly (Astin et al., 2011). As prefaced in the opening section of the Spirituality: Community of believers theme, it was evident that the Rome Program participants had a less difficult time in communicating the objective spirituality impacts versus those of a subjective nature. The relationship between increased spiritual growth and study abroad was an obvious area of potential investigation given the Catholic affiliation of the UD Rome Program. The outcomes commonly attributed to study abroad participation and increased spirituality often cited in the relevant literature, were clearly exhibited by the Rome Program participants in the spirituality: community of believers theme.

During their semester abroad, the students were provided ample opportunities to participate in their spiritual formation and experience a rejuvenation of their faith. The participants also acknowledged the changes they experienced in their spirituality upon their return to Texas. Many participants expressed spiritual highs and lows during and after their semester on the Rome campus. These feelings can be attributed to the high concentration of chapels within easy access of the students, by sharing the same spiritual journey as their friends, and as a result of leaving the spiritually concentrated environment. Each of the illustrations above, combined with an inherent compulsion to investigate the basis of their spiritual beliefs, allowed for the Rome Program participants to undertake a period of enhanced spirituality.

Additional Findings

Personal Development: Transformed by Rome

Of the various ways in which individuals describe being impacted by study abroad participation, outcomes that are associated with personal development are the most commonly reported in research findings. Research findings strongly identify study abroad as an activity that facilitates personal development both on the intrapersonal and interpersonal level in areas such as maturity, independence, tolerance, confidence, and self-efficacy (Kauffman & Kuh, 1984; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Sandell, 2007). This was reaffirmed in the examination of the UD Rome Program participant experiences as well. The Rome Program participants reported a number of specific examples as to how they recognized individual personal development as a result of spending a semester in Rome, through responses to the participant surveys, interviews, and during the focus group session.

Within the personal development: transformed by Rome growth category, two significant sub-themes emerged. The first sub-theme involves personal development in terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal growth. A number of participants acknowledged an increase in areas of intrapersonal growth such as maturity, independence, confidence, and self-efficacy. When asked to identify something they learned about themselves while spending the semester abroad, almost every participant mentioned a love of travel. Of the students who provided examples of situations where interpersonal growth was demonstrated, the majority involved interactions between their roommates, friends, and classmates.

For many of the participants, the lack of access to modern technology on the Rome campus strengthened face to face interactions between fellow classmates, thus further cementing the intense connection which is characteristic of both fall and spring classes. The manner in

which the strong connections to a particular Rome semester were conveyed, alluded to a division between the students who elect to travel to Rome in the fall or spring semester of their sophomore year. The participants eagerly described the fall versus spring Rome semester as UD's "greatest rivalry" on campus. Throughout the interviews, the participants referenced a handful of Rome Program specific vocabulary words. Hence, this topic of discussion emerged as the second sub-theme of the personal development: transformed by Rome category.

Real World: Rome

Michael Collins' reflected on the appreciation he developed for the personal education he earned in addition to the academic education he gained during his semester on the Rome campus:

The goal of an education, college education is not simply book knowledge; it's not simply rote memorization. It's meant to be something that you develop as a person. You know, who you are as a freshman is going to be very different from the maturity level that's present in you as a senior, you would hope.

Many of the students mentioned areas in which they felt the semester impacted them personally.

Alli stated, "It made an enormous impact on my self-confidence." Upon returning home from their semester abroad, many of the participants were cognizant of their increased level of maturity. Weezer described how she felt more mature after her time on the Rome campus:

Your perspective has been changed and you've been through enough that you're not a kid anymore. You relate to professors differently because you've kind of lived with them, you see them not on the same level but on a more mature level. I feel like I definitely related to my mom a lot different when I came back and it's just part of that maturation experience.

Kate described the Rome semester as an impetus to grow up:

I don't know what else to describe Rome as—definitely like a push out the door—which is why I was almost kind of scared of it. But it's what I needed to kind of grow up and maybe get over myself, get over the America thing. It was just really nice to come back and be kind of freed from—I was doing everything for my parents or I was doing everything for someone else—and at the end of the day, your education is your education.

Another participant commented on the personal maturity they experienced as a result of spending a semester on the Rome campus:

I think my personality changed, and I think that was just from being by myself without my family. It was all up to me, so I think I became more independent and more, “I can figure this out on my own” which I’m pretty sure drives my parent’s nuts.

Alice explained how the semester had an impact on her confidence:

It transformed me into an entirely different person. I still have a hard time explaining how I feel about Rome because it was that phenomenal and that important to shaping my person as an adult and helping to become familiar with who I am. To let go the angst-y teenager and become a more confident adult woman who actually feels like a woman.

One of the most common reflections of the participants regarding their time abroad was that of increased confidence in travel, particularly in the area of international travel.

You grow up as a person, they kick you off campus for 10 days and you have to figure out how to survive and how to get around in a foreign country that you don’t necessarily speak the language. They give you the responsibility of adults and they expect you to deal with it and handle it well. I think that’s a really liberating experience too, especially for a college sophomore. I hadn’t really had that opportunity yet.

Liz mentioned that she plans to backpack after graduation with her two older brothers and credits the Rome semester with building her confidence to take the trip. Frank noted, “I definitely wasn’t capable of independently traveling around the world before going to Rome and that’s something that especially you learn how to do.” Allie described her increase in confidence in terms of navigating life:

I became much more confident in my ability to both literally and metaphorically navigate life in a practical sense of figuring out plane tickets, figuring out how to travel, figuring out how to communicate with people. Oh, you’ve got a problem and you’re stuck somewhere, how do you solve it, how do you stay patient?

Lance commented, “Travel just sounded like a fun vacation before Rome and now it still sounds fun but it’s a chance to learn about other people, about history, which is not something I was interested in beforehand.”

