HOW A WRAP-AROUND, COHORT MODEL SUPPORTS

UNDERREPRESENTED, FIRST-TIME WOMEN TRAVELERS IN THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

the School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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June 26, 2018

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Studies

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University of Pittsburgh, 2018

This dissertation examines the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. The VIH Program is a cohort-based, wrap-around (predeparture and reentry) curricular model designed specifically for underrepresented students from fifteen institutions. International education data illustrates that the following populations are underrepresented in study abroad: Pell Grant recipients, STEM majors, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ students, students registered with their institution's Disability Office, as well as first-time travelers. Literature substantiates that networks and cohorts can empower underrepresented groups, yet the majority of U.S. institutions offer predeparture and reentry programmatic options aimed at the individual. By conducting a series of three focus groups with underrepresented, invested graduates of the VIH Program, a series of best practices around a wrap-around cohort model were gleaned. Four key implications for practice emerge from this study. 1) The wrap-around cohort model contributes to the development of underrepresented students' cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal learnings. 2) The wrap-around cohort model has the potential to not only develop our students' global perspectives but also to fine-tune their ability to navigate diversity domestically. 3) International educators need to not only increase compositional diversity but also empower underrepresented students through culturally responsive

pedagogical practices. 4) Inter-institutional collaborations can provide fertile ground for supporting underrepresented students. This study demonstrates that underrepresented students' intersectional identities inform their international experiences, and that a wrap-around cohort model supports them in the development of the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions of their global perspectives. Future research on the cohort model is needed to further position underrepresented students to enhance their global perspectives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

An African proverb affirms that it takes a village to raise a child. The heart of this proverb is that the collective, and not the individual, that shapes a child's lived experiences and values. In many ways, the same is true of a dissertation. While an individual puts words to paper, these words would not be the same without constructive, iterative feedback, lively and sometimes heated debates, and of course the priceless words of support and encouragement of friends, family, and colleagues. To say that I am indebted to many is an understatement. As such, I wish to sincerely thank my colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh and the Campus Coordinators at the 15 VIH institutions who remind me on a daily basis why it is we do what we do. I could not have asked for a more invested Doctoral Committee; Dr. Mike Lovorn, Dr. Belkys Torres, and Dr. Jean Ferketish held me to exceptionally high standards, primarily by compelling me to examine and to deconstruct my own biases. Jean, along with Dr. Angi Yucas, Carol Larson, and Dr. Stan Thompson have, for the past ten years, invested in me through their mentorship, sponsorship, and indeed, friendship. The example that these intelligent and kind individuals set is inspirational on so many levels. I am so grateful for the support of my mom, my dad, and my brother Stephen as well as all of my friends, both in the U.S. and abroad. In particular, Dr. Diana Gómez and Jessica Sun have spent countless hours both encouraging me and pushing me intellectually to consider intersectionality, inclusion, identity, and language both within and outside of the context of international education. Finally, I am deeply indebted to my students, the VIH awardees. Their investment in each other and in the VIH community serves as a daily reminder that knowledge development must be in function of creating a more just, inclusive educational system.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   PROBLEM AREA

Over the course of the past 15 years, the field of international education has undergone three major structural changes. First, there has been an increase on discipline-centered programs over a previous focus on language and culture-centered programs. Second, the landscape of international programming has overwhelmingly shifted from year and semester experiences to a short-term, or less than eight-week experience abroad. Finally, the number of students who study abroad has tripled, to encompass almost 10 percent of all students in higher education. These structural changes mark the advent of the current paradigm in international education: the experiential paradigm (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). Moreover, these three structural changes within international education are situated against the backdrop of even broader seismic paradigm shift, or what Deardorff, De Wit, and Heyl (2012) refer to as the emerging landscape of global education and global learning.

While the increase in the number of students studying abroad is applauded by those both inside and outside of the international education sector, numbers and percentages in the aggregate conceal trends about who is studying abroad and what they are gaining from the experience. In a report published by the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), S. Twombly, Salisbury, and Tumanut (2012) outline the four primary functions of study abroad: a) enhancing

curricular knowledge; b) deepening intercultural skills or developing their global perspectives; c) developing career-readiness; and, d) personal student development. While all four of these rationales are powerful, this research concerns itself with the development of global perspectives. L. A. Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill (2009) disaggregated the concept of a global perspective into three dimensions: cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal and defined the concept as "the disposition and capacity for a person to think with complexity taking into account multiple perspectives (the cognitive dimension of global learning and development), to form a unique sense of self that is value based and authentic (the intrapersonal dimension), and to relate to others with respect and openness especially with those who are not like her (the interpersonal dimension)." The GPI was selected as the framework for this research because it is both a developmental framework for students as well as an assessment tool.

Curricular models and pedagogical practices around developing students' knowledge, – in this case their global perspectives – have historically largely been a function of power and privilege. In his writings, French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu examined the ways in which overt and hidden curriculum along with pedagogical practices contribute to the legitimization and reproduction of social inequalities (Murphy & Costa, 2015). Bourdieu argued that society disproportionately values the knowledge of the upper classes. Pinar (2012)'s exploration of curricula as a series of conversations adds another layer to the discussion. He wrote that knowledge and lived experiences of those taking part in the conversations set the tone of and direction for what different ways of knowing are valued. What is included and what is excluded in the conversations is, in no small part, determined by the participants.

So, who is included in these conversations? Or perhaps stated in a more nuanced way, who has more recently been invited to participate? Broadening our gaze from international education

to higher education, Schugurensky (2007) notes that "[i]n the twenty-first century, higher education systems continue the trend toward institutional diversification…the typical student of several decades ago (male, upper class, and young) is no longer the norm, as women, minority groups, and mature students have entered the system in increasing numbers" (p. 293). Paralleling these trends in higher education, international education has also historically catered to upper-class, white male students in the humanities and the social sciences.

As the number of U.S. American universities seek to increase enrollment in study abroad programs, the number of women who partake in study abroad currently outpaces the number of their male counterparts. While the upswing in compositional diversity of women in both higher education and international education is a positive development, a slightly higher rate of participation of women does not necessarily translate into a redistribution of power from men to women. We must be mindful of the degree to which increased rates of participation translate into a change in lived experiences, within the context of the university and beyond. Compositional diversity is but the first step in this equation. Carving out space for marginalized voices to affect change is a necessary next step. The need for increased participation rates to translate into a deep-rooted change in our daily lived experiences has been most recently articulated, and indeed demanded, by grassroots social movements, such as #MeToo and the 2017 Women's Marches throughout the United States.

Moreover, and of equal importance, within these bifurcated groupings of men and women, there are a variety of underrepresented populations. Underrepresented represented students in international education include: Pell Grant recipients, STEM majors, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA students, and students registered with their institutions' Disability Offices. First-time travelers, as defined as students who have never left the country, are a particular underrepresented

group of students. However, their lack of international travel experience is but one facet of their identities. There is ample evidence that first-time travelers are also first-generation college students, have the highest level of demonstrable financial need as evidenced by receiving a Pell Grant, have never been on an airplane, and have parents who have limited, at best, travel experience. International educators must resist any knee-jerk, reductionist tendencies, and be mindful of the inherent and nuanced complexity of primary and secondary identity domains. For example, the number of students of color who receive a Pell Grant is disproportionally higher than the number of white students who receive a Pell Grant. What of the Latina who is a heritage speaker majoring in a STEM field? The woman in a wheelchair; (i.e., registered with her institution's disability office) who is also a first-generation college student and Pell grant recipient? The bisexual African-American woman?

In positioning underrepresented, first-time women travelers to develop their global perspectives, international education need to take into consideration the dynamics of intersectionality. Sociologists and co-authors of the book 'Intersectionality,' Collins and Bilge (2016) define the concept of the same name as: "[a] way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world…When it comes to social inequality, peoples' lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class but by many axes that work together and influence each other" (p. 3). This definition illustrates the need to deepen our understanding of how multiple forms of oppression work in tandem and how a holistic lens based on interconnectivity, as well as programs and policies derived from this lens, are necessary to effect change.

Simply put, underrepresented students, as understood as the above-mentioned groups, do not study abroad at the same rate as their peers. The theory of stereotype threat and domain

4

identification position us to unravel how identity complicates international experiences. Domain identification constitutes a theoretical framework harnessed to explain and combat achievement barriers faced by minority groups. A lack of identification with the subject matter or a lack of feeling of belonging as well as societal pressures on minority groups result in internalized stereotypes and these dual societal and psychological barriers can pose challenges that result in a range of less-than-ideal outcomes, from suboptimal performance to the outright withdrawal from the domain (Steele, 1997, p. 613). The application of domain identification to underrepresented, first-time women travelers in international education helps us to understand trends of participation, or more accurately put, lack of participation. It also reframes our thinking around increasing the number of underrepresented first-time women travelers from simply employing different marketing strategies to these groups to positioning them to deconstruct stereotype threat and to develop their global perspectives while abroad through a cohort-based, wrap-around programming model. Literature is abound as to how networks, cohorts, and groups can advance the interests of underrepresented groups such as women (Bowen, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Weaver, 1997). My research examines the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. The wrap-around cohort model on the effect of the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers is an underexplored area of international education, and as such, will contribute to nascent efforts in this area.

1.2   INQUIRY CONTEXT & SETTING

The Study Abroad Office (SAO) at the University of Pittsburgh is included in the Institute for International Education's (IIE) list of the top thirty institutions who send the most students abroad. The Study Abroad Office sends over 1,800 students abroad per year and has 15 full-time study abroad employees as well as several interns. It offers dozens of programs on six continents, the majority of which are short-term or summer programs.

The Vira I. Heinz (VIH) Program for Women in Global Leadership is housed within the University of Pittsburgh's Study Abroad Office (SAO) and constitutes the context for this research project. VIH is a one-year program exclusively for first-time women travelers, the majority of whom are underrepresented students. Currently, it is administratively housed at the University of Pittsburgh and operates at fifteen institutions across Pennsylvania. It is a legacy program funded by The Heinz Endowments, meaning that its continuation is mandated according to the will of the namesake of the program, Vira I. Heinz. The impetus of the program stems from the first international travel experiences of Vira Heinz. She was so moved by what she referred to as 'the transformational impact of foreign travel,' that in 1954 she started a scholarship fund as a means to empower women with no previous international travel to develop cultural and linguistic competencies.

In 2008, what was a simple study abroad scholarship became, in collaboration with The Heinz Endowments, a comprehensive leadership development program for first-time women travelers: the VIH Program. Ten years have passed since the VIH Scholarship became the VIH Program. Within the framework of this new model, an annual cohort of 45 students from 15 institutions across the state partake in the four-component program: a spring predeparture retreat, a funded summer international experience, a fall reentry retreat, and a Community Engagement

6

Experience (CEE). The curriculum of the two retreats centers on developing first-time women travelers' global perspectives through experiential activities, peer feedback and discussion, and built-in time for reflection.

The students admitted into the VIH Program are referred to as VIH awardees. Currently, awardees are selected from a variety of institutions such as: Lincoln University, Arcadia University, Temple University, the University of Pittsburgh at Oakland, the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Duquesne University, Chatham University, Carlow University, Robert Morris University, Thiel College, Waynesburg University, and Washington and Jefferson College. While some cohort programs center on having the cohort members partake in the same international experience, the VIH Program is unique in that the shared experience of the cohort members is the wrap-around programming: the pre-departure and the re-entry retreats. However, it is extremely rare for two VIH awardees to study abroad on the same program because of a structured holistic, developmental advising period that positions the awardees to select study abroad experiences that are a function of their own unique personal goals, academic interests, and professional pursuits.

It is important to emphasize that the VIH Program is exclusively open to women with no previous international experience, and substantial effort is placed on recruiting first-time women travelers who are also underrepresented in one of five ways: race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, LGBTQIA+, a STEM major, and registered with their disability office. Marketing and advising are a function of a very intentional design. While the demographics of the awardees in the VIH Program are driven by the provisions of the grant, there are far broader learnings around implications for future practice in the entire field of international education.

Cohort models in international education tend to be a function of a group-based study abroad experience. In other words, the students travel to a study abroad site together, take classes together, travel on excursions together, and live together. The cohort model is synonymous with the on-site, study abroad experience. The VIH cohort model flips the equation on its head. VIH awardees do not travel, live, or study together. The VIH cohort, and its accompanying sense of community and belonging, is derived from its 'wrap-around nature:' pre-departure and reentry programming. As opposed to analyzing the impact of a cohort model of an onsite study abroad program, my study builds on these findings by examining the effect of a wrap-around cohort model.

1.3   STAKEHOLDERS

There are three primary groups of stakeholders in this study: a) underrepresented, first-time women travelers, b) University of Pittsburgh international educators, and c) senior staff at both the University of Pittsburgh and The Heinz Endowments; i.e., those in positions of decision-making power. Given their lack of previous engagement within the sphere of international education, underrepresented, first-time women travelers are a vulnerable population, and as such, merit international educators' special consideration in determining how best to position them to develop their global perspectives. Study abroad offices and international educators who choose to embrace this task are confronted with structural, institutional, and cultural barriers. Perhaps one of the most underrecognized structural barriers is the very dearth of a tradition of underrepresented, first-time women travelers partaking in international experiences. To elaborate, the absence of role models

who emulate the behavior of globalizing one's education constitutes a psychological barrier that must be overcome in order to empower members of this group to study abroad.

Even when robust marketing and advising practices are in place for underrepresented students, study abroad offices must question the degree to which they are adequately preparing these students to develop their global perspectives while abroad. Finally, senior administration of both institutions of higher education as well as in philanthropic and charitable foundations, need to be invested and vocal stakeholders not only of expanding programming of international experiences for underrepresented populations but also in ensuring that these students are well-positioned to develop their global perspectives as a result of these experiences. Table 1 below outlines both the optimal outcomes as well as the risk, or opportunity cost, for these three stakeholders.

Table 1: Stakeholders: Challenges & Goals

Stakeholder	Relationship to the Issue	Optimal Outcome	Opportunity Cost
Underrepresented, first-time women travelers	Currently do not study abroad at the same rate as their peers	Develop cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions of their global perspectives	Overcoming financial and psychological barriers to entry, including family buy-in, and opportunity cost.
University of Pittsburgh international educators	Currently focus on logistics and health and safety predeparture preparation	Create programmatic options that develop the global	The inclusion of wrap-around, cohort-based programmatic options

Table 1 continued

		perspectives of underrepresented groups.	requires personnel, time, talent, and buy-in
The Heinz Endowments / Senior Administrators at institutions of higher education in international education	Currently, set the vision for international education; determine whether to endorse tradition or empower underrepresented groups	Establish an organizational culture that values the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented students	Allocating support for the development of global perspectives of underrepresented students implies an opportunity cost of diverting resources from other endeavors.

Table Adapted from Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009).

Currently, the majority of U.S. institutions provide pre-departure and reentry programmatic options that come in a 'one-size-fits-all' format. This curricular framework tends to center primarily on logistical, health, and safety information. In other words, students, regardless of level of experience and irrespective of their different identity domains, tend to receive the same pre-departure and reentry information. First-time underrepresented women travelers are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their more well-travelled counterparts in that their first international experience often constitutes their first encounter with 'the other,' at least outside of national borders. Underrepresented students need tools and support in order to develop their global perspectives. Ensuring that our logistics-oriented pre-departure sessions and career-oriented re-entry sessions deliberately carve out space for cohort-based curricular activities will empower

underrepresented students to enhance their global perspectives. This, along with deconstructing dominant narratives in the field of international education, will position underrepresented students to overcome Steele's Stereotype Threat (1997).

1.4   PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

The problem of practice in this study is not understanding how a wrap-around cohort model for underrepresented, first-time women travelers supports the development of their global perspectives. This lack of understanding limits the opportunity to maximize the learning in this cohort group as well as to apply this program design to other study abroad groups. This research examines the impact of this curricular model on the following dimensions of a global perspective of underrepresented, first-time women travelers: the cognitive, the interpersonal, and the intrapersonal. Implicit, explicit, and null curricula, along with pedagogical practices, have historically been a function of power and privilege, and they have contributed to the reproduction of social, political, and economic inequalities in educational systems, including international education. Underrepresented students in international education: Pell Grant recipients, STEM majors, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA students as well as first-time travelers, do not study abroad at the same rate as their peers. Yet identity is multifaceted, nuanced, situational, complicated, and intersectional, and a given student's identity comprises multiple identity domains. The theories of stereotype threat and domain identification position us to unravel how intersectional identities inform international experiences of underrepresented students. They also challenge us to reframe our thinking around compositional diversity, or simply increasing the number of underrepresented students who partake in international education. Rather, our task is to

holistically examine the entire study abroad process to the end of positioning underrepresented students to deconstruct stereotype threat and to develop their global perspectives. As such, this research does not concern itself with merely increasing the number of underrepresented students. Rather, it builds on previous literature attesting as to how networks and cohorts can advance the interests of underrepresented groups. The wrap-around cohort model has the potential to serve as an example for other study abroad programs, as well as other co-curricular activities, at the University of Pittsburgh and throughout the United States.

Over the course of the past 15 years, the field of international education has undergone three major changes. First, the majority of study abroad programmatic offerings are discipline-centered, as opposed to language and culture-centered. Second, while study abroad used to be conceptualized as an academic-year experience, the landscape of international programming is now dominated by short-term, primarily summer experiences. Finally, the number of students who study abroad has tripled. It is important to contextualize these changes within international education against the backdrop of broader trends in global education.

These structural changes impact different groups in different ways, and these evolving dynamics are of particular importance to underrepresented, first-time women travelers. While increasing numbers of international educators are questioning how identity complicates study abroad, their responses typically focus on access, or marketing, and not as much on quality, or pre-departure and reentry programming. In fact, the majority of study abroad programmatic offerings at major study abroad sending institutions do not provide wrap-around programming specifically for underrepresented students, let alone underrepresented first-time women travelers. While participation of underrepresented groups in study abroad programs has increased slightly, it is important to evaluate how international educators can ensure that underrepresented, first-time

women travelers are well-positioned to develop their global perspectives, pre, during, and post-study abroad. My problem area is mitigating stereotype threat for underrepresented, first-time women travelers through a cohort-based, wrap-around program. This study is significant because it will contribute to the understanding of how underrepresented, first-time women travelers work together in a cohort model through wrap-around programming to develop the three dimensions of their global perspectives: the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The concept of a global perspective is explained in depth in Chapter 2 as well as in Appendix 1.

1.5   INQUIRY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the cognitive dimension of their global perspectives?

2) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the interpersonal dimension of their global?

3) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the intrapersonal dimension of their global perspectives?

I will interpret my findings according to the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions of a global perspective, and I will synthesize my findings across these three research questions.

1.6   POSITIONALITY

In my current role as the Director of the VIH Program, I oversee the following processes at all of the 15 VIH institutions: marketing to underrepresented groups; interview committees; holistic, developmental advising; processing of all financial purchases and the submission of back-up documentation; financial reporting and stewardship to The Heinz Endowments; logistics, curriculum design and facilitation at the two retreats as well as the campus coordinators meetings; the oversight of the design and execution of the CEEs; presentations at national and international conferences; as well as the mentoring of both VIH Campus Coordinators and the VIH awardees. As such, I personally have worked with the past ten cohorts of students, or about 450 VIH awardees, and have access to both them and data around their experiences in the VIH Program. To this endeavor, I bring international experiences on five continents, study abroad experiences in England (one year), Mexico (six weeks), Costa Rica (one semester), Chile (one semester), and Brazil (eight weeks), as well as research experience in El Salvador (five weeks) and Colombia (five weeks), work experiences in Venezuela (11 months) and Mexico (three months), as well as language development in both Spanish and Portuguese.

This research was inspired by my educational experience as a Pell Grant recipient as well as my past ten years of work experience in the field of international education. My personal, academic, and professional experiences in higher education generally, and the field of study abroad specifically, have taught me that far too frequently institutions of higher education serve to reproduce structures of power and privilege rather than to dismantle and redistribute them. Critical theorist Nieto (2005) affirms that inequality is a function of "differences in race, ethnicity, social class, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and exceptionality, among others…" (p. 43). In order to counter gaps in educational achievement, we as educators need to reevaluate how our

curricular frameworks – explicit, implicit, and null - serve to empower or exclude diverse groups of students as well as how we position them to navigate their intersectional identities (Milner, 2015).

My interest in issues of identity, intersectionality, equity, and empowerment, in part, stem from the examples that colleagues, mentors, students, and friends have set. Through their actions, they have shown how reevaluating our pedagogical practices can successfully uproot and work to reverse deeply-engrained systems of power and privilege. In analyzing the literature as well as in drawing on my own experiences in international education, I have explored the importance of a cohort-based, wrap-around programmatic option for underrepresented, first-time women travelers. My experiences have taught me that international educators can better serve students of diverse backgrounds, and to this end, I want to draw attention to the need to think more creatively about more inclusive pedagogical practices around a cohort model. My beliefs are three-fold:

- I believe that the three dimensions of the GPI: the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, matter for underrepresented, first-time women travelers.

- I believe that underrepresented students prepare for international experiences well in a group, or a cohort model, and I believe that these three dimensions of the GPI are enhanced in a cohort model.

- I believe that past awardees and current cohort members have a positive impact on the development of these three dimensions, in particular, on identity development and cultural learnings, in a cohort model.

2.0   REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

My literature review will examine the following topics: 1) study abroad paradigm shifts, against the backdrop of the shift from international to global education; 2) identity and intersectionality within the context of the current paradigm; 3) dominant discourses; 4) relevant terminology and assessment tools; and 5) curricular interventions, before, during, and after the study abroad experience. I am limiting the exploration of these arguably broad topics in this literature review to the context of international education. While broad historical trends are briefly detailed, each section focuses the bulk of the discussion on the contemporary paradigm. The exploration of identity and intersectionality in section 2 is limited to underrepresented groups in international education, although these phenomena are considered against the backdrop of domain identification and critical theories. Section 3 exclusively examines three dominant discourses: expectations around transformation and immersion; the cultural 'other,' and the homogenization of the subject. While several terms and assessment tools are outlined in section 4, I limit my overview to the terms that are most relevant to my study. Section 5 constitutes a survey of interventions in student learnings, in terms of predeparture, onsite, and reentry curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the cohort model. I conclude Chapter 2 by reiterating key insights that constitute an overarching framework for this research.

2.2   OVERVIEW OF PARADIGM SHIFTS IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The term international education within the U.S. context traces its roots back to curricula changes implemented by religious and private schools in the 1860s. Within the relatively young field of international education, there have been three eras or paradigms: the positivist paradigm, the relativist paradigm, and the experiential paradigm (Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012). The positivist era, encapsulating the time period between roughly 1950 and 1985, was marked by the proclivity of sending excellent, primarily male, students with excellent grades and a solid foundation in a given foreign language to a 'civilized' and 'cultured' country in Western Europe. Reilly and Senders (2009) refer to study abroad in this first era as the "Grand Tour" during which the elitist nature of international experiences served as a means to reinforce divisions between worldly individuals, primarily men, and those who lacked 'cultured' knowledge; that is, social classes.

Against the backdrop of the international politics of the Cold War, 80 years later, the U.S. Department of Education became a key driver of international education. National Resource Centers (NRCs), Higher Education Title VI centers, and Area Studies Centers were created with the aim of sending students to study abroad. Study abroad students were charged with the task of developing knowledge of international affairs, foreign languages, and regional cultural expertise to the end of promoting world peace and containing communism. Complementary, non-academic programs such as Peace Corps and Fulbright were created with similar aims. *International* rather than *global* education was a crucial linguistic distinction that was promoted in accordance with U.S. Cold War foreign policy objectives. While *international* is used to denote a specific geographic area, *global* refers to humanitarian, economic, and environmental themes (Reilly & Senders, 2009). The distinction is not merely semantics, as it had far-reaching implications for its use in achieving the above-mentioned U.S. foreign policy objectives.

By the end of the Cold War, the field of international education transitioned from the positivist to the relativist paradigm. The dual beliefs that: a) all cultures are equal and b) that cultural acclimation constituted the intellectual engine of an international experience, defined the relativist paradigm (Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012). Study abroad was still largely conceptualized as an academic year experience in another country. While a still extremely small percentage of students took part in international experiences, those who did so overwhelmingly tended to, under the auspices of their home institutions, direct-enroll in foreign universities and partake in homestays abroad. Funding streams, of course, played into this programmatic choice. Yet students studying abroad within the relativist paradigm operated without the structure and support of present-day study abroad offices. Of their own volition, they developed goals to 'internationalize' their education; they understood the value of language development prior to the international experience; and they were largely self-sufficient, intrepid, and savvy in their navigation of foreign institutions and cross-cultural challenges.

As a function of student experiences during the relativist paradigm, an overarching narrative around cultural immersion formed and was subsequently reinforced. These students 'immersed' themselves in the host culture, to the best of their ability, to the end of being 'transformed' (Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012). While the original author of the term 'transformed' remains unknown, the term's incorporation into mainstream vocabulary set a new standard for college students and spurred them to set their sights on 'transformation' through international experiences.

Towards the end of the relativist and at the beginning of the experiential paradigms, Vande Berg, Paige, et al. (2012) question the degree to which students "meaningfully develop either through simple exposure to the environment or through having educators take steps to increase the

amount of that exposure through 'immersing' them" (p. 21). As increasing numbers of students regurgitated the narrative of transformation, leading influential scholars and interculturalists such as Vande Berg, Quinn, and Menyhart (2012) to adopt an increasingly critical stance towards the concept and accompanying narrative of 'immersion.'

Concomitantly, colleges and universities across the United States began to realize the benefits of study abroad and began to capitalize the soon-to-become oft-cited slogans of 'immersion' and 'transformation.' In the increasingly-commercialized field of international education, study abroad offices and accompanying infrastructure were launched, developed, and expanded. Newly-minted international educators developed a kind of template, blueprint or formula to facilitate students' personal transformation: students were encouraged to engage the locals while abroad; to live in home stays; to directly enroll in foreign universities; and finally to immerse themselves so as to develop their global and cultural competencies (Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2015). These students began to opt for semester or summer programs over an academic year experience, and they increasingly relied on their universities to facilitate the logistics of their international experiences. While Vande Berg, Paige, et al. (2012) acknowledge that some students are able to insert themselves into a new culture with some degree of success, their point of contention is that increasingly greater numbers of students are not able to achieve this particular depth and quality of 'immersion' on their own. This is one of the primary challenges that has shaped the current-day field, and third and final paradigm, in international education: the experiential paradigm.

The principal reasons for this reality are found both outside and inside the field of international education. First, the geography of the U.S. does not bode well for exposing its habitats to other languages and cultures. Second, there is a dearth of sustained, high-quality

19

history, geography, language and culture classes at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, which is coupled by an overarching political narrative that falls short of explicitly valuing global learnings. Third, the way that internationalization is measured at a university level focuses on quantity. Internationalization is defined by S. Twombly et al. (2012) as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education," and study abroad is viewed as a key part of internationalization (p. 12). In fact, a national ranking of U.S. institutions by the Institute of International Education is, in part, a function of the numbers of students that go abroad. No distinction is made as to whether a given student's international experience is two weeks or 10 months in duration, nor are the dynamics or parameters of a given program taken into consideration.

The third and final paradigm in study, the experiential paradigm, is denoted by a decrease in the duration of international experiences, an increase in discipline-centered programs, and an increase in the overall number of students who study abroad. The paradigm shift from the relativist to the experiential paradigm is not only driven by internal actors. As U.S. government funding streams dry up, or shift to other sources, the contemporary culture of and expectations around international education is impacted in several crucial ways. The recent shift in language from international to global underscores the changing ecosystem of now global learning in higher education institutions. University of Pittsburgh Global Studies Center Director Dr. Michael Goodhart is quoted by Nair (2017) in explaining this distinction,

> Global studies is concerned with the transnational. It seeks to identify and understand trends, structures, processes, and interactions that take place across time and space, especially those that cross familiar borders and boundaries – whether political, cultural, or psychological. The 'global' in global studies is not primarily

a geographical marker [as is international]; rather, it designates a focus on the multiplicity of interconnections that affect us, and our social, economic, cultural, political, and ecological environments. Sometimes these effects manifest locally, sometimes nationally, regionally, or across the entire planet. Whatever the case, global studies is primarily a way of thinking about these interconnections (p. 4).