Face to Face

A number of participants commented on the lack of distractions that modern day technology creates on the Irving campus. While in Rome, the classmates were without cell phones, Facebook, email, and texts thus forcing the participants to communicate with each other in person. For some, the lack of distractions brought on by everyday technology found on the Irving campus allowed for the opportunity to develop deeper and more meaningful friendships with fellow classmates. One student explained:

The intensity of the semester's just so much different than a semester in the U.S. because you just remove all the distractions that—I mean, like we didn't have cell phones, our internet was really slow and you didn't have a lot of—you could only use so much of it a day before it just went to dial-up speed. So, that kept you off of Facebook and YouTube and things like that, which was really good.

Anne provided more of an explanation on how this opportunity encouraged a more meaningful relationship with her fellow spring Romers:

I guess the only thing I thought about differently was just the fact that—I don't know how to word this. Like when we were there, we didn't have cell phones. Nobody was on Facebook the whole time. We had to walk everywhere or take public transportation, so it was kind of nice to just forget about all of the modern technology kind of things and it just felt natural to be like that. Just to have to fend for ourselves I guess I would say. If you wanted to talk to someone you had to call their room phone and if you wanted to find someone you had to go look for them; you couldn't be texting your friends and saying, "Oh, meet me here." I think that was really good for all of us just because I feel like sometimes Facebook and having cell phones kind of takes a lot away from conversation because you can so easily say something to someone without even having to look at them. That's something I don't really like even though I participate in it here in the U.S.

Derek shared his appreciation for the lack of technology on the Rome campus:

You just become content and then you actually just even enjoy it more, the fact that you don't have any of those things. Like literally, the majority of us just read books, got our work done, traveled, and just hung out, and that would almost sound boring in the U.S. because you don't have an Xbox or an iPhone or a PSP or a computer.

Alli provided a similar example in her interview:

You don't have as much phone contact or like as reliable Internet, I just felt so isolated in

a good way where I could really forget everything else that was going on in my life and focus on that moment in time, that like chunk of time. I didn't have to think about [the] Irving campus or even other classes that I was going to take because there was really only time to think about what I was experiencing right then since everything was moving so fast and I was meeting new people.

A result of the lack of distractions on the Rome campus allowed the students more opportunities to focus on developing their interpersonal skills. Many of the examples of interpersonal growth involved developing a higher level of tolerance, patience, and flexibility. The Rome Program participants often mentioned instances involving roommates, suitemates, and travel partners where they had to learn to adjust to different personalities. One student explained:

I think just being able to go roll with the punches as cliché as that sounds is a big part of Rome. You kind of learn to adapt, which for me was really good because I like knowing where I'm going and being in control. When I'm not, I kind of freak out, but that helped me adapt.

Alli described how the close quarters during the Rome semester allowed for the chance to learning about her roommates and herself:

I think you're put to the test in friendships. I met so many new people and because you're in such a close environment, you can really get into a lot of trouble that way because you can't get away from people that may annoy you or may cause hurt. Building solid relationships and being a good friend and knowing how to handle yourself in awkward situations, all of those things are going to put you to the test because all of those are going to happen. You're going to feel awkward, and you're going to have weird romances—everybody's going to—and your roommates are going to anger you because there's six of them.

Another participant had a similar experience in identifying personal growth as it related to how to effectively handle situations with others:

I guess what I meant by growth is knowing who you are when you're traveling, or learning who you are gives you a more accurate picture of yourself than who you necessarily thought you were. Because there's times when you haven't eaten and when you haven't slept and when you're dehydrated and when you're frustrated with someone or when you want to go somewhere where somebody else doesn't want to go or vice versa and your level of control and your personality and who you are comes to the surface. And you can see that and see where you need to do, what you need to improve.

Fall versus Spring

A vast amount of study abroad research focuses on individual students from individual institutions being placed in individual host homes. The UD Rome campus is a unique setting; 120 students from a small, private, liberal arts institution are transported to an even smaller campus located in the Italian countryside. Through speaking with the students, a distinct split between the fall and spring semester groups was evident. Early on, one way the students make their decision to attend in the fall or spring has to do with the ideal weather in the fall, and the inimitable opportunity of celebrating Easter in the Vatican. Another way the participants make the decision is based on their personality and how the fall and spring semesters reflect their own personality. Even as seniors who were mostly two years removed from their Rome experience, they continue to strongly identify with their particular semester. Steven mentioned, "I'm a fall Romer, I associate strongly with my fall Rome class. Even when I'm at a party I find it easier to talk to my fall Rome class people than the spring Rome class people."

When asked which semester the participants elected to travel to Rome, more often than not the question was met with an emphatic "fall!" or "spring!" response. Further conversation led to additional explanations as to why the two semester groups appear to be so divided. During the interviews, the participants explained that the fall classes are typically made up of the students who can be described as the more outgoing, loud, "partiers," who tend to live on the west side of the Irving campus. The spring classes typically include athletes, is more studious and less social, and primarily consists of students who live on the east side of the Irving campus. Emily described how she made the choice to go to Rome in the fall. She explained, "I was good friends with a lot of people that had gone in the fall, and they recommended it based on my personality. They thought that a lot of fall Romers were more like me, just more adventurous, like outgoing." When asked to elaborate on the stereotypes of the two classes, one participant explained, "The

stereotypes are: fall Romers tend to be more open minded, more outgoing, your general westsiders of campus. The spring Romers are your eastsiders who are more quiet, bigger studiers, and not as open to new things.” Anne provided an additional explanation on the separate personalities of the classes:

There’s this stigma about how the fall Romers are always a certain type of people and the spring Romers are the boring, quiet people. People on the east side kind of have a negative view of the other people and the people on the west side have a negative view of those people. Jerome—the dorm—and Greg, are the people that drink and like to go party. Catherine, Teresa, and Madonna—those are like the really, really—good catholic people that don’t drink and they’re judgmental. Jerome and Greg is like the people that—they are catholic and they care about their faith but they also like to have fun. So, usually what happens is the Jerome and Greg people go in the fall and the Catherine and Madonna and Teresa people go in the spring.

One particular answer was different than most. Michael Collins expanded on his answer, “I’m a fall Romer at heart, but I’m [a] spring Romer in experience. So I definitely can absolutely defend both of them.” He explained that he chose to attend in the spring semester due to the course options for his major. Further probing into his response led to this rationalization:

To a certain extent, maybe I should be grateful that I went in the spring because it allowed me a chance to have those fall friends that I’m still closest friends with. I’m closer friends with all fall Romers than spring Romers, but it gave me that chance to experience.

When asked to provide advice to any future Rome Program participants on how to decide between the two semesters, Michael Collins strongly suggested they go “when their friends go.”

He explained:

I think that having to kind of choose between what works best and when your friends might go, I mean, it’s really difficult. I think that for me—so this does go back to when I went, I would say—because it’s so important to go when your friends go, to heck with everything else.

East meets West

In some cases the Rome semester allows for a breakdown of the preconceived stereotypes

that surround the personalities of the fall and spring semester classes. A few students discussed how they fit the mold of a particular semester, but chose to participate in the opposite due to struggles with their friends on the Irving campus, because their siblings or parents had traveled in a particular semester, or simply because the weather was more appealing. For these students, the integration led to a collapse in the stereotypes they had been fed prior to traveling to Rome. One student provided her experience:

I ended up getting to know a lot of people from the—I don't even remember which one's the east and which one is the west—but from the other side of campus, basically, that I had previously kind of heard were stuck up and not fun. I became really good friends with some of those people and I realized how wrong the stereotypes were.

Another student described how the time abroad impacted her friendships with the students still on the Irving campus:

I started to see my friends that I had gone with from the other side of campus—I started to realize that a lot of the things that they did were bad and that our friendships weren't really—like they were kind of superficial. I didn't really realize that until Rome so it definitely makes you re-examine your views on everybody from UD.

Rebecca explained her hesitation in participating in the fall semester, “I was leaning more towards fall and I only knew a couple of people, so that was scary. I was a Teresa girl and a lot of the people going were from Jerome and Greg and I didn't know them.” She went on to say that her experience was “amazing” because she did meet new people and have the “Rome bonding experience.” In his interview, Paul expanded on the topic of east and west sides of campus and the stereotypes that pervade the Irving campus:

Going to Rome I met a ton of people that I would not have met otherwise, like just people that weren't in the same circles or I didn't run around with. I was the stereotypical eastsider, like studious—well, kind of studious—at least not a partier or a jock or an athlete. I met a lot of those kinds of people that maybe had the more, what I would have considered crazy social lives, or they were into sports and stuff like that. That was a really good experience. They were really good people, and I made some really good friends in those kinds of groups so I think that was great because that exposed me to some different folks that I wouldn't have met otherwise. I guess I was probably a little

jaded before going there. I'd made some presumptions about those kind of people; that I really had that broken down and realized that they're really good people, too, so that was a great experience for me.

As the Rome Program participants shared their experiences, it is worth considering if transporting the students to Rome early in their undergraduate career, the administration on the Irving campus is aiding in perpetuating the division in classes. Once abroad, the opportunity to break down these preconceived stereotypes diminishes because the close connection the students develop as a Rome class begins to form and rarely fades. Jim Bob addressed the connection in his interview, "I went in the fall. I got to know a lot of my classmates and when we came back we all hung out. When the spring Romers came back there was like two separate cultures; almost like two separate experiences." Rebecca further elaborated on Jim Bob's comment, "It's not just that you are with them in Rome, you're with them again in Irving." She went on to describe this closeness:

That transition is interesting because you really cling to each other because you feel like you're the outsiders on campus again. You look towards your fall Rome class or your spring Rome class, what have you. My best friends today are ones that I met in that spring semester from my Rome class.

Another participant validated Rebecca's comment by stating, "I know that other Rome classes are like that; once they go to Rome together they're inseparable." An example of the inseparability was provided in Erica's interview, "All of my roommates I met while in Rome. I met my five best friends—some of us knew each other and some of us didn't—then all six of us came together and we've lived together for three years." Erica's example of her living situation was just one of many shared throughout the interviews. In a sense it is admirable that the students connect as strongly as they do while on the Rome campus, but it also suggests a division upon their return.

Rome-isms

Another unique aspect of the Rome Program comes in the form of “Rome-isms.” Because the Rome Program has been in operation for over 40 years, the students have created a handful of expressions that are inimitable to the experience. Rome goggles, Rome-mances, Romesick, and Rome drama were common phrases that were sprinkled throughout many of the interviews. From an interview with Steven, the phrase “Rome goggles” emerged. His explanation:

Actually, a couple from my class—Tim and Jessica—just got engaged and they started dating over there. Rome goggles is the phrase we have for that. You’re over there with a hundred other people, they’re all Catholic, you’re all more or less good friends and so you start being interested in whoever’s there. And you know, you probably start dating...

Another term that was first introduced in my interview with Steven was “Rome-mance.”

Through deeper probing, it’s an expression given to relationships that are inspired in Rome, likely a result of the Rome goggles the students acquire while living on a campus of 120 students half a world away from their friends. Steven explained, “Our class was fairly small on the relationship scale; only two or three started while we were there. I’ve heard of like 10 relationships starting up in Rome. They usually don’t last.” A conversation with Liz backed up Steven’s claim of Rome-mance’s being short lived. She shared her experience of dating another UD student in Rome. “So, only one Rome-mance for that year. There’s typically one. I mean, the Rome-mance before us, they just got engaged. And the Rome-mance before that... typically the Rome-mances get engaged. So it was quite the scandal when we broke up.”