In this shift towards global education and global studies within the experiential paradigm, it is important to distinguish between study abroad and education abroad. The former is defined as education in another country that "results in progress toward an academic degree" whereas the latter is understood more broadly, as "education that occurs outside the participant's home country" (S. Twombly et al., 2012, p. 10). Study abroad is but one form of education abroad. Other outlets for education abroad include: service learning, internships, volunteerism, and international research. Moreover, study abroad has changed in several important ways from the relativist to the experiential paradigm.

With both the positivist and relativist paradigms, study abroad tended to be conceptualized as an academic-year experience, in part as a result of financial incentives aligned with and in function of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The landscape of international programming within the experiential paradigm is now dominated by short-term and/or summer experiences. In fact, less than two percent of all study abroad students spend an academic year abroad, and 63 percent of study abroad programs are short-term, discipline-centered (Institute of International Education, 2016). The often gendered-divide in majors; i.e., more women in the humanities and social sciences and more men in STEM fields, began to have a direct translation into study abroad participation rates, and it was during this paradigm that more women than men started to study abroad.

International educators working strictly within the framework of the experiential paradigm oftentimes view study abroad primarily as a means through which students are able to study a given subject(s) in another country (Parkinson, 2007; Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012). For example, both study abroad program providers and faculty-led programs at universities market international education in terms of specific subjects and disciplines (University Center for International Studies, 2015). This indicates an abrupt departure from the relativist paradigm and marks the advent of the experiential paradigm within the field of international education (Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012).

In addition to the decrease in program duration and the increasing emphasis on discipline-centered programs, a third structural change defines the experiential paradigm: an increase in the number of students studying abroad. According to the U.S. Institute of International Education (2016) Open Doors Report, approximately 130,000 students studied abroad during the academic year of 1998 and 1999. Fifteen years later, by the academic year of 2013-2014, this number has more than doubled to 313,415 (Institute of International Education, 2016). Stated another way, access to study abroad experiences has expanded to almost ten percent of U.S. undergraduate students. The increase in the number of students studying abroad is applauded by those both inside and outside of the international education sector, so much so, in fact, that at the 2014 Council International Educational Exchange (CIEE)'s annual conference, the IIE announced its new goal of reaching 600,000 U.S. Americans studying abroad by the 2017-2018 academic year. The collective response of the vast majority of universities and colleges has been to set specific goals to increase the number of students who are studying abroad. Implicit in this goal is the notion that the higher the number of students taking part in international experiences, the more successful an institution is at internationalizing. As S. Twombly et al. (2012) note, "[b]ecause the literature on

study abroad is so overwhelmingly positive in its tone, sometimes in the face of modest results, we also look to the critiques of study abroad research as well as to the critiques of purpose and experience to examine how insights from these voices might inform the promise of preparing globally competent citizens" (p. 5). The following sections of this Review of Literature present a constructive critique of some aspects of study abroad to the end of making contributions to a larger debate on the direction and content of global education.

2.3   CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF THE EXPERIENTIAL PARADIGM: IDENTITY & INTERSECTIONALITY

There is not a level playing field for all groups of students, in terms of either access to international education or the quality of the experience. As educators, we know that poverty matters. Race matters. Gender matters. Context matters. And our policies impact, in the words of political scientist Lasswell (1936) "who gets what, when and how." While increasing numbers of international educators are questioning how identity complicates study abroad, their responses tend to focus on access to, or marketing for the experience, and not as much on the quality of the experience itself as well as pre-departure and reentry programming to position underrepresented students to prepare for and to process the experience, post-return.

As a means to empower low-income students to study abroad, the U.S. Department of State offers over 4,000 study abroad scholarships, the Benjamin Gilman Scholarship, annually for Pell Grant recipients. Students who receive a Pell Grant as part of their financial aid package have the highest level of financial need, determined primarily by their parents' income. Students with the highest levels of financial need are among the least likely to partake in an international experience

(S. B. Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012). Social class is thus an important example of underrepresentation in study abroad. Moreover, there is a lot of overlap between students who receive a Pell Grant and students who are 'first-time travelers.' For the purpose of this study, the term 'first-time travelers' is defined as an individual who has never left the United States.

However, social class is but one aspect of identity. Identity is multifaceted, nuanced, situational, complicated, and intersectional. Collins and Bilge (2016) explore the complex and entangled nature of intersectionality but remain careful not to exclusively situate their definition of the concept squarely within the parameters of identity theory but rather to situate it against the backdrop of systems of power and privilege. How do these systems of power and privilege reinforce barriers to entry for underrepresented students in international education and how are leaders in the field of international education seeking to address these disparities?

National leaders in the field of international education include the U.S. Department of State-funded Benjamin Gilman Scholarship, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), and Diversity Abroad. There is some overlap in their respective missions. While the VIH Scholarship Program is exclusively for first-time women travelers with a specific emphasis on underrepresented students, the Benjamin Gilman Scholarship is exclusively for Pell Grant Recipients. In addition, special consideration is given by the Gilman Scholarship to Pell Grant recipients who are also of racial or ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA, are registered with their institution's Disability Office, are majoring in a STEM field, or who attend a community college. This policy is in recognition of the fact that a student's, or an individual's, identity comprises both primary and secondary identity domains. In other words, a student can be registered with their institution's Disability Office and also be a 'first-time traveler.' Or, a student can be a racial minority and also be a 'first-time traveler.' Identity, as stated above, is multifaceted, nuanced,

situational, complicated, and intersectional, and rarely does one 'category' capture its complexities for a given individual Collins and Bilge (2016). Likewise, CIEE and Diversity Abroad award millions of dollars of scholarship funds to underrepresented students of the above-mentioned demographics. Other institutional level scholarships, for example, the University of Pittsburgh's Show Them the World Scholarship, also purport to counter barriers to entry in international education for underrepresented students by funding specific underrepresented groups, for example, African Americans. Leading national organizations such as Diversity Abroad, the Gilman Scholarship, and many third-party providers such as CIEE, as well as university-level scholarships such as Show Them the World, recognize this disproportionality in enrollment by underrepresented students in study abroad programs as a structural problem and are investing millions of dollars in scholarship funds as a means of reversing these trends.

This special consideration is warranted, and necessary next steps merit unpacking the multiple and intersectional identities of underrepresented students. Dessoff (2006) explores how interrelated historical, institutional, cultural, and financial circumstances collude to perpetuate barriers to entry in study abroad. In spite of modest increases of racial and ethnic minority enrollment in higher education, racial and ethnic minority participation in study abroad has failed to keep pace (Dessoff, 2006; Lowe, Byron, & Mennicke, 2014; Salisburg, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011; Sweeney, 2013). The challenges that students with disabilities face include a lack of information, lack of encouragement, lack of resources, and a fear of judgment (Twill & Guzzo, 2012). Personal safety and discrimination are among the chief concerns of LGBTQIA students, as noted by Bryant and Soria (2015). Simply put, – and as Figure 1 illustrates – students of color (note: The terms 'students of color' and 'racial and ethnic minorities are used interchangeably),

students with high levels of financial need, LGBTQIA students, and students with disabilities, do not study abroad at the same rate as their peers.

In analyzing the barriers to entry to study abroad for underrepresented students, one is forced to grapple with powerful, and potentially complementary, arguments that do not view a lack of minority participation exclusively through a financial lens. In 'A Threat in the Air,' Steele (1997) puts forth stereotype threat, or

> [a] general theory of domain identification that is used to describe achievement
> barriers…the theory assumes that sustained school success requires identification with
> school and its subdomains; that societal pressures on these groups (e.g., economically
> disadvantaged groups, gender roles) can frustrate this identification (p. 613).

Has the fact that participation by unrepresented students failed to keep pace with their counterparts become internalized? Is this example of disproportionality self-perpetuating? Stated another way, how do stereotypes around access to and success in international education shape (hinder) the possibilities for success of under-represented groups, in particular, unrepresented groups who are also first-time travelers?

In considering education broadly, decades prior, Bourdieu's and Passeron's (1977) writings of habitus, or the "enduring beliefs, attitudes, aspirations, perceptions and values an individual acquires through home and school environments and social class that serve to frame and constrain their choices" provide a useful backdrop to this discussion (p. 204-205). In his writings, French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu examined the ways in which overt and hidden curriculum along with pedagogical practices contribute to the legitimization and reproduction of social inequalities (Murphy & Costa, 2015). Bourdieu argued that society disproportionately values the knowledge, or the capital, of the upper classes. At the most basic level, social class can

be understood as the intersection of education and income but access to credit obfuscates this common denominator definition. All students in higher education are in the process of attaining an advanced degree; yet not all have parallel relationships to "the process in society by which goods, services, and culture are produced" (Anyon, 1980, p. 367). It follows that not all students' cultural capital is valued in the same way.

Critical race theorists and feminist theorists built on Bourdieuean cultural capital theory in asserting that the lived experiences and historical narratives of communities of color and of women are undervalued (Brandon, 2002; Yosso, 2005). How can study abroad practitioners take Bourdieu's ideas into consideration in terms of mitigating inequalities in terms of who studies abroad and who enjoys success in their international experiences? Moreover, how can international educators open up space for underrepresented women to share their experiences with each other, to reaffirm value in these narratives and to explore their own respective cultural capital, and to harness their own realities as a means to position each other to develop their global perspectives? Sweeney (2013) argues that "many institutions concentrate on compositional diversity and fail to take a more comprehensive approach to inclusive excellence," and he cautions us not to "focus on the numbers of diverse students participants [but] rather [focus on] a thorough examination of the entire study abroad process and students' experiences" (p. 3). This danger outlined by Sweeney is amplified, given the shift from the relativist to the experiential paradigm. The previous emphasis on cultural immersion and linguistic development of the relativist paradigm is increasingly overshadowed by the ever-deepening focus on knowledge acquisition within a student's major of the experiential paradigm. While there is value in both endeavors, if the downplay on the acquisition of the cultural knowledge of the host country is complimented by a downplay on the cultural capital (the cultural knowledge, language(s), and (informal) educational

credentials of prospective underrepresented study abroad students), international educators may well run the risk of simply reinforcing stereotype threat.

While the experiential paradigm brought about a most-welcome change in study abroad practitioners employing more inclusive marketing practices, the focus remains on the volume of students studying abroad. Efforts by change agent organizations such as Gilman, Diversity Abroad, and CIEE work to empower underrepresented students to partake in international experiences, primarily through scholarships. There is a need to develop and implement widespread strategies that complement these scholarships and work to position underrepresented students to not only study abroad but also to develop their global perspectives while doing so.

2.4   DOMINANT DISCOURSES IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The current paradigm in the field of international education is shaped by three dominant discourses: a) expectations around transformation and immersion, b) the cultural 'other,' and, c) the homogenization of the subject vs. diverse positionalities. The examination of how these discourses contribute to the current landscape of international education programming is guided by the following questions. How do these discourses inform the mentality of students partaking in study abroad programs? Given the context and parameters of these discourses, to what degree are international educators' decisions regarding program structure and content shaped?

Study abroad providers and offices are in effect pulled in two increasingly diametrically-opposed directions: a) as service providers and b) as international educators. As the identity of students as 'customers' and study abroad as a 'business' further cement, study abroad providers and offices are increasingly expected to provide additional services such as arranging group flights,

purchasing entrance fees to museums and cultural activities, and arranging optional weekend trips. Ogden (2008) warns that as "the duties and responsibilities of the [study abroad] organization keep growing, those of the student decrease" (p. 37). In a world where (almost) anything can be bought, this consumer discourse in which the students are the 'customers' and can demand certain outcomes such as 'immersion' and 'transformation' ultimately set an implicit, and increasingly explicit, tone for their experiences.

The observed and well-documented trend is that students have the expectation of being able to select which parts of the experience – primarily cultural and linguistic – to 'opt out' of, to disregard, or from which to shield themselves. "Rather than immerse themselves into the host community to the extent possible," Ogden (2008) argues, students "embrace the privileges afforded to them as short-term guests. Learning the local language, developing meaningful relationships within the community or exploring the uniqueness of the host culture all become relatively less important…" (p. 38). When this client-service provider relationship, - and the culture of expectations that it reinforces – is situated in the 'big picture' of preparing students to thrive in our globalizing world, international educators are faced with the stark reality that providing too many services for students potentially stunts their personal growth, and yes, ultimately hinders their aspirations of 'transformation' and 'immersion.'

Ogden cautions us to re-center the intellectual and intercultural dimensions of international experiences at the forefront of our programming efforts and not succumb to an elitist and consumerist tendency to over-program and over-provide to the point of depriving our students of agency while they are abroad. He concurs with Ogden and puts out a powerful call to deconstruct this narrative as well as the accompanying infrastructure that perpetuates it. "Education abroad," Ceballos (2013) writes, "[i]s increasingly dominated by the need to offer more and to risk less.

29

Discomfort, stress or excessive challenge must be avoided. Our objectives and our way towards them are decided from the outset, for nothing must hinder the quality and the success of the experience that was promised" (p. 2).

Drawing on his decades-long tenure as a Resident Director for the CIEE Sevilla site, Ceballos' multifaceted call-to-action urges international educators to resist articulating easy-to-measure learning objectives, to stop the over-programming of excursions that ultimately leaves students safe in their own cultural bubble, and to cease the overarching endorsement of generic, tired slogans such as 'global citizenship.' This requires that pre-departure preparation is strengthened with cultural frameworks. The onsite academic components must also be strengthened. Together, these two factors have the potential to effectively combat the lack of nuance in student perspectives, to illuminate the diverse positionalities of a people within a given culture as well as to empower students to engage with 'the cultural other;' in other words, the people of a culture. Discourse has such power, and Ceballos (2013) forewarns that if international educators fail to position their students to appreciate the diversity of mindsets, religions, social classes, races, economic status, students run the risk of, in the case of Ceballos' home country of Spain, labeling the country as a place of "flamenco, siesta, and nice food" (p. 8). These arguments build a powerful case for investing in predeparture programming that clearly establishes the expectation that there is a certain degree of discomfort inherent in international education. In fact, in the absence of such discomfort, student learnings are most likely not advancing past a superficial level. Modeling the behavior of exercising agency while abroad and providing students with tools to do this are important components of pre-departure preparation.