The term Romesick is used by students they return to campus in Irving and have a homesick feeling for the Rome campus. Alice Sheldon stated, “I left my heart in Rome and I have to go back, I just have to.” One former Rome Program participant created and posted a video on YouTube entitled, “Rome Sick.” Derek mentioned the term during his interview in

terms of being in Europe for four months and having to deal with coming back to reality. He further elaborated on the term:

You just think back to your experiences and the friends you had there and how you could just go simply from studying [on campus] into Rome, and you could go from studying to traveling to Spain, or traveling to Germany, or going to Prague, or going to Ireland or Switzerland. Like the possibilities are endless, and not only are they endless, you have a hundred friends to do those endless possibilities with, and that's just something that is like a once in a lifetime experience.

The reference to drama was sprinkled throughout many of the interviews, particularly when speaking of roommates and friends. However, the Rome Program participants identify the struggles they experience with learning how to handle these issues as “Rome drama.” Erica mentioned the term when discussing the personality of her Rome semester class, “My class was super close. We had no Rome drama, no nothing. Everyone said we were boring— we had one Rome-mance and they're actually now engaged so we're very proud of that.” Another participant mentioned, “... it would be interesting if you asked other students, “What can you tell me about Rome drama?” When asked to elaborate on the comment, she stated, “In Rome, you don't air your Rome drama—or not Rome drama—but your dirty laundry. Whenever people are like, “How's Rome?” You don't tell them the truth that there was [*sic*] issues.”

Summary of Personal Development: Transformed by Rome

Many of the outcomes provided by the participants in the personal development: transformed by Rome category support the outcomes found in the readily available study abroad literature, regardless of the unique format. The students provided endless examples of engaging in both intrapersonal and interpersonal development while abroad. These experiences taught the Rome Program participants how to address issues with friends, roommates, and the fellow classmates they traveled with to Rome. The fall and spring semester classes are both equally

engaging semesters academically, but the differences arise when the personalities of the students who make up the semester classes are further examined. When presented the opportunity to select the semester in which to participate in the Rome Program, a majority of participants continue to perpetuate the semester division stigma by selecting the one in which upperclassman advised they would best assimilate.

This category reaffirms the conclusions reached by those who have previously conducted research on study abroad and personal growth. All of the participants interviewed mentioned experiencing some type of self-discovery while spending the semester on the Rome campus. Similar to the results found in Chieffo and Griffiths' (2004) study, many of the Rome participants mentioned areas of growth related to personal development such as adaptability, flexibility, patience, responsibility, respect for others, and appreciation for the arts (p.173).

It can be asserted that the outcomes experienced by the participants likely transpired due to the intimate campus setting, the numerous options for individual and class travel, number of roommates per suite, and the opportunities to rely on one's own self. The students were able to engage in face to face communication with their roommates, classmates, and friends with a significant lack of distractions, thus allowing for social interactions. The participants were also provided opportunities to engage in personal reflection on the areas in which they were experiencing individual development. Finally, the out of class activities combined with the distinctive personalities of both fall and spring semester classes allowed for significant growth in the category of personal development.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the inductive examination of interview transcripts in five categories of development, four of which directly responded to the research questions posed.

All of the data were separated, synthesized, and analyzed by the code system developed specifically for this research study. The final category and its sub-themes addressed outcomes expressed by the participants both recurrent in the study abroad literature and unique to the Rome Program.

The questions of the effects of participation in a mid-length study abroad program on the participants—particularly in the areas of intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spirituality—were answered through the survey, individual interviews, and the focus group. As evidenced in the previous five sections, to a large degree UD has accomplished desired objectives in the areas of increasing intellectual and spiritual development, and to a lesser degree in the areas of global perspective and career development. As stated by Kauffman and Kuh (1984), “The increased tolerance for ambiguity and interest in reflective thought combined with greater sensitivity and emotionality, and an increased interest in the esthetic suggest that study abroad can be an important general education component of the liberal arts curriculum” (p.15). I feel certain that each participant I spoke with would wholeheartedly agree with this statement. Chapter 5 delves into a deeper examination of the findings presented in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Participation in a study abroad program while attending college is becoming more and more popular on U.S. college campuses. In 2011, the IIE and Forum on Education Abroad distributed a survey to 153 member institutions in an effort to collect data on study abroad participation. The survey reflected a 53% increase in study abroad enrollment (Chow & Villarreal, 2011). At the University of Dallas, over 85% of students elect to study on UD's campus in Rome during their sophomore year. Though participation has consistently been high during the program's 40 years, analysis of the effects of participation in the Rome Program had not yet been examined through a qualitative study. The purpose of this research was to examine the outcomes of participating in a mid-length study abroad program at the University of Dallas. Because the participation rate continues to be higher than most programs, it is recommended in order to evaluate current processes that ensure quality outcomes of study abroad programs. The input provided by the Rome Program participants will assist in assessing the effects of the study abroad experience on participants, and potentially aid in the better aligning of program goals with the administration's anticipated outcomes.

The participants in this study were senior-year students who spent a semester on the UD Rome campus. The findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. Provided this study was conducted at a single institution, it should be advised that the findings are specific to the UD Rome Program, and would be challenging to generalize. This chapter provides a brief summary of the results found in the study, and discusses those results in relation to the available literature on outcomes of study abroad. In addition to comparison of results, implications and

recommendations for practice are presented, as well as a conclusion of the entire research project.

Implications of Findings

Previous research on the effects and impacts of study abroad on participants tend to reflect growth in intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development (McCabe, 1994; Norris & Steinberg, 2008; Norris & Gillespie, 2009; Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). As evidenced through the interviews, participant surveys, and focus group session; UD to a large degree has accomplished these goals in the areas of intellectual development and spiritual growth. The participants acquired a deep-seated appreciation for the core curriculum taught at UD, for the new academic subjects they were being exposed to while traveling throughout Europe as part of class, and for the rigorous nature of the Rome Program. Additionally, a majority of the participants reignited the flame of their faith life. In the areas of global perspective and career development, the goals were accomplished to a lesser degree as the interview comments reflected little impact on their future career plans, and mixed reviews on the amount of cultural immersion experienced. Consequently, if the areas of development covered in this study are believed to be of significance to the UD Rome Program administration, it would be beneficial to make them more explicit for the participants.

The findings of this study contribute not only to the literature on the outcomes of study abroad, but also provide the Rome Program administration with practical implications for organizing the mid-length study abroad program. The information gathered from this study will provide helpful feedback in assessing the current Rome Program processes, the development of future program practices and better goal alignment, and an overall structure upon which to

evaluate the effectiveness of the Rome semester as experienced by the participants. Although the Rome Program is specific to UD, the framework from which the success of the program can be evaluated could be beneficial to other study abroad programs as well.

For the University of Dallas Rome Program; I believe it would be beneficial to communicate to the participants, prior to the semester abroad, what to expect in terms of intellectual, personal, global, spiritual, and career growth. The UD Rome Program could consider instituting a structure of objectives to meet in order to evaluate the success of the Rome Program from year to year. Michigan State University's International Studies and Programs Office established six goals they aim to achieve through their study abroad programs; facilitate students' intellectual growth, contribute to students' professional development, accelerate students' personal growth, develop students' skills for relating to culturally different others, enhance students' self-awareness and understanding of their own culture, and contribute to the internationalization of the student's home department, college, or university (Ingraham and Peterson, 2004).

To a certain degree the above listed goals are vague; however at a minimum they provide a framework from which the success of the MSU programs may be evaluated. Additionally, these desired outcomes provide the study abroad participants a guideline for areas of potential developmental growth. International educators and administrators have begun to re-orient their focus from an appraisal of the sheer numbers of students participating in international education to the quality of their experiences abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003). Because students, faculty, and administrators all value study abroad as a vital component of education, and resources expended continue to grow, institutions need effective ways to assess the educational outcomes associated with the programs their students choose (Detweiler, Welna, & Anderson, 2008).

Stating the desired goals of the Rome Program and the objectives for the Rome Program participants would be beneficial for three reasons. First, identified goals will allow the administration to structure the program so as to best support the possible desired outcomes. For example, if a goal of the program is for students to learn the Italian language, then requiring all students to enroll in the Survival Italian class should be enforced. By structuring the program with the intent of attaining these goals and creating the desired outcomes, the administration creates the opportunity to design or consistently revise the program with these elements.

Second, outlining expected goals for the participants will provide them a “map” to follow in order to identify the growth they may encounter while abroad. These “maps” will explain what the administration hopes the students will get out of the program, and will help them to shape their own educational experience. Though it is necessary to not restrict the experience for any participant, by making the goals of the program explicit it will allow for the participants to be cognizant of their own goals. The students can assist in self-shaping their experience and be more attentive in achieving personal desired experiential outcomes.

During an interview with Emily, she mentioned an area of improvement related to the pre-departure orientation. She wished the administration had scheduled previous Rome participants speak to those who were preparing to go to Rome, so as to gain a peer-related insight to their four months abroad. Additionally, another participant suggested the administration provide the students with a list of sights to see before the semester ended. Without an idea of what they could experience, it might be difficult for participants to understand what they are experiencing, or could be experiencing. In essence, if the goal of the program is to immerse the students in the Italian culture during their semester on the Rome campus, then the students need to be aware that this is a goal so that they can determine how they can achieve the desired goal.

Finally, by identifying a set of objectives for the Rome Program it creates a framework upon which the program can be evaluated in the future, either by the Rome Program administration or outside investigators. The guiding curriculum is essential for evaluating the achieved outcomes and overall success of the Rome Program. How is the administration to evaluate its success if an existing framework of what they do does not exist? The benefit of the information gathered from this study is that moving forward the administration has five categories of goals in which to draw their desired outcomes from. As mentioned previously, although this study is restricted to UD, these principles may be of help in structuring and evaluation of other study abroad programs.

Implications and Recommendations

As a recommendation for the Rome Program, it is advisable that more explicit statements of purpose or the objectives of the programs be conveyed in a mission statement. The current program is well supported, participation by students is uncommonly high for a college campus, and the participants report very high outcomes. However, in order to attain a higher level of effectiveness it is suggested that the administration identify a set of explicit objectives or goals for the program to achieve. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, I have asserted a handful of goals that were identified from the literature which the Rome Program administration may share, consider alternatives, or have additional goals they wish to achieve by sending the students to the Rome campus for a semester. Furthermore, I have addressed the potential for issues if the administration chooses to pursue these goals.

In addition to explicitly stating desired goals and objectives of the program, I recommend the Rome Program administration consider conducting four separate studies on the outcomes of

the Rome Program participation. The first study to consider is that of the Rome Program Alumni study, much like that of the IES Alumni study. This would attempt to collect information from all living alumni of the Rome Program. As previously mentioned the Rome Program has been in practice for over 40 years. Though locating and receiving participation of all living alumni for the past 40 years could create logistical difficulties, the large number of respondents would provide a greater chance to receive responses from participants and perhaps a broader range of responses. It would also provide an anonymous forum for those to submit their feedback.

A second recommendation is for the Rome Program administration to conduct a longitudinal study on Rome Program participants by surveying their experiences at a similar point in their undergraduate education on an annual basis. This quantitative study would follow up with students about the quality and effectiveness of the Rome Program using the qualitative framework that was established by analyzing the findings in this study to provide a broader perspective of outcomes experienced by the participants. In addition to covering intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development, the administration could also include characteristics of personal development which was explored in the additional findings section. Because the area of additional findings covers themes that emerged through the participant surveys and interviews, it is evident that the participants experienced significant effects in these categories, particularly within the areas of expected outcomes of the program. Prior to this study, the administration did not have feedback from the Rome Program participants on what they believed to be the most important outcomes of the program. Finally, if the administration has any additional ideas that they would like to explore in the survey, those topics could be incorporated as well. By tracking the participant experiences over time, the administration would be able to determine which areas of development were consistent or inconsistent with the literature.