The oversimplification and stereotyping of countries constitute a common concern between Ceballos and international educator Doerr (2013). According to Doerr, the discourse around the

homogenization of the subject results in a homogenization of both territorial units and reinforces the mentality that the home country is globalized while the host country is 'backward.' Ultimately, this discourse creates a new kind of hierarchy that positions the so-called 'worldly' student in a position of intellectual superiority vis-à-vis her unworldly and untraveled cultural 'other.' Building on this argument, Doerr (2013) asserts that this discourse devalues efforts – both on the part of the students themselves as well as from their domestic language and social science professors - to develop students' cultural skills *at home*. As such, it is perhaps a worthwhile exercise to consider how much time and preparation international students who study in the U.S. invest in learning English and developing a heightened sense of awareness of U.S. American cultural values *prior* to stepping foot on US soil. Perhaps it is even fair to assert that the majority of U.S. American students would not be able to pass the equivalent of a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam in the language of the country where they intended to study abroad.

The mutually-reinforcing discourses of immersion, transformation, the 'cultural other,' and homogenization of the subject have far-reaching consequences that raise concerns about international educators' increasing inclination towards a one-size-fits-all pre-departure preparation. It is not uncommon for pre-departure preparation to exclusively center on the logistical and health and safety aspects of study abroad, and any cultural or linguistic preparation is not mandated at an institutional or departmental level but rather decentralized and left to the discretion and political will of the individuals leading the study abroad programs.   As the commodification of study abroad deepens, time, personnel, and resources to structure meaning and specific pre-departure sessions during which students have the opportunity to reflect on issues of personal and cultural identity, values, verbal and nonverbal communication, and the development of global perspectives, both at home and abroad, become scarcer.

2.5   RELEVANT INTERCULTURAL FRAMEWORKS, TERMINOLOGY & ASSESSMENT MEASURES

One of the challenges with doing research in the field of international education is that there is little consensus on which of many concepts are to be assessed as well as how to define all of these concepts. The following section outlines some of the most important terms and concepts on which my study hinges but does not purport to constitute an all-exhaustive review. Rather, the inventory of concepts and assessment tools has a direct bearing on my study, and I am limiting my description of this section as such.

There exist myriad terms that form part of our international education lexicon but whose definitions vary depending on context, experiences, and interpretations (Deardorff, 2011; Woolf, 2015). When a collective understanding of and consensus on when certain terms are used does not exist, it is difficult to operationalize these terms and then measure student growth and the impact of different programmatic options across programs in different countries and cultures. The debate is not merely esoteric; it has far-reaching consequences in terms of pre-departure preparation, program design, duration, location, and learning objectives. When purported gains to students are not clarified, oftentimes reported results and ensuing narratives become increasingly anecdotal.

A nascent wave of new terminology and accompanying assessment tools muddies the water. How much variance is there between terms such as: a) intercultural abilities; b) global citizenship; c) global competencies; d) intercultural sensitivities; e) intercultural competencies; f) cultural awareness; and, g) global perspectives? The effect of international education programs on the above-mentioned terminology, or variables, has been explored by multiple authors and the value of measuring a student's learnings as a means to assess what he or she is taking from a given experience as well as ways to improve the structure of curricula and quality of facilitation is well-

documented (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006; Morais & Ogden, 2011). The literature in this area is vast and extensive. For the purposes of this study, a full exploration of the differences and overlap between these terms will not be provided here. However, a cursory exploration of how some of the most prominent scholars and scholar-practitioners define, operationalize, and measure these terms will be examined.

One of the original voices in this debate is Bennett (1986, 1998) whose pioneering work on culture is widely regarded as one of the most important contributions in the field of international education. M. Bennett (1986) focused in on the term intercultural sensitivity and defined it as an "awareness" of cultural differences. This conceptualization constitutes a type of lowest common denominator in terms of intercultural skill development as it is almost inevitably dependent on what he referred to as the "subjective experience of the learner" (p. 179).

While Bennett was the original author in the conceptualization of intercultural learning along a series of stages in a continuum, his intellectual growth was fueled by fellow scholar-practitioner Hammer. While the two interculturalists collaborated for years, they parted ways over Hammer's (2012) design and promotion of his assessment tool to measure cultural mindsets: the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The IDI is set up as a continuum comprising six cultural mindsets: a) denial, b) polarization, c) reversal, d) minimization, e) acceptance, and f) adaptation. The fifty-item assessment tool includes forty-four quantitative forced-choice questions as well as six qualitative questions.

Evaluating cultural mindsets is a useful endeavor because a key pitfall in international education is that international educators are oftentimes trying to assist students in reaching the stages of 'adaptation' or 'acceptance.' However, if a student is in the stage of 'denial' or 'polarization,' this tool assists international educators with knowing the cultural mindset of their

students and designing curricula accordingly. The downside of this construct is that seldom does one's cultural mindset shift over the course of a short-term experience. In fact, on average it takes two years of sustained and deliberate cultural contact for a cultural mindset shift to occur (Hammer, 2012). In this respect, although the IDI is arguably one of the most visible assessment tools, using it as a pre- and post-test for a study abroad experience falls short of capturing cultural development in the short term.

While Bennett and Hammer were advocating to measure cultural mindsets, Morais and Ogden (2011) proposed a definition of global citizenship – a widely-used but equally widely-contested concept in international education – operationalized the definition, and validated the new construct both qualitatively and quantitatively. Using both qualitative focus group interviews and quantitative questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, the Global Citizenship Scale measures the construct of the same name across social responsibility, global competence, and civic engagement. This is an important contribution to the field of international education as international educators frequently define and use the term global citizenship but rarely do they operationalize their definition and develop an empirically-validated scale that is applicable across a multitude of programmatic options. A strength of this approach is the level of detail in the scale itself: three dimensions and six sub-dimensions of the construct of global citizenship are introduced. A key limitation is the flip side of this level of detail: unless a study abroad program's learning objectives are aligned with these six sub-constructs and three constructs, the instrument is not applicable.

Harvey (2013) borrows from Bennett's original definition of intercultural sensitivity and argues that intercultural competence as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 3). In

34

effect, she collapses Morais and Ogden's (2011) nuanced categories to succinctly define the construct. Her definition is re-expanded by L. Braskamp, Braskamp, and Engberg (2014) in their contribution to the field: a global perspective. A global perspective is an oft-cited term in an international educator's lexicon. In their instrument, the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), L. Braskamp et al. (2014) define a global perspective as "the capacity for a person to think with complexity taking into account multiple perspectives (cognitive), to form a unique sense of self that is value-based and authentic (intrapersonal), and to relate to others with respect and openness especially with those who are not like her (interpersonal)" (p. 102).

This definition is particularly relevant and applicable as it approaches the concept of a global perspective holistically. As one of the most widely-used and respected pre and post assessment tools, the forced-choice answer format of Braskamp et al.'s (2014) GPI gathers quantitative data through a forty question online questionnaire on a Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree scale. Conceptually, the GPI disaggregates the inherently different-to-grasp, esoteric concept of a global perspective into three mutually-exclusive dimensions: (knowledge and knowing), interpersonal (social responsibility and social interactions) and the intrapersonal (identity and affect). This empowers both the international educator and the student to set goals in each of the dimensions, which is a useful developmental tool.

The lack of consensus around competing and overlapping terms is emphasized by Deardorff (2011), as is the fact that certain terms are preferred by certain disciplines. Her own definition of intercultural competence centers on the following attributes or variables: attitudes, knowledge, adaptability, and communication. The effect of international education programs on the above-mentioned terms, concepts or variables has been analyzed in myriad journal articles and book chapters. The definitions included above were designed by some of the most well-respected

interculturalists, however, it must be emphasized that there is no consensus among scholars on how to define, operationalize, and measure these numerous terms.

2.6   CURRICULAR INTERVENTIONS & THE COHORT MODEL

Faced with these dominant discourses, mandates to increase enrollment numbers, and the trend in favor of short-term programs, the literature has responded with different pointed curricular interventions or ways of structuring the environment in which students learn, through pre-departure preparation, on-site curricula, and re-entry programming.   The final section of this literature review will examine some of the most influential, well-respected scholar-practitioner efforts to intervene in student learnings.   It will also present a challenge to pointed curricular interventions for short-term programs offered by one of the leading scholars in the field.   Finally, it will outline what a cohort model is, and it will identify unexplored opportunities to deepen these points of contact for underrepresented, first-time, women travelers by harnessing a cohort-based, wrap-around programmatic option.

The ideas to which Dr. Lilli Engle gave voice to in her keynote address at the 2009 FORUM conference in Boston were particularly thought-provoking, and they challenged current trends in the field of international education. During her tenure as a co-director at French language immersion programs at Marseille and Aix-en-Provence, Engle, alongside her husband and co-author Engle (2012), conducted a longitudinal study spanning almost two decades. In the study, they built on Ogden's (2008) line of reasoning by arguing against simply 'immersing' a student in another culture by advocating for eight well-designed international education programmatic components garnered from their own experiences as professors, administrators, students, and

pioneers in the field. These eight components are: 1) a language pledge; 2) the internet factor; 3) the homestay; 4) the incoming group flight; 5) clear (cultural) behavioral guidelines; 6) student responsibility in relationship building; 7) structured reflections and timely feedback; and, 8) mentoring. The dual purpose of this study was to: a) identify the areas in which international educators can impact student learning; and b) detail 'best practices' within each of these areas (Engle & Engle, 2012). In short, they asserted that in order for students to develop their global perspectives, it is necessary for international educators to set the stage with high expectations and specific, targeted curricula interventions. An intercultural communication course that provided the students with frameworks on "language use, nonverbal behavior, communication style, cognitive style, and cultural values," while also "acting as a forum for self-reflection" was also highlighted as a crucial curricular intervention (Engle & Engle, 2012, p. 298). They describe the course as "front-loaded," which refers to the fact that most of the content was provided in a pre-departure session, or before the students arrived in France during orientation week (p. 299).

Another approach is the Council on International Educational Exchange's (CIEE) Living Learning Seminar, an onsite course designed to provide students with the cultural tools that they need in order to maximize cultural learnings. Developing students' global perspectives was one of the primary goals of the team of CIEE international educators ((Vande Berg, Quinn, et al., 2012). The course balances a culture-specific unit that focuses on the values orientations and communication styles of a given locale with a culture-general component in which students are oriented to cultural continua and cultural concepts. The third and final unit is the sphere of practice "that recognizes that knowledge of content does not automatically translate into mastery of process" (Bennett, 1998, p. 10). This can be conceptualized as the application of cultural-general and cultural-specific knowledge against the backdrop of emotional intelligence and social

dexterity. This course was piloted at over a dozen CIEE study sites throughout the world, and it continues to expand to additional locations. One of its most notable features is the rigorous training that the facilitators and professors undergo as a means to prepare themselves to teach the course. Some scholar-practitioners may well raise concerns about the feasibility and scaleability of training the facilitators and executing these courses. Indeed, analyzing the opportunity cost in any endeavor cannot be far from the minds of administrators and educators. At the end of the day, we must question whether we value the growth and development in our students as a function of the investment in X numbers of hours of training and Y number of hours of workshops.

Deardorff (2011) takes a step back from predeparture programming to analyze trends in evaluating learning objectives as well as reentry programming in the field. While she acknowledges the importance of developing a "process that generates specific measurable outcomes," she argues that a pretest-posttest format has outlived its usefulness (p. 71-72). Specifically, she emphasizes the value of assessment based on students' written reflections during a re-entry component. According to Deardorff (2011), a good start is to give students adequate familiarity with the lexicon of intercultural competence and then have them develop their own learning constructs or objectives. "[R]eflection," she writes, is not only "a rich source of data" but also a powerful medium through which students learn (p. 75).

While only three of literally hundreds of examples of pre-departure courses, on-site curricular interventions, and structured re-entry programmatic options have been explored, these three were deliberately selected given that Engle, CIEE, and Deardorff are all pioneers and leaders in the field of international education. They are also part of well-resourced entities who have consistently demonstrated the political will to invest in personalized education and student development on this level. They are, however, not indicative of larger trends in the field. Further

38

analysis of these three sources, as well as a broader survey of the literature, unveils common denominators in terms of the need to increase students' awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences and intercultural communication. Vande Berg, Paige, et al. (2012)'s exploration of the experiential paradigm sheds light on this new mentality around pointed curricular interventions and makes a compelling case that the international environment in which a student learns is pliable. The heart of their argument is that international educators can equip students with intercultural skills, thus shaping both their interactions as well as their learnings. Through pointed, curricular interventions, international educators can position students not for cultural immersion, but rather for cultural learnings; i.e., the development of their global perspectives. The growing consensus in the field is staunchly in favor of scholar-practitioners intervening in the learnings of students, in terms of pre-departure, on-site, and re-entry programmatic opportunities (Martinsen, 2011; Vande Berg, Paige, et al., 2012).

Perhaps Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) summarizes and contextualizes the challenges of pre-departure preparation and pointed curricular interventions best. In her well-respected examination of the effect of duration of study abroad on the cultural learnings of students, Medina-Lopez-Portillo situates her comparative study of two programs of different lengths in different Mexican cities within the context of the theoretical framework of intergroup contact theory. This theory asserts that merely interacting with people who have different cultural values than you will not automatically result in an enhanced cultural understanding and that any experience aimed at enhancing intercultural sensitivity development must necessarily occur against the backdrop of conditions that reduce prejudices.

In comparing a short-term program in Taxco with a semester program in Mexico City, Medina-Lopez-Portillo's mixed methods study dovetails with conventional wisdom in

demonstrating that longer-term programs positively correlate with deeper levels of intercultural sensitivity. Referring to the students who completed the seven-week Taxco program, Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) cautioned that they "had just begun to see the proverbial tip of the cultural iceberg" (p. 195). In short, the heart of her argument is that if a short-term program is too short, then deep cultural learnings will not result. Although study abroad students may not enroll in a study abroad program with the specific goal of reducing prejudice or even enhancing their intercultural sensitivity or global perspectives, international educators are afforded the responsibility and, some might argue, obligation, to design programs with learning objectives that are not necessarily completely understood or valued by students at the time of their enrollment in these programs.