A third recommendation would be for the Rome Program administration to survey past and present faculty who have taught on the Rome campus. If possible, consulting the original creators of the Rome Program or the initial faculty members could be beneficial in gauging the expectations of the program. Is the Rome Program currently operating at the expected level when it was originally created, or are there areas of concern to be addressed? Additionally, by surveying the more recent Rome Program faculty the administration could identify areas of success or any particular areas that need additional attention in an effort to begin evaluation from a faculty perspective.

Moreover, I recommend the Rome Program administration conduct a longitudinal study on the outcomes experienced by participants. This study was conducted at least one year (mostly two years) after participation in the Rome Program. I suggest implementing a study to interview the participants prior to embarking on the study abroad program, immediately upon their return to the U.S., after five years, after ten years, etc. to determine the actual long term effects of the program versus the projected effects. The areas of mission work and international careers are of particular interest. As evidenced in the research, many students return from their time abroad with idealistic views on their future careers and place in the world. Implementing a longitudinal study to follow up on the actual fulfillment of these plans would be appealing.

Conclusions

The reality of study abroad effects, goals, and outcomes is that for the most part students go into the program with their own set of ideas, expectations, goals, and outcomes. Braskamp et al. (2009) found study abroad to be “an effective educational experience for students, if the desired goal of the study abroad program is to help students develop holistically and globally” (p.

110). Undoubtedly an institution can outline expected or desired outcomes for the study abroad participants to strive towards, but ultimately it is up to the participant to aspire to engage in such opportunities in order to experience those effects. Providing students with an explicit guideline of goals for the study abroad program experience could assist in encouraging this engagement.

In conclusion, to a certain degree the mid-length study abroad program offered by the University of Dallas on its Rome campus provided opportunities for the participants to experience growth in areas of intellectual development, global perspective, career development, and spirituality. By implementing these specific goals and outcomes of the program and communicating these expectations to the participants, it is possible that successful development in these areas will expand, and provide a greater ability to quantify.

APPENDIX A
EMAIL SOLICITATION

January 2012

Dear University of Dallas Rome Program alumni,

You are invited to volunteer for a research study on the effects of participation in a mid-length study abroad program on student participants. This research is being conducted as part of a dissertation towards an Ed.D through the University of North Texas. I am conducting a research study on the effects study abroad participation has on the intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development of the student participant. This study may help to better understand the effects of the Rome semester experienced by the participants and how the University of Dallas can better align the goals with the anticipated outcomes of the Rome Program.

Your participation in this study is extremely important. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short Rome Program participant survey, participate in an hour long audio recorded personal interview, and possibly participate in a 90-minute audio recorded focus group session with other students. Overall, your time commitment to this study could be 2.5 hours. This will take place on the University of Dallas campus and will be arranged for almost any time during mid-January and early February; once you agree to participate in the study we can set up an interview time that works best for you at the date and time of your convenience. As a token of appreciation for participating you will receive a 10 drink gift card to the Capp Bar on campus. *Please let me know if you are willing to participate in this study as soon as possible.* Individual answers will be kept confidential and participation in the study is entirely voluntary. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at both UNT and UD.

If you wish to participate, please send an email by January 27, 2012. Include your name, email address, and a few dates/times that would work best for your personal interview. The date of the focus group will be announced in a separate email. I have attached an informed consent form for you to review for additional information about this study.

I appreciate your help and willingness to participate in this doctoral study. If you have any questions or comments about this study, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Marc Cutright, my Major Professor.

Sincerely,

Jill K. Corbin
Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education Administration
University of North Texas

APPENDIX B
ROME PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Name: _____

Pseudonym: _____

Major/Concentration: _____

Race: _____ Gender: M ___ F ___ Birthday: _____

Hometown/State: _____ Year at UD: ___ Senior ___ Other: _____

Prior to the Rome semester, had you ever traveled abroad before? YES NO

If yes, list the country(ies) you visited and the length of your visit.

Had you studied abroad prior to the Rome Program? YES NO

If yes, when? How long was the program? List the location.

Overall, how would you rate your Rome Program experience?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Great

Why did you give your Rome Program experience this score?

What advice would you give to someone who was considering participating in the Rome Program?

APPENDIX C
UNT IRB APPROVAL

UNT[™]
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH TEXAS
Discover the power of ideas.

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
January 23, 2012

Marc Cutright
Department of Counseling and Higher Education
University of North Texas

Re: Human Subjects Application No. 11598

Dear Dr. Cutright:

As permitted by federal law and regulations governing the use of human subjects in research projects (45 CFR 46), the UNT Institutional Review Board has reviewed your proposed project titled "The Effects of Mid-Length Study Abroad Programs on Private Liberal Arts College Students." The risks inherent in this research are minimal, and the potential benefits to the subject outweigh those risks. The submitted protocol is hereby approved for the use of human subjects in this study. **Federal Policy 45 CFR 46.109(e) stipulates that IRB approval is for one year only, January 23, 2012 to January 22, 2013.**

Enclosed is the consent document with stamped IRB approval. Please copy and **use this form only** for your study subjects.

It is your responsibility according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations to submit annual and terminal progress reports to the IRB for this project. The IRB must also review this project prior to any modifications.

Please contact Shelia Bourns, Research Compliance Analyst, or Boyd Herndon, Director of Research Compliance, at extension 3940, if you wish to make changes or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Patricia L. Kaminski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Chair, Institutional Review Board

PK:sb

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Invitation to Participate in a Research Project: The Effects of Mid-Length Study Abroad
Programs on Private Liberal Arts College Students

You have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by Jill K. Corbin under the supervision of Dr. Marc Cutright in the Center for Higher Education, University of North Texas. Before agreeing to voluntarily participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefit and risks of the study and how it will be conducted. You will receive a copy of this form.

Student Investigator: Jill K. Corbin, University of North Texas (UNT) Higher Education Program, College of Education.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of participation in the Rome Program on the participant. The areas of investigation may include intellectual, global, career, and spiritual development.