Yet program duration is but one variable in an increasingly complex algorithm that results in the development of global perspectives. For other scholars, the degree to which students on short-term programs are able to see the "proverbial tip of the cultural iceberg" is debatable. Several studies have validated the positive effects of short-term programs on intercultural learnings (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Heinzmann, Kunzle, Schallhart, & Muller, 2015). In addition to duration, another factor impacting the quality of an international experience is the level of instructor training. For example, in their exploration of the role of instructors on faculty-led, short-term study abroad programs, Anderson, Lorenz, and White (2016) demonstrate that deliberate, supportive facilitation and reflection that centers on intercultural frameworks by trained instructors lead to increased cultural learnings. Their findings underscore the need for pointed curricular interventions by qualified professors and study abroad professionals. While program duration and facility training are but two variables in a far -from-an-exhaustive list, they do serve to illustrate that shifting our

perspective to different variables can yield different results in terms of the quality of our students' experiences and the development of their global perspectives.

How does introducing a cohort model into the equation impact student learnings? Robinson Beachboard, Beachboard, Li, and Adkison (2011) define a cohort as a "formal learning community" (p. 854). For the purposes of this paper, the terms 'formal learning community' and 'cohort' will be used interchangeably. Robinson Beachboard et al. (2011) cite studies illustrating that cohort models have the potential to enhance motivation, feelings of belonging, critical thinking skills, and communicative abilities, they also acknowledge scholars who argue that it is difficult to establish a direct correlation, positive or negative, between a cohort model and learning outcomes.

The use of cohort models in higher education has markedly increased since the 1980s (Denny, 2013). More recently, scholars have started to analyze the effect of cohort models on learning outcomes and student development within the field of international education. As context for their discussion on cohort models, Jessup-Anger and Aragones (2013) acknowledge two broad trends outlined by Engle and Engle (2004), as well as many other scholars. Referring to previous paradigms in international education, they write, "[h]istorically, students spent a semester or more abroad and lived with a family or stayed in a dormitory isolated from other Americans; today many students choose to attend faculty-led programs during which they travel with a cohort of peers" (p. 22). In light of these recent structural changes, they explore the impact of peer interactions in a cohort model on fellow peers' experiences on short-term study abroad programs. Framed by the constructivist paradigm, they argue that "students' interactions with peers and the host countries could not be understood as an independent reality; rather, it would be rooted in context and include their previous experiences and perspectives as knowers" (p. 24). Detailed observation notes,

journal entries, and semi-structured interviews were coded for development of the development of self-knowledge, cultural interactions, and group dynamics. As a function of the cohort, several types of student roles were identified: loners, mediators, messengers, and learners. The findings of this study illustrate the crucial role that facilitators have in structuring activities, establishing expectations within a cohort, and responding to group dynamics. Finally, their call to action – to analyze the cohort model - is compelling, as the majority of study abroad students do participate in a short-term, faculty-led study abroad program within a cohort model.

These findings dovetail with recommendations provided by Denny (2013) for "program staff and faculty to be heavily involved in the beginning of the program, actively working to create opportunities in which communication and interaction will occur between cohort members" (p. 102). Reza (2015) concurs, and in reference to her study on a multi-destination, cohort model study abroad program affirms that "[t]he results and analysis of this study support the assertion that educators should intervene through intentional pedagogical models that develop students' intercultural competence rather than assuming they will develop simply because they are abroad" (p. 170).

It is important to underscore that these studies analyze the effect of a cohort model on a group-based study abroad experience. In other words, the students travel to a study abroad site together, take classes together, travel on excursions together, and live together. The cohort model is synonymous with the on-site, study abroad experience. The VIH cohort model flips the equation on its head. VIH awardees do not travel, live, or study together. The VIH cohort, and its accompanying sense of community and belonging, is derived from its 'wrap-around nature:' predeparture and reentry programming. As opposed to analyzing the impact of a cohort model of an onsite study abroad program, my study builds on these findings by examining the effect of a

wrap-around cohort model i.e., Engle's pre-departure programming and Deardorff's reentry programming on the development of students' global perspectives.

2.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This literature review informs my research. The paradigm shifts outlined in the first section provide a historical overview for this problem of practice. Domain identification and stereotype threat framed the discussion on identity and intersectionality in the second section. This exploration of intersectionality and identity lay the groundwork of an argument against merely increasing the numbers of compositional diversity to instead embrace programmatic options and curricular interventions in support of holistic identity development. Specifically, Bourdieu argued that knowledge of upper and middle classes are considered capital-valuable to a hierarchical society…the assumption follows that certain groups of people lack valued social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The realization that the knowledge that underrepresented, first-time women travelers bring to their international experience is different, nuanced, and valuable must be at the forefront of our pedagogical practices.

Deconstructing the dominant discourses of expectations around transformation and immersion; the cultural 'other;' and the homogenization of the subject vs. diverse positionalities provide context for contemporary dynamics and challenges. However, it is worthwhile to note that the implications of these dominant discourses for underrepresented students generally, and underrepresented, first-time women travelers specifically, were not considered. The pointed exploration of key concepts, relevant terminology, and accompanying assessment measures provides the rationale for the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 3. The final section

of this literature outlines some of the most well respected pointed curricular interventions and pedagogical practices for predeparture, onsite, and reentry programs in international education. It concludes by exploring the cohort model as a salient, – although by no means widespread – pedagogical practice in international education, leaving us well-positioned to examine its value and effect on the development of underrepresented, first-time women travelers' global perspectives. While the literature overwhelmingly focuses on the agency of the international educator, and how they impart knowledge through these pointed curricular interventions during the actual international experience, studies dedicated to examining the effect of peer-to-peer teachings during a wrap-around cohort model remains an underexplored area.

3.0   METHODS

3.1   INQUIRY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to analyze how a wrap-around cohort model impacts the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. The research is guided by the following inquiry questions:

1) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the cognitive dimension of their global perspectives?

2) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the interpersonal dimension of their global perspectives?

3) How do VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the intrapersonal dimension of their global perspectives?

Each of these three questions addresses a separate dimension of a global perspective: the cognitive dimension, the interpersonal dimension, and the intrapersonal dimension. Through these questions, I will explore the degree to which each respective dimension is developed through interactions with other underrepresented, first-time women travelers in a wrap-around, cohort model.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN: IMPACT ASSESSMENT EVALUATION

The inquiry approach of this study is an evaluation, specifically, an impact assessment evaluation. Powell (2006) defines evaluation research as the use of research methodologies for program assessment purposes. At first blush, this definition seems almost a little too straightforward. This is not the case, as Powell (2006) introduces the topic by affirming that it "is not easily defined" and then listing a multitude of variations of evaluations: "input measurement, output / performance measurement, impact / outcomes assessment, service quality assessment, process evaluation, benchmarking standards, quantitative methods, qualitative methods, cost analysis, organizational effectiveness, program evaluation methods, and LIS-centered methods" (p. 102). For example, input measures assess the resources of a given entity, for example, an endowment, personnel, or books. Output measurement analyses what was achieved, for example, the number of magazines published, or the number of seminars held. Another example of an output measurement is satisfaction surveys. Impact assessment differs from input and output assessment in that this type of assessment analyses change as a function of a given intervention. For example, an output assessment could measure the number of programs held in a year whereas an impact assessment would look at the learnings that results from these workshops. As this research looks at the effect of a wrap-around cohort model, it is situated within an impact assessment inquiry approach.

This research design, including the focus group questions, affinity diagram questions, and possible follow-up questions, was submitted to the IRB. The IRB concurred that this study is a program evaluation, and approval to move forward was granted. Appendix 3 contains the 'Statement of Informed Consent' that all focus group participants signed prior to the start of each focus group.

3.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: FOCUS GROUPS

The research methodology of focus groups was selected due to the fact that "[u]nlike individual interviews, the individual is not the main focus of focus groups; it is the group itself that provides the data, and this is an important distinction" (Davis, 2016b, p. 1). Through different types of qualitative methodologies, participants share their own experiences and insights, however, in focus groups, they are also put into conversation with each other. The interactions between the focus group participants serve to reduce redundancies as well as to create additional data that may not have emerged without the backdrop of the focus group. In further exploring the strengths of focus groups as a research methodology, Finch and Lewis (2003) affirm that "[t]his stronger social context offers an opportunity to see how ideas and language emerge in a more naturalistic setting than an in-depth interview, how they are shaped through conversation with others. It reflects the social constructions, normative influences, collective as well as individual self-identity shared meanings…" (p. 172). As such, focus groups tend to be employed when the group of participants have experienced the same thing, in this case, the VIH Program. This research methodology is also recognized as a good starting point to explore unexplored and underexplored topics (Mentor, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011; Mertens, 2015).

As this research concerns itself with the impact of a cohort model, using a methodology that gives voice to the group itself over individuals was appropriate. In her analysis of communication theory and focus groups, Davis (2016b) asserts that the methodology of focus groups particularly resonates with feminists and critical theorists precisely because of the more-democratic relationship between the researcher and the people being researched. To elaborate, the typical balance of power between the researcher and the people being researched is hierarchical, as the researcher dictates at least most of the parameters of the research. However, with the

research methodology of focus groups, the hierarchy flattens, as the researcher has less agency to shape or influence the discussions in the focus groups.

As depicted in Table 2, focus groups serve four basic functions: problem identification, planning, implementation, and assessment. This research is an impact assessment evaluation, and the methodology of focus groups will be employed to evaluate how and why the resulted outcomes occurred as well as to provide context around these processes.

Table 2: Four Basic Uses for Focus Groups

	Academic Research	**Product Marketing**	**Evaluation Research**	**Quality Improvement**
Problem Identification	Generating Research Questions	Generating New Product Ideas	Needs Assessment	Identifying Opportunities
Planning	Research Design	Developing New Products	Program Development	Planning Interventions
Implementation	Data Collection	Monitoring Customer Response	Process Evaluation	Implementing Interventions
Assessment	Data Analysis	Refining Product of Marketing	Outcome Evaluation	Assessment Redesign

Table is taken from: (D. Morgan, 1998, p. 14)

3.4   PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

It was emphasized in class discussions in that it is important to be intentional about who is selected to participate in a focus group, and this intentionality should be based on a specific theory. It is not necessary that this theory is 'objective,' as in qualitative research, 'objectivity' does not form part of the constructivist epistemology. It follows that random sampling is not a requirement for focus groups. While objectivity does not form part of the constructivist epistemology, it is important to take into consideration representation and equity. The following constituted the parameters for selection for the focus groups.

All of the students invited to the focus groups graduated from the VIH Program between 2013-2017. On average, there are 40 students per each of those five years, for a total of about 200 students. VIH graduates from previous years were not invited due to changes in the VIH retreat curriculum. Moreover, limiting the focus group invitation to more recent graduates facilitated their easier recollection of the experience. While all VIH awardees are first-time travelers, and the vast majority are underrepresented, not all are underrepresented. The pool of VIH awardees who were invited to the focus groups was narrowed to exclusively those who are underrepresented in at least one of the following five ways: 1) a racial or ethnic minority; 2) LGBTQIA; 3) registered with their disability office; 4) a Pell Grant recipient; 5) a STEM major. As such, my focus group composition will run counter to the advice of who argue that a key attribute that leads to more successful focus groups is homogeneity in terms of gender, age, race or ethnicity, etc. (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Given that the VIH awardees have spent considerable amount of time in groups that were intentionally and explicitly designed to be diverse, and that part of the learning outcomes of the VIH Program is to develop a sense of reciprocity and deepen their appreciation for diversity, the focus groups will intentionally include previous VIH awardees

49

from different backgrounds and attributes. See Figures 4-8 for visual depictions of the diversity in the focus groups.

Focus groups enjoy more success when participants are invested and interested in the topic. 'Invested' underrepresented VIH awardees was defined as students who either a) participated as a mentor in the VIH Mentoring Program, or b) returned to a retreat as a guest facilitator or panelist. Of the 200 total students in the 2013-2017 cohorts, 103 were identified as both invested and underrepresented, and all 103 were invited to take part in the focus groups.

Three focus groups were conducted so as to ensure that the data collected was not merely a function of the unique dynamics of one particular focus group but rather the information gathered was reliable across focus groups. Given the timing of when the IRB determined that this study was exempt, I selected that the following three dates in March would be the most feasible to hold the focus groups: the 10th, the 17th, and the 25th. Incentives, location, and timing all posed challenges, albeit in different ways. During one of the doctoral methods classes, we discussed how economic and material incentives for participation lead to an increase in volunteers. Although my initial invitation did state that pizza and soft drinks would be provided, I was unable to offer any financial incentives for participation. Recruitment, thus, was entirely voluntary. Second, the location of the focus groups was a challenge. VIH awardees come from 15 institutions throughout Pennsylvania, and upon graduation, many VIH awardees go to graduate school or seek employment in a different state or a different country, and at least one VIH awardee per cohort is accepted into the Peace Corps. As I did not have funds to pay for travel expenses, I was initially concerned that primarily VIH awardees enrolled in Pittsburgh institutions such as Carlow University, Robert Morris University, Chatham University, Duquesne University, and the University of Pittsburgh at Oakland would attend. Indeed, I received over two dozen emails from students who expressed

interest but regret that they could not attend given distance and cost. Still, these emails were a heartfelt way to reconnect with former VIH awardees as many of them shared that they were in Boston working, in California studying, in London studying, and beyond.

My original plan was to accept eight students per each of the three focus groups, with the hope that 6-8 students per focus group would attend.   Most scholar-practitioners recommend 6-8 participants per focus groups, with D.L. Morgan (2012) making a more liberal recommendation of between 4-12 participants. My initial RSVP count showed that 10 people had confirmed for the March 10th focus group, and nine people had confirmed for both the March 17th and the March 25th focus groups. After confirming their attendance, I did not accept any more focus group volunteers.

Table 3: Focus Group Schedules

Date	Location	Number of Confirmations	Number of Attendees
Saturday, March 10	Posvar Hall, University of Pittsburgh	10	10
Saturday, March 17	Posvar Hall, University of Pittsburgh	9	7
Sunday, March 25	Wyndham Hotel, Oakland, Pittsburgh	9	8

The third challenge was the general timing. March is a busy month for students, and the first focus group, held on Saturday, March 10th, took place over the University of Pittsburgh's spring break. Sunday, March 25th was the last day of the VIH three-day spring retreat. I decided to hold the third focus group on that Sunday evening, from 5-7pm, instead of pushing it to the next

weekend in April, as many of the focus group participants expressed interest in also returning to the VIH spring retreat as guest facilitators.

3.5   PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

While I was very intentional about how I defined and invited exclusively underrepresented, invested VIH awardees from 2013-2017, I realized that the composition of the focus groups also depended on the students' availability. Prior to tallying the RSVPs, I was concerned about balance in the focus groups or ensuring that there was a nice mix of students from different VIH institutions who had studied in different regions of the world and who were of diverse backgrounds. When I finished counting the RSVPs, I was pleasantly surprised to realize that this balance had occurred. Of the 25 awardees in all three focus groups, 44% were in STEM fields, 32% were registered with their institution's disability office; 52% were women of color; 12% were LGBTQIA, and 52% received a Pell Grant. See Figures 4-8 for visuals of the diversity of those students who attended the focus groups. In addition, students from Washington & Jefferson College, Waynesburg University, Thiel College, Duquesne University, Chatham University, Robert Morris University, the University of Pittsburgh at Oakland, the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, and Temple University signed up for focus groups.

3.6   QUESTIONS: TOPIC GUIDE VS. QUESTIONING ROUTE

In designing the focus group questions for this research, several sources were consulted (Finch & Lewis, 2003; Gill et al., 2008; Mentor et al., 2011; Mertens, 2015; D.L. Morgan, 2012). Currently, there are two dominant questioning strategies for focus groups: the topic guide and the questioning route. While the topic guide is more conversational, allows for greater spontaneity, and is faster during the actual focus groups, once the focus groups have concluded, it is more difficult to analyze the results.   Moreover, oftentimes there are inconsistencies in the data across moderators. Advantages of the questioning route include increased consistency and higher quality analysis whereas potential drawbacks include a longer amount of time required to develop the questions and the potential that the questions are too scripted. Typically, the more focused the questions are, the more questions can be asked whereas less structured focus groups tend to have fewer, more broadly articulated questions. Other scholars, such as D.L. Morgan (2012), refer to these two categories of questions as content-oriented and conversation oriented but the definitions of the categories of questions remain consistent across authors (p. 163).

In an earlier work, D. Morgan (1998) outlines five categories of questions and delineates each of the categories' specific functions. See Table 4 below:

Table 4: Categories of Questions

Question Type	Purpose
Opening	Participants get acquainted and feel connected
Introductory	Begins discussion of the topic
Transition	Moves smoothly and seamlessly into key questions

Key	Obtains insight on areas of central concern in the study
Ending	Helps researchers determine where to place emphasis and brings closure to the discussion

My initial inclination was to follow the questioning route, and I developed a list of questions sequenced in the following way: general questions before specific questions; positive questions before negative questions; un-cued questions before cued questions. After piloting my focus group questions, I decided to structure the sessions according to the topic guide.

3.7   PILOTING QUESTIONS

In mid-February, I piloted the focus group questions (according to the questioning route) to a class in the School of Education (SOE). There was a strategy behind choosing this specific class, as the class itself was part of a cohort in the SOE. Moreover, and given the nature of the class and program, the students brought to this experience both a professional background as well as coursework in organizational culture and group dynamics. This was both an invaluable and a pivotal experience for this research, as I garnered four key insights from the opportunity. First, I realized that my questions were compound questions and had far too many components. Second, the questions used a very esoteric language that while comprehensible to the students in the class, ultimately did not set a conversational tone for the discussions. This language is part of the nomenclature of the VIH network but I still opted for a more conversational tone in designing the final version of questions. My third key learning from leading a focus group in the School of

Education was that the questions were so focused that discussion was ultimately extremely limited. As a result of piloting the focus group discussion questions, I changed the structure of the questions to the topic guide.

My fourth key learning from the piloting was a deepened appreciation for the role of the facilitator. A focus group provides an opportunity for participants to share and compare experiences. Yet their ability to do so in an honest and thorough manner is, in no small part, a function of the skills and style of the facilitator as well as their work before, during, and after the focus groups. "Making decisions about the research design is a process of anticipating what difference it would make to conduct focus groups in one way rather than another" and how important "this deliberation [is] on our possible actions and their likely outcomes" (D.L. Morgan, 2012, p. 162) In applying this wisdom, one is forced to grapple with the overarching goals of the project, the content of the questions, and also the facilitator's style.

A focus group facilitator must be able to build rapport, dig past the superficial to uncover the impetus for statements, and effectively deal with any potential conflict. In stressing the importance of the moderator's style, Davis (2016c) affirms that "it's a balancing act as facilitator to let the participants work through the chaos to come to a shared meaning without stifling voice" (p. 9). Given the participants and topic of these focus group discussions, conflict was not an issue however, at times, I did have to ensure a balance of participation. Infrequently, a student would go off on a tangentially-related idea, and refocusing her in and opening up space for participants who had not yet contributed modeled the behavior of inviting quieter participants to share. I entered into the session with a heightened sense of awareness around the use of non-verbal cues such as eye contact and inviting hand gestures as important ways to shape group dynamics. My understanding of a feminist interpretation of silence was complemented by advice from Finch and

Lewis (2003) that silence can also be used to prompt more in-depth reflection of the questions. In addition to the 'follow-up questions' (see Appendix 4), silence was an effective technique in encouraging students to 'go deeper.'

3.8   DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

Introducing the focus groups and giving the instructions for the session provides an opportunity to set the tone as to how structured the focus group discussions will be. Setting an appropriate tone is crucial. As I aimed to have a light conversational tone to start off each of the focus groups, I welcomed participants and opened space for them to introduce themselves with the following information: a) their name; b) their institution; c) country where they studied abroad; d) something that they are proud of. This was important, as each focus groups comprised participants from the 2013-2017 cohorts. The introductions took about 20 minutes. I then took a brief moment to explain the purpose of the research

From there, I passed out small pads of post-it notes and markers to each person, and I directed everyone's attention to the wall where two flipcharts were hanging. On the first flipchart, I had written the agenda for the Spring VIH Retreat, and on the second flipchart, I had written the agenda for the Fall VIH Retreat. As a means to provide a refresher of the retreat activities, I provided a brief summary and learning objectives of each activity at both retreats. As the focus group participants listened to the synopsis of each activity at both of the retreats, they wrote a word, thought, phrase, or sentence(s) on a post-it note. I deliberately structured this activity in a way that it was not merely a 'high-tell;' i.e., I provided a refresher of the two retreats but rather

the participants themselves were forced to articulate their own learnings and/or thoughts on their individual post-it notes.

The summary of the two retreats took about 30 minutes, and by the end, each focus group participant had a small pad of about several dozen post-it notes. I invited everyone to choose the three most important or meaningful post-it notes that they would like to share with the group and stick them to the wall. In this way, each focus group constructed an affinity diagram. An affinity diagram exercise entails participants clustering their ideas as a group. The affinity diagram served as the basis for our subsequent focus group discussions. I collected both the post-it notes on the wall as well as the remaining post-it notes that were not placed on the wall. The final 70 minutes of the two-hour sessions were devoted to the discussion questions. I was very careful to articulate the questions with a more conversational language, clear phrasing, and direct and simple messaging.

3.9   DISCUSSION PROMPTS

The three focus groups were held in Oakland between March 10 and March 25, 2018. Each focus group session was a little over two hours in length. Twenty-five of 28 of the VIH awardees who signed up for the focus groups actually did participate. The eight questions that guided our discussion can be found in Appendix 4. The questions asked in the focus groups were linked to the indicators of development in the three domains of a global perspective: cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. I almost entirely refrained from commentary, except to prompt for more details with four follow-up questions, also located in Appendix 4.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION & CONFIDENTIALITY

Data collection was conducted in a two-fold manner. I videotaped and, as a back-up, also audio-recorded each focus group session. While I ended up deleting the audio recordings, it was assuring to know that a back-up was available during the data analysis stage of this research. Balancing (temporarily) keeping a backup set of data with protecting the participants' identities was one of the issues of most considerable weight during both the data collection as well as the transcription and coding phases of this research. Transcriptions of the three focus group videos was an iterative process that took about 75 hours and concluded in mid-April.

The following steps, extrapolated and adapted from class notes in one of the methodology classes, were taken in order to ensure confidentiality throughout these processes:

- During the recruitment phase, only the researcher will have access to the videotapes, post-it notes, and transcriptions.

- During the focus groups, participants were only identified by their first names.

- Both names and any identifying markers such as locations, institutions, events, etc. will be modified from the transcriptions.

Moreover, at the beginning of each focus group, participants received and signed an Informed Consent Form, found in Appendix 3. As they were signing the Informed Consent Form, I reviewed issues of confidentiality and reiterated that everyone is free to withdraw from the focus group at any time.

3.11   DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The publications of three researchers, in particular, guided my data analysis: Mertens (2009, 2015), D.L. Morgan (2012), and Davis (2016a). In coding the answers given during the focus groups, I used a hybrid model *a priori* codes and grounded theory. A priori code refers to the identification of predetermined codes in the data whereas Glaser and Strauss (1967)'s grounded theory allows for codes to emerge after the fact. The *a priori* codes corresponded to the six subdimensions of L. Braskamp et al. (2014) global perspective: knowledge, knowing, social interactions, social responsibility, identity, and affect.

Table 5: Data Analysis

Research Question	Method	Evidence	Analysis
How did VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the cognitive dimension of their global perspectives?	Semi open-ended, qualitative questions that are derived from the learning objectives of the retreats of the VIH Program. These questions were discussed in three focus groups.	I examined change across the two constructs of the GPI: knowledge and knowing.	Through axial coding, I analyzed the responses shared during the three focus groups for evidence that indicated a shift in the development of the students' global perspectives.
How did VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the	Semi open-ended, qualitative questions that are derived from	I examined change across the two	Through axial coding, I analyzed the responses shared during the three

Table 5 continued

interactions that it provides as enhancing the interpersonal dimension of their global perspectives?	the learning objectives of the retreats of the VIH Program. These questions were discussed in three focus groups.	constructs of the GPI: social interactions and social responsibility.	focus groups for evidence that indicates a shift in the development of the students' global perspectives.
How did the VIH awardees experience the cohort model and the interactions that it provides as enhancing the intrapersonal dimension of their global perspectives?	Semi open-ended, qualitative questions that are derived from the learning objectives of the retreats of the VIH Program. These questions were discussed in three focus groups.	I examined change across the two constructs of the GPI: identity and affect.	Through axial coding, I analyzed the responses shared during the three focus groups for evidence that indicates a shift in the development of the students' global perspectives.

To reiterate, in addition to looking for change across the six subdimensions of a global perspective, grounded theory was employed as a means to capture information that did not fit neatly into one of these six *a priori* themes. Coding was an iterative process that can be encapsulated by four steps. First, I gave an initial read through and made note of possible themes. Second, I made a first coding pass, in which I employed an open coding technique, or the labeling of data in accordance to basic components across the three focus groups. Third, I made a second coding pass, in which I used an axial coding method to combine the cross-focus group patterns in

the data into themes. Axial coding constitutes a deeper dive than open coding in that it is more than simply counting the frequency of words or identifying certain categories in the data. Axial coding concerns itself with the relationships between these categories, and how they are systematically interconnected. My fourth and final coding pass was guided by Davis' (2016b) discussion on discourse analysis or the examination of not only "what people say (their language usage)" [but also] "how they say it (their communication patterns" (p. 85). In her book, Davis (2016b) explores seven communication theories that contextualize how meaning is made and guide data examination through discourse analysis: systems theory, social network theory, symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, framing & sense-making, structuration theory, and nonverbal communication in groups. In my final pass at coding the data in accordance with discourse analysis, social constructionism was the guiding communication theory. Social constructionism looks at "negotiating public or shared meaning" [and…] recogniz[es] that meanings and interpretations are socially, historically, temporally, and culturally constructed" Davis (2016b, p. 14). Moreover, her acknowledgment that communication is "culturally and socially constrained and linguistically constructed" was never far from my mind in my analysis of communication, group dynamics, and meaning-making (p. 14). Indeed, during my facilitation of the focus groups, I found myself frequently prompting with follow-up questions that probed for the meaning of words such as 'support,' 'activism,' and 'confidence.'

3.12   NVIVO & FIELD NOTES

The data from the Affinity Diagram and the focus groups are complementary data. In order to code my Affinity Diagram data, I used NVivo software. I entered the aggregate transcriptions of the

post-it notes into the software to generate both the 'wordle,' or word cloud as well as a frequency

diagram. However, for the focus group discussions, I chose not to use NVivo and did all of the

coding by hand as I was concerned that the computer software would not be able to identify

potential overlap across the six subdimensions of a global perspective (Carrie & Muller, 2016).

Moreover, I knew that NVivo would not be able to capture meaning through the interpersonal

interactions of each focus groups' communication.

It is always important to acknowledge positionality. As I have served the VIH Program for

almost ten years, I brought to this study my own experiences as director, positionality, and yes,

preconceived notions. As such, I did my best to take off my 'VIH hat' and put on my 'researcher

hat' and refrain from fixating on specific pieces of data during the transcription process or reaching

any conclusions about which themes were the most well substantiated. Moreover, participants in

focus groups do not typically know, or have a relationship with the focus group facilitator. There

are advantages to this, for example, there was a high level of trust going into the focus groups.

The primary drawback is that remaining neutral is a challenge. To guard against interpretative bias

issues, I wrote down my thoughts, feelings, and concerns before and after each focus group in field

memos. This self-reflection heightened my level of consciousness around my preconceptions and

emotional state.

4.0   FINDINGS

4.1   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This study examines the effect of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the three dimensions of a global perspective of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. Through three focus groups, underrepresented, engaged VIH awardees from the 2013-2017 cohorts shared their experiences, learnings, and insights. Section 4.2 of this chapter presents the findings of the data collected during the affinity diagram portion of the focus groups. This data is presented through a word frequency diagram as well as through a visual depiction or Wordle. Both of these figures were generated through NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. The three research questions posed in this study are specifically addressed in section 4.3 through section 4.5. The research questions and data analysis portion of the methodological framework of this study borrows from Braskamp's definition of a global perspective. L. Braskamp et al. (2014) defines a global perspective as the "capacity for a person to think with complexity, taking into account multiple viewpoints, to form a unique sense of self that is value-based and authentic, and to relate to others with respect and openness, especially with those who are not like her" (p. 102). In this definition, Braskamp takes a very esoteric concept, a global perspective, and disaggregates in into three dimensions: cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Each of these three dimensions is further disaggregated into two subdimensions, or scales, as a means to operationalize them.