Procedure

You will be asked to complete a short Rome Program participant survey and participate in an audio recorded interview. The personal interview will last a minimum of one hour. You will be asked to share your experience of participating in the University of Dallas Rome Program with most of the questions focusing on the above mentioned four areas of personal development.

Risks

No expected risks are involved in this study. The only potential risk of participating in the research is that of an accidental breach of confidentiality. However, this risk is minimized by the procedures used for collecting and rendering all data anonymous at the earliest possible time.

Benefits

As a participant in this study, there will be no likely direct benefit to you. However, your input on the Rome Program experience could potentially help others in assessing the effects of study abroad programs and potentially better aligning program goals with anticipated outcomes.

Compensation

As compensation for your time, you will receive a 10 drink gift card to the University of Dallas Capp Bar on campus.

Confidentiality

Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Interviews will be audio-recorded and the data from this study will be transcribed and coded from these tapes. This data will be organized by a pseudonym assigned to you so that your identity will be available only to the researcher and will remain completely confidential. The signed consent form will be the only record of your identity and will not be linked to the interviews in any way.

Questions about the Study

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Jill K. Corbin.

Review for the Protection of Participants

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT and UD Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at 940.565.3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants Rights

Your signature below indicates that you have read, or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Jill K. Corbin has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.
- You understand that the interviews will be audio recorded and agree to release all rights for the use of any written and recorded information during the study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Student Investigator

I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the subject signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

Signature of Student Investigator or Designee

Date

APPENDIX E

ROME PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Rome Program Participant

Interview Protocol

Project: Reactions to Participating in the Mid-length Study Abroad Rome Program

Date:

Time:

Place:

Interviewer: Jill K. Corbin

Interviewee:

Interview Topics and Questions

Overall Experience

1. Which semester did you participate in the Rome Program?
2. Why were you interested in participating in this mid-length study abroad program?

Academic/Intellectual Background

1. What was your level of Italian language proficiency before going?
 - How did it change?
2. Do you feel that your time abroad improved your language proficiency?
 - Which area (listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing) was impacted the most?
 - What activities impacted the specific area the most?
3. How has the academic experience in Rome differed than your academic experience in the US?
4. Did the semester in Rome impact your academic development?
5. In what ways did the Rome Program affect what you might like to study in the future?

Global Perspective

1. How would you describe your international experience before the Rome semester?
2. If you traveled abroad prior to the Rome Program, where to and for how long?
3. How immersed were you in the Italian culture during the Rome semester?
 - How could you have benefited more in terms of immersion from your time in Rome?
 - What activities had the most effect on your cultural immersion?
4. Did you experience any changes about how you think of the US?
 - Of the world in general?

Career Aspirations

1. What was your major/concentration at the time of participating in the Rome Program?
2. What is your major/concentration now?
3. Explain how the semester abroad has impacted your career aspirations?
 - Your education goals?

4. What types of future international involvement do you hope to be involved in after spending a semester abroad?

Spiritual Growth

1. The Rome Program includes the Vatican and other religious components. In what ways did the experience change your religious or spiritual feelings?
2. Tell me about how you noticed the changes in your spiritual changes.
3. Have you noticed a difference since returning to Texas?

Conclusion

1. What advice would you give someone considering participating in the Rome Program?
2. Describe an area that was affected by the semester abroad than the four listed above.
3. How did the mid-length study abroad program meet your expectations of study abroad?
4. How was the Rome Program different than what you expected?
5. What advice would you give someone considering participating in the Rome Program?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I can assure you that your responses will be confidential. Future interviews may be necessary.

REFERENCES

- Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Act of 2006, S.3744, 109th Congress, 2nd session. (2006.)
- Astin, A.W., Astin, H.S., & Lindholm, J.A. (2011). *Cultivating the spirit: How college can enhance students' inner lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bolen, M. (2001). Consumerism and U.S. study abroad. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 5, 182-200.
- Bowman, J.E. (1987). *Educating American undergraduates abroad. The development of study abroad programs by American colleges and universities*. New York: Council on International Educational Exchange.
- Braskamp, L. A., Braskamp, D. C., & Merrill, K. C. (2009). Assessing progress in global learning and development of students with education abroad experiences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 101-118.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101
- Carlson, J. S., Burn, B. B., Useem, J., & Yachimowicz, D. (1990). *Study abroad: The experience of American undergraduates in Western Europe and the United States*. New York: Council on International Educational Exchange
- Carlson, J. S., & Widaman, K. F. (1988). The effects of study abroad during college on attitudes toward other cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 12(1), 1-17. DOI: 10.1016/0147-1767(88)90003-X
- Chieffo, L. & Griffiths, L. (2004). Large scale assessment of student attitudes after a short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 165-177.
- Chow, P. & Bhandari, R. (2010). *Open Doors 2010 report on international educational exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education.
- Chow, P. & Villarreal, A. (2011). *IIE/Forum on education abroad survey of study abroad enrollments during academic year 2010/11*. New York: Institute of International Education.
- Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Detweiler, R., Welna, C., & Anderson, W. (2008). *Liberal education and study abroad: Assessing learning outcomes to improve program quality* [White Paper]. Retrieved from

http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2008_liberal%20education%20and%20study%20abroad.pdf.