At the beginning of each of the following sections: 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5, the definitions of the six subdimensions are provided. These dimensions and subdimensions orient our analysis of the focus group discussions. Section 4.3 unravels the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the

development of the cognitive dimension of the students' global perspectives, in terms of both knowledge and knowing. The development of social interactions and social responsibility of the interpersonal dimension is analyzed in section 4.4 whereas section 4.5 explores how the identity and affect components of the intrapersonal dimension of underrepresented, first-time travelers' global perspectives were enhanced. While this study posed specific research questions, it also remained open to grounded theory findings. As such, section 4.6 shares three grounded theory themes that consistently emerged from the data generated from all three focus groups: a) the importance of language in the application process and beyond; b) a level playing field; and, c) the duality of sisterhood and support. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion on intersections and overlap between and across these different themes described above. It also shares some insights from the focus group participants in terms of follow-up communication. Insights from key themes that emerged from the data are reiterated in a chapter summary comprising section 4.7.

4.2   AFFINITY DIAGRAM RESULTS

Following introductions of cohort members at the start of the focus groups, a review of the spring and fall retreat agendas was provided. VIH focus group participants were given a pad of post-it notes and asked to write a word, phrase, or sentence(s) for each activity reviewed. This served not only as a refresher of the activities but also as a way for the awardees to think about what they learned or what each activity meant to specifically and personally, to them, as individuals.

There was more consistency in the answers, or themes, that emerged than I originally anticipated. Moreover, the depth of the answers far surpassed my expectations. Post-it notes provide three square inches of space to write, and as a means to enhance the legibility of everyone's

handwriting, I gave the focus group participants sharpies instead of pens. I expected to see one-word answers on the post-it notes, primarily superlatives or adjectives, such as 'fun,' or 'great.' After all, this part of the focus group session was considered as a refresher of past experiences. Instead, most participants used a pen instead of the sharpie provided and of their own volition, they wrote a phrase or a sentence on each post-it note. Rather than superlatives or adjectives, most focus group participants succinctly described their learnings from each activity. Finally, as evidenced in Figure 1, less than 20 percent of the words in the frequency diagram are adjectives.

Figure 1: Frequency Diagram

The 20 Most Frequently Used Words in VIH Focus Groups' Affinity Diagrams
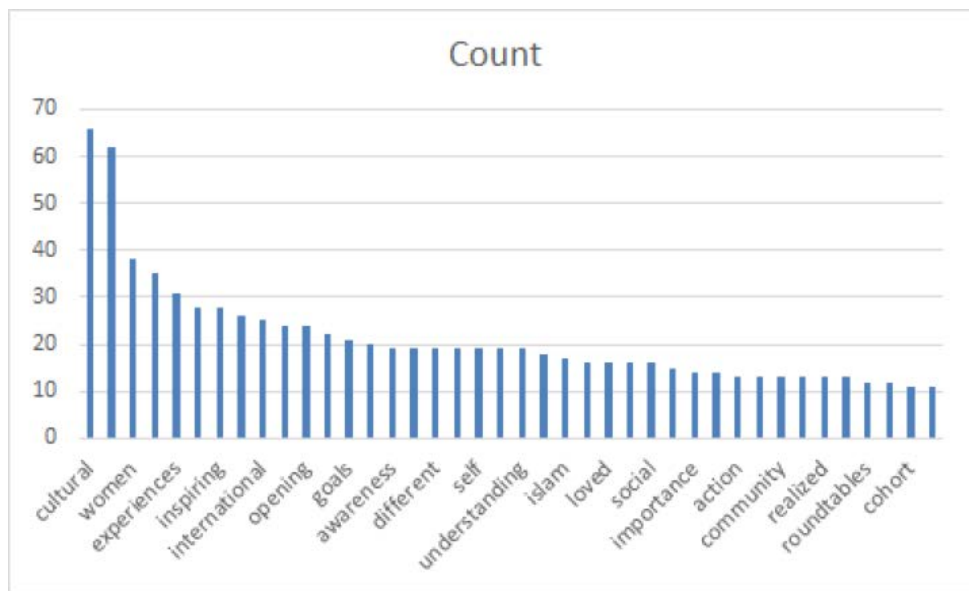
Figure 2 expands on the 20 most frequently used words provided in the frequency diagram. In this visual depiction, the 40 most frequently used words are shown. The dominant theme that emerged from the affinity diagram centered on cultural learnings, cultural awareness, cultural difference, cultural relativism, and cultural understanding. 'Women' was the second most frequently referenced word and this word was primarily used in the context of self-awareness, challenging oneself, broadening perspectives, and getting out of one's comfort zone. Other themes

65

that emerged included community engagement, feminism, confidence, high expectations, and sisterhood.

Figure 2: Visual Depiction

The 40 Most Frequently Used Words in the VIH Focus Groups' Affinity Diagrams

While the frequency diagram and visual depiction are useful in illustrating the 20 and 40 most frequently-used words, respectively, it is important to include some of the actual phrases or parts of comments written on the post-it notes. In selecting the comments, I chose comments whose themes were articulated in all three focus groups. For example, at least one person in each of the three focus groups wrote about the commonalities in dance throughout the world, thus one of these comments on dance was selected and included in the list below. See Appendix A for a description of the role that dance played in the retreat as well as descriptions of other activities at the retreats. All of the comments selected also depicted one of the following themes: a) the development of new knowledge; b) behavioral changes; c) a depiction of solidarity and/or self-confidence. Finally, comments or themes limited to superlatives (amazing, wonderful, great, fabulous) were not included.

66

- Learned Muslim women's responses to stereotypes and how to speak again stereotypes*
- Dancing connects us as humans*
- OMG – that's how I always feel
- Let loose! Ready to roll; inspired!
- Struggle; am I ready? Will I make it?
- Understanding differences around the world by creating self-awareness
- Colorism – how I can bring light to modern issues in my CEE and beyond*
- Perspective; perspective; perspective
- Feminism in different cultures, professionalism, and staying true to myself
- Talking about challenges objectively
- Teared up a lil. I feel like this all the time. Power in words
- Meeting so many insanely driven women.
- Thinking about how much bigger this program is than what I'd initially realized
- Mapping out what I wanted to get out of studying abroad
- Abandoning self-conscious attitude, pride, friendship, eagerness to explore, SISTERHOOD
- Very supportive; I felt loved or something
- MissRepresentation, made us examine flaws in our own culture and media representation*
- Bafa Bafa, I really enjoyed this activity, it really showed me how immigrants have a hard time integrating because they don't know about social norms*
- Goals and action plans forced me to expect more of myself for my study abroad experience*
- Even though I don't know how to dance, I danced!*
- Imposter syndrome – had HUGE breakthrough*
- Wangari – it touched me and I appreciate the sacrifice and the strength demonstrated*
- Women leader mentor pushed me to follow my heart
- End of the retreat, so powerful, I felt empowered, inspired, and confident, and I didn't want to let go of the cohort
- Emotional closing, never enough time, confident!

*Appendix A contains descriptions of the activities marked with an asterisk.

In summary, focus group participants were given post-it notes and were invited to share their own learnings during the spring and fall retreats. The answers they provided were more robust than originally anticipated. While the frequency diagram and visual depiction provide visuals of the 20 and 40 most frequently used words during this part of the focus group sessions, the quotes above shed more light into the students' learnings. The insights that the focus group participants shared centered on three themes: a) the knowledge that they gained; b) the behavioral

changes that they were making; c) and the dual sense of solidarity and self-confidence that was being created. By inviting the focus group participants to articulate their own learnings rather than simply provide an overview of the retreats, they were concomitantly empowered and positioned to take a deeper dive into the focus group discussion questions.

4.3   COGNITIVE

The cognitive dimension of a global perspective centers on developing a more nuanced worldview, taking into account different, and sometimes diametrically-opposed perspectives, and moving from absolutism to cultural relativism in making value judgments. The two scales of the cognitive dimension are: knowledge and knowing.

- "Knowledge: degree of understanding and awareness of various cultures and their impact on our global society and level of proficiency in more than one language."
- "Knowing: degree of complexity of one's view; the importance of cultural context in judging what is important to know and value."

In unraveling the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the cognitive dimension of focus group participants' global perspectives, I expected to see evidence of growth and development. What aspects of cognitive development the focus group participants would choose to highlight and the examples that they would choose to provide were a question mark in my mind. In terms of knowledge, focus group participants across all three focus groups highlighted two key themes: a) the impact of the cohort on their goals and action plans and b) the impact of the cohort on their learnings from the experiential, group-based activities.

4.3.1 Knowledge

The 'Relevant Intercultural Frameworks, Terminology, and Assessment Measures' subsection in Chapter 2 provided a brief overview of the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI) as an assessment tool. While the GPI is administered to the VIH awardees in a pre and post assessment format, of greater importance is how the tool is used during both the spring and fall retreats as a developmental framework. Working in pairs, trios, small roundtable groups, VIH awardees are put in conversation with each other and work together to make specific, personal goals for their international experiences. From there, each awardee designs accompanying action plans to ensure that they are capable of operationalizing their goals. Focus group participants highlighted how working with other cohort members on their goals and action plans expanded their knowledge, both at home, during the retreats, and abroad, during their international experiences. One student elaborated,

> "I think just hearing from other people and what their plans are. Where they are, why they decided to go there, what they want to do there is inspiring. At first, you may have any idea, or a plan that is very basic. Which is also really important for some people. But then you see other things and you are like 'wow!' I wonder if I could do that! And then you're talking to your cohort members and they are like 'yeah, you could do that! So, it is nice to have ideas from other people who think that it is possible. They inspired you!"

Focus group participants cited numerous topics that they learned about or even became aware, merely from the process of listening to other cohort members design their goals and action plans. Diverse topics such as herbal medicine in India, gender identity in Thailand, and environmentally-friendly policies in Iceland were brought up as examples.

Concomitantly, focus group participants acknowledged that part of the reason why working with different small breakdown groups of cohort members to develop, and later, refine their goals and action plans was inspirational was precisely because it was new, difficult, and challenging. One student shared how daunted she felt when the cohort was instructed to "write down our goals and action plans," and how nervous she felt when she shared them in a small group for the first time. In spite of these initial feelings, virtually all of the focus group participants affirmed that working through the Goals and Action Plans activity on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the spring retreat created a kind of comradery that lasted far past the spring retreat and provided a sense of support during the students' international experiences. As one cohort member shared,

"The connection with the group helped me in my experience abroad because I found that the people abroad had a different mindset that I did. And being part of the VIH cohort, we all had our action plans. What we wanna get from this. And there were other people [in the program] who did not have the same kind of ideas, everything would just make them upset…So, being able to reconnect with the cohort allowed me to continue with my action plan and keeping a positive perspective in my experience."

Reconnecting with cohort members during the international experience over their goals and action plans was consistently cited as a way to challenge themselves, cognitively. The awardees explained that through social media they were able to stay in touch and encourage each other to push forward with their goals and action plans because "learning so much information kind of created` a bond, like you were all in the situation together, even when you were 3,000 miles apart." Focus group participants conveyed frustration at how some study abroad students looked at the experience as a "vacation," and how continued communication around their goals

and action plans enable them to hold themselves to high standards. One focus group participant explained that,

> "A lot of people go with a tourist mentality, and I think that this is the case for most of study abroad…They go in, and they think, oh you know, it is sort of like going to Spain for the bullfighting and the paella and the flamenco…but you know we [the VIH awardees] don't want the Disney Land version; like what's the point?... I felt like having people that were kind of actively looking for that deeper layer was really valuable because they found it, and we could talk about what we saw."

While the focus group participants emphasized how the iterative process of creating, refining, and executing their goals and action plans in a group setting enhanced their knowledge, they also stressed the importance of processing and reflecting upon the results of their goals and action plans, collectively, at the fall retreat. Focus group participants spoke to the value of having a space where everyone could learn about and from each other's international experiences: the International Fair at the fall retreat. As one focus group participant remembered, "I remember during the closing remarks during our fall retreat, someone made a statement that they felt that they had traveled to around 40 countries instead of one because of the fair." Sharing the artifacts, stories, and photographs during the international fair exposed the students to other regions and countries in the world, thus enhancing their knowledge past the country where they studied abroad.

The International Fair was one of three experiential activities during the retreats that were referenced across all three focus groups has having contributed to their knowledge; the other two experiential activities that students in all three focus groups pointed to as having enhanced their knowledge were Bafa Bafa and Women & Islam. Bafa Bafa is a cultural simulation in which half of a group learns the values and behaviors of one culture, the Alphans, and the other half of a group

71

learns the values the behaviors of a second culture, the Betans. Bafa Bafa positions students to deepen their knowledge of culture past what is 'visible;' i.e., the food, dance, clothing, etc., and understand, as one focus group participant remarked, "what the rules are or what their set of values is." Developing an understanding of the components of culture and recognizing them within your own culture is a precursor to understanding another culture. This cultural simulation omits most of the objective culture, or products of a culture such as food, dress, music, and literature. Instead, the subjective cultural aspects: communication styles, behaviors, non-verbal communication, and use of space, are at the forefront of the students' experience. In this way, they are able to experience first-hand, as a group, the crucial nexus between behaviors and values.

Women and Islam was the third experiential activity during the retreats that was consistently held up by focus group participants as having expanded their knowledge. For this interactive activity, Muslim women from at least four continents and at least eight countries facilitate three interactive stations: a) the hijab, b) henna; and c) prayer. These three interactive stations provide the VIH awardees with the opportunity to engage in small groups of about 10 students with different Muslim women, and it positions them to ask questions during our large group panel. One focus group participant shared that, "I come from a really, really small town, and my parents are really conservative. The Women and Islam panel really stood out to me. I've never met face to face with people wearing hijabs and talking about what it means to be Muslim. But now I can educate people back home about this experience." Across the focus groups, students shared how their knowledge of this frequently stereotyped but oftentimes only superficially understood religion was enhanced through this set of experiential activities.

Within the knowledge subdimension, one notably absent topic of conversation was language. Language is an important way to deepen our knowledge of other cultures, and in fact,

during the spring retreat, many VIH awardees establish goals and action plans that center on linguistic development. While focus group participants were not directly questioned as to why they did not discuss language, one possible explanation is the duration of their international experiences, from between four weeks to twelve weeks, did not afford them enough of an opportunity to truly deepen their language skills. Thus, when they reflected on the cohort's effect on their knowledge, language development was not one of the key areas of impact.

4.3.2   Knowing

Knowing is defined by L. Braskamp et al. (2014) as the "degree of complexity of one's view; the importance of cultural context in judging what is important to know and value." This was the only subdimension of the six subdimensions of the global perspectives construct, for which I did not have a specific question. Rather, I looked for evidence of the focus group participants valuing cultural context and recognizing cultural complexity throughout their answers to all of the questions.

Growth in this area was most evident in the focus group participants' discussion around the cultural continuums activity. The cultural continuums activity draws from Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions. During the activity, the cohort works with Hofstede's sets of values: polychronic vs. monochronic; individualism vs. collectivism; activity vs. people, etc. For each set of values, the cohort members place themselves on a line, first in accordance with where they situate their own culture on a given continuum of values (e.g., hierarchy vs. ascription) and second, in accordance with where they situate the culture of the place where they studied abroad in terms of the same continuum of values. See Appendix A for a description of this activity. On almost all of the 12 values continuums, students span nearly the

73

entire length of the line, illustrating their diverse positionalities. In other words, all 40 or more VIH awardees did not stand on the same spot on a given continuum to represent U.S. American values. This is a particularly powerful learning moment for the students both in terms of their own culture as well as for processing cultural complexity and deconstructing stereotypes in other countries. One focus group participant stated that upon her return from a city in southern Germany, she felt as though she knew everything about Germany. However, participating in the cultural continuums activity during the fall retreat with another student who studied in northern Germany, was a powerful learning experience. "Just seeing how different we both experienced different things as well as how different the two cultures were made me realize 'okay, you've only got an inkling!'" she affirmed, adding that, "the cohort helped me realize how we did not scratch the surface." The realization that one's experience is indicative of exclusively one's own experience is a powerful learning in the knowing subdimension.

The importance of cultural context became all the more apparent for another focus group participant who shared that she and another cohort member had both studied abroad, on different programs, in different places in South India. Even though they were only three hours away, she realized that "there were so many differences…It was so interesting how people perceive things differently in the same country." Another student had a similar example and shared how "there were two girls who went to the same program in Tanzania, and I remember times when they were on completely opposite sides of the line...their interpretations and explanations were completely different!" Study abroad participants can run the risk of using inductive reasoning to draw conclusions around an entire nation that are a function of their unique experiences in one locality. As one focus group participant articulated,

"[j]ust knowing that everybody in the room is willing to learn and grow, to kind of confront and fix their own flaws, it made me think 'I've been thinking incorrectly about this!'…And knowing you can say I have been thinking incorrectly about this, how have you been thinking about this, how do you think that we can help each other fix it? Knowing that you're in that setting and in that environment, and everyone in the room shares that mindset, it's really conducive to growth and self-reflection."

The cohorts' discussion on place and positionality enhanced the 'knowing' component of their global perspectives in that it afforded the cohort an opportunity to compare and to contrast.

Race was a topic that was explored in all three focus groups. The cultural continuums provided a framework for participants to explore their own racial, among other, positionalities, both at home and abroad. The concept of positionalities is an important component of the knowing subdimension, as it underscores the complex and ever-changing intersection of place and identity. One focus group discussed differences in experiences of an Asian student, a black student, and a white student, all of whom had studied in India. For example, the Asian student shared that she was constantly told that she was Chinese, in spite of the fact that her family is from South Korea. The black student was consistently met with surprise when she informed Indians that she is from the United States. Her identity was questioned on more than one occasion, and she was repeatedly asked if she was from Africa. On the other hand, the white student's identity was never explicitly questioned.

Another focus group participant recounted what is what like for an African American student to be in the racial majority for the first time in her life during her study abroad experience, and what it was like for her white U.S. American counterpart to have the opposite experience. It is important to situate these conversations within the racial composition of the cohorts at the

75

retreats, as the retreats themselves constitute a specific space. In the words of one focus group participant, the retreats are a place populated with "black people and Asian Americans, like other people besides white people there." Perhaps one of the reasons why positionality, cultural relativity, context, and race came up so consistently during the focus group discussions is that it was, at least in part, a function of the diversity of the cohorts.

Broadening our gaze from VIH to other research, we find studies that use the GPI as the assessment framework tend to report the lowest amount of growth or change in terms of the knowing dimension of a global perspective. This was not the case for this research. For the focus group participants, the cohort, "challenged the viewpoint you've got and kind of forced you to look at your own biases…it forces self-reflection and awareness!" Privilege, bystander effect, how to deal with "discrimination that is not specific to you" were deconstructed against the backdrop of cultural relativity. It was one of the subdimensions of a global perspective for the focus group participants in which growth was the most evident.

4.4 INTERPERSONAL

The interpersonal dimension of a global perspective centers one's level of comfort while interacting with those who are different from her as well as the degree to which one recognizes her own agency as well as her obligation to act on that agency in benefit of others. The two scales are: social interactions and social responsibility.

- "Social Interactions: degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings."

- "Social Responsibility: level of interdependence and social concern for others."

4.4.1 Social Interactions

As expounded on in Chapter 3, cohorts in the VIH Program comprise a relatively high percentage and number of diverse students across multiple types of diversity. Creating an inclusive and diverse community of cohort members is at the forefront of the VIH philosophy. Throughout all three focus groups, participants spoke about the importance and depth of the relationships that they built with fellow cohort members. In fact, one participant went so far to affirm that, "I formed the strongest relationships that I have with the members of my cohort." Against the backdrop of the strength of their relationships, participants in all three focus groups spent considerable time articulating the juxtaposition of diversity and like-mindedness of the VIH awardees. 'Like-minded' was a word that came up repeatedly in discussions, and when pressed to define the concept, participants elaborated by referencing attributes such as "motivated," "active leaders on campus," and having "a social justice mentality." Another participant built on the definition of 'like-minded' by drawing our attention to the commonalities in the awardees' backgrounds, primarily the fact that no one had ever left the country. She spoke softly but firmly when she stated that "there are reasons why someone hasn't studied abroad: oppression, financial, systematic, parenting, age." She went on to add that by giving women with no previous international experience the opportunity to study abroad, it "not only increases diversity but also helps us to own a space, whether its locally or globally and how we can actually take those steps and get to a point where we actually want to be in the end!"

Moreover, the diversity of the cohorts was repeatedly pointed to as one of the key reasons why learnings were so deep and why a positive learning environment was created. By having many people from different backgrounds and experiences, a better balance of more representation of different types of groups was achieved. Citing the emphasis on diversity and inclusion of the

77

VIH program, one participant explained, "I've been to many group programs before, and I've always been one of the very few people of color, and the fact that I walked in and saw people that look like me, or even people that didn't look like me who represent some other minorities, that was really exciting for me! And I loved it!" For other participants, a more diverse cohort forced them to think outside of their worldview and provided "a different lens." These interactions constituted key learning moments in which students were pushed to consider new viewpoints.

While some participants spoke of the cohort's learnings from the cohort members, other focus group participants took this a step farther and shared how exposure to and interaction with diverse women facilitators and guest speakers also deepened their interpersonal skills. One student who was raised Catholic admitted that,

"I had never known anyone who is Muslim before being a part of this, so I think knowing these [Muslim] women, and meeting them, and talking to them, and learning about their religion combined with their gender kind of helped me to prepare to engage with people in other countries. Because I was really nervous going abroad and I did not wanna offend anyone but I wanted to learn also. I felt that I did not know how to ask those hard questions, and I felt that the Women and Islam session really helped me to prepare for that."

Asking those hard questions and having those difficult conversations was the second key theme to consistently appear in the social interactions scale of a global perspective. Several students shared that their time with cohort members taught them how to better respond to adversarial, or ignorant, or insulting comments. Almost as a call to action, one cohort member affirmed, "[c]all out the crap! But it is so important to do that in a way that is not destructive to the other person, as a person. We are not working to shame them. And VIH has helped with that

78

so much!" Another focus group participant shared how hard it is to acknowledge when she is frustrated or angry but concomitantly to get the other person to think about what they are doing. She noted, "[f]iguring out how to approach that is challenging, and VIH made me think a lot about that."

Setting boundaries, respecting others' boundaries, and thinking about how to bridge the differences, cultural or otherwise, were skills that focus group participants indicated that they have either developed or refined. For example, one student shared an encounter during her study abroad experience in Latin America with a very sheltered student. She was able to think back to the tone of conversations between cohort members at the retreats and mimic that approach to the end of positioning her classmate to learn in a "way that is kind and helpful and that encourages growth." Learning not to either give a response that is a function of raw emotions or to "keep it all bottled in until I exploded or said something rude," was one of one participant's "biggest takeaways" in VIH in terms of social interactions. Thinking about her job waitressing 30 hours a week, her studies in two majors and two minors, and her role as president of an extracurricular club, she added, "I really can't think about any other opportunity or kind of group setting, especially given the current political climate, where I would learn those skills." As might be expected, holding respectful conversations around challenging topics with people who are different than you are a strong indication of the growth of the interpersonal dimension of a global perspective. What was pleasantly surprising was an almost ubiquitous emphasis on bridging these differences without hurting anyone. In one particular focus group, the students framed this skill in terms of "creating community," no matter what place, group, or context one finds themselves in. As students recounted these challenging situations and how they constructively dealt with conflict, there was an almost palatable sense of support in the room.

4.4.2 Social Responsibility

Given the eligibility requirements, marketing, and application components, VIH is designed to appeal to women with a high level of social consciousness who are invested in community engagement. Yet in the weeks and months following each and every spring retreat, VIH awardees invariably share how daunted they were to arrive and to meet other 'women global leaders.' Focus group participants reiterated how intimidated they felt upon arriving at the retreat and not knowing anyone but later, how that trepidation turned to excitement. When asked to provide an example, one student divulged that it has always been difficult for her to make meaningful connections because "it was sort of façade after façade, [and yet at the retreat] it was just this wonderful connection of 'take me exactly as I am.' Because, you know, I want to do similar things, change the world, and these amazing, powerful women inspired me equally." Coming to the retreat and meeting other engaged women provided a venue for which the awardees could "bond[…] over our struggle. But also over the fact that we wanted to make it out. [to go abroad]."

When asked to describe the dynamic at the fall retreat, the focus group participants shared how it seemed as though they simply picked up where they had left off at the spring retreat. The primary difference between the spring and the fall retreats was that rather than prepare for their international experiences, the learning objective of the retreat for the awardees was to work together to find an expression for their newfound skills, knowledge, and passions through their Community Engagement Experiences (CEE). One such example that occurs almost every year during the fall retreat, one of the recurring topics of conversation centers on sexual harassment abroad, and according to one student, a sense of solidarity is built once you realize that you are "not the only person who went through that." This solidarity over gendered injustices finds its expression every year in at least a handful of CEEs. As one participant remarked, "[i]t's not one,

80

it's all of us against it! It's not just that somebody has to deal with it individually! You know it's a problem that all of us can tackle together." Of course, not all participants chose to do their CEE on sexual harassment, or anything gender-related, for that matter. CEEs are executed on a wide variety of topics including, but not limited to, sexism, racism, classism, environmental issues, issues of access and inclusive and topics such as arts, culture, and language.

According to one participant, simply organizing a CEE to raise awareness about a global issue had a kind of ripple effect on her behavior as well as the behavior of some of her cohort members. When pressed for an example, she explained that she and her cohort members would make a cognizant effort to sit with international students because they could empathize with their situation. "Because we had been abroad, we realized that so many people on our campus were disrespectful and not really willing to get to know other people because they are different. And this is probably happening on all campuses. Once you go abroad, you just feel like you have to do so much more!" Numerous other examples of these 'micro' behavioral changed were shared.

Virtually all participants shared that even after the conclusion of the VIH Program, they stayed connected to support each other, to challenge each other, and to continue their activism. Throughout all three focus groups, participants spoke of how they felt challenged to go above and beyond their original goals each time that they hear of another cohort member who was accepted into the Peace Corps or who moved to another country for a new job opportunity. One student emphatically stated that "I'm probably in law school because I was like the plan that I have right now, I can do more than that." Students who attend one of the schools on the eastern side of the state shared how they continued to be active and how they all attended the 2017 Women's March in D.C., and how most of them met up again to participate in the March against Sexual Violence.

I expected the conversation around social responsibility to center on environments outside of the university, however, given where the focus group participants are in their lives, the conversations took another direction. The topics and direction of the focus group discussions reoriented my outlook on timeframes. I realized that most of the focus groups' discussions centered on the retreats, the CEEs, and activism at their home institutions due to their age. The focus groups were exclusively open to cohort members in the 2013-2017 cohorts, and the majority of cohort members in the 2016 and 2017 cohorts are still matriculated in an undergraduate program. Others between 2013-2015 were in graduate school, thus the tone for these discussions was much more centered on their university communities than I had originally anticipated. One student in the 2013 cohort did share how she regularly incorporates social concern into her classroom, in her job as a teacher. "I'll be teaching an American issue but I want to open it up to see what is going on in the world. And that makes the kids more engaged…because it creates curiosity." She spoke with a sense of pride when she shared how the child wrote her a note saying that he too wanted to go to Russia.

In general, reentry is one of the least addressed but potentially most fruitful areas in international education for personalized education and in-depth cultural learnings. It constitutes the opportunity for the student to take her own agency; i.e., her skills, knowledge, and passion and channel them into social change. It is through teaching students to exercise their own agency that we avoid Ceballos' call to push our students past being passive receptacles of knowledge and to cultivate their ability as change agents. Focus group participants' discussions, in terms of forming relationships with diverse peoples, learning how to have hard conversations in a respectful way, and investing their global knowledge, locally, indicate growth in the interpersonal learnings dimension of the global perspectives. While examples were mostly given in the context of VIH,

once the focus group participants graduate from university, it will be interesting to see the degree to which their skills and learnings are implemented in their workplaces, communities, and beyond.

4.5 INTRAPERSONAL

The intrapersonal dimension of a global perspective centers on enhancing an awareness of one's values and sense of self. As a person embraces their different identity domains, they become more confident and adept in dealing with cultural differences. The two scales are:

- "Identity: level of awareness of one's unique identity and degree of acceptance of one's ethnic, racial, and gender dimensions of one's identity."
- "Affect: level of respect for and acceptance of cultural perspectives different from one's own and degree of emotional