- Dolby, N. (2004). Encountering an American self: Study abroad and national identity. *Comparative Education Review*, 48(2), 150.
- Dwyer, M.M., (2004). Charting the impact of study abroad. *International Educator*, 13(1), 14-20.
- Dwyer, M.M., & Peters, C.K. (2004). The benefits of study abroad. *Transitions Abroad*, 27(5), 56-57.
- Engle, L. & Engle, J. (2003). Study abroad levels: Towards a classification of program types. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 9, 1-20.
- Fischer, K. (2010). U. of Minnesota integrates study abroad into the curriculum. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 56(29), A26-A27.
- Forum on Education Abroad. (2011). *Standards of good practice for education abroad* (4th ed). Carlisle, PA: Dickinson College.
- Gore, J.E. (2005). *Dominant beliefs and alternative voices: Discourse, belief, and gender in American study abroad*. New York: Routledge.
- Ingraham, E.C. & Peterson, D.L. (2004). Assessing the impact of study abroad on student learning at Michigan State University. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 83-100.
- Institute of International Education. (1964). *Open doors*. New York, N.Y: Institute of International Education.
- Institute of International Education. (2011). *Fall 2010 online survey indicates that study abroad numbers are rebounding* [press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/en/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2010/2010-11-15-Fall-2010-Study-Abroad-Snapshot-Survey>
- Jones-Ridders, C.G., & Douglas, C. (2001). The relationship between study abroad programs and worldmindedness: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 13(1), 55-66.
- Kauffman, N.L. & Kuh, G.D. (1984). *The impact of study abroad on personal development of college students*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED245591.pdf>
- Kehl, K., & Morris, J. (2007). Differences in global-mindedness between short-term and semester-long study abroad participants at selected private universities. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 67-79.

- King, N. & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Kitsantas, A. (2004). Studying abroad: The role of college students' goals on the development of cross cultural skills and global understanding. *College Student Journal*, 38, 441-452.
- Kitsantas, A., & Meyers, J. (2001). *Studying abroad: Does it enhance college student cross-cultural awareness?* Paper presented at the combined Annual Meeting of the San Diego State University and the U.S. Department of Education Centers for International Business Education and Research, San Diego, CA. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED456648.pdf>
- Kneale, P. (2008). Getting the best from an international year. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 32(2), 337-345.
- Kowarski, I. (2010). Colleges help students to translate the benefits of study abroad. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 56(41), A21-A22.
- Lincoln Commission. (2005). *Global competence and national needs: One million Americans studying abroad*. Final Report from the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Fellowship Program, Washington, DC.
- Marcum, J.A., & Roochnik, D. (2001). What direction for study abroad? 2 views. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 47(36), 7-10.
- McCabe, L. (1994). The development of a global perspective during participation in Semester at Sea: A comparative. *Educational Review*, 46(3), 275.
- McKeown, J.S. (2009). *The first time effect: The impact of study abroad on college student intellectual development*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- McLeod, M., & Wainwright, P. (2009). Researching the study abroad experience. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13(1), 66-71.
- McMurtrie, B. (2008). Fulbright emphasizes diversity among its fellows. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55(9), A23.
- Meredith, M. (2008). *Diamonds, gold, and war: The British, the Boers, and the making of South Africa*. Jackson, TN: PublicAffairs.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass
- Miller-Perrin, C., & Thompson, D. (2010). The development of vocational calling, identity, and faith in college students: A preliminary study of the impact of study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 19, 87-103.

- Mistretta, W. (2008) *Life-enhancing: An exploration of the long term effects of study abroad*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (Publication No. AAT 3320555).
- Murphy, C. (2006). A year of education abroad. *International Educator*, 15(1), 2.
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (2003). *Securing America's future: Global education for a global age*. Retrieved from http://www.nafsa.org/uploadedFiles/NAFSA_Home/Resource_Library_Assets/Public_Policy/securing_america_s_future.pdf?n=3894
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (2009). Senator Paul Simon study abroad foundation act. Retrieved from <http://www.nafsa.org/simon>.
- Norris, E., & Gillespie, J. (2008). How study abroad shapes global careers: Evidence from the United States. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13(3), 382-397.
- Norris, E.M., & Steinberg, M. (2008). Does language matter? The impact of language of instruction on study abroad outcomes. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 107-131.
- Obst, D., Bhandari, R., & Witherell, S. (2007). *Meeting America's global education challenge: Current trends in U.S. study abroad & the impact of strategic diversity initiatives* [White paper]. Retrieved from http://www.iienetwork.org/file_depot/0-1000000/0-10000/1710/folder/62450/IIE+Study+Abroad+White+Paper+I.pdf.
- Orahood, T., Kruze, L., & Pearson, D.E. (2004). The impact of study abroad on business students' career goals. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10(7), 117-130.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE
- Praetzel, G.D., Curcio, J., & DiLorenzo, J. (1996). Making study abroad a reality for all students. *International Advances in Economic Research*, 2(2), 174-182.
- Redden, E. (2009, May 5). Study abroad plus. *Inside Higher Ed*. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/05/11/abroad>
- Rexeisen, R. J., Anderson, P. H., Lawton, L., & Hubbard, A. C. (2008). Study abroad and intercultural development: A longitudinal study. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 171-20.
- Rhodes Trust. (n.d.). <http://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/page/about>

- Sandell, E. (2007). Impact of international education experiences on undergraduate students. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 73(4), 12-39.
- Schroth, T.L. (2010). *Student perspectives on study abroad: The case of Louisiana state's university summer internships in the French Alps*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Louisiana State University. Baton Rouge, LA.
- Sears, Susan. (1982). A definition of career guidance terms: A national vocational guidance perspective. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 31, 137-143.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to methods*. London: SAGE.
- Steinberg, M. (2002). Involve me and I will understand: Academic quality in experiential programs abroad *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 207-229.
- Stroud, A. H. (2010). Who plans (not) to study abroad? An examination of U.S. student intent. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 14, 491-507.
doi:10.1177/1028315309357942
- Sutton, R.C., & Rubin D.L. (2004). The GLOSSARI project: Initial findings from a system-wide research initiative on study abroad outcomes. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 65-82.
- Themudo, D., Page, D., & Benander, R. (2007). Student and faculty perceptions of the impact of study abroad on language acquisition, culture shock, and personal growth. *AURCO Journal*, 13, 65-79.
- University of Dallas. (2011) *University of Dallas bulletin 2011-2012*. Irving, TX: University of Dallas.
- Young, D.Y. (2008). Persistence at a liberal arts university and participation in a study abroad program. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 93-110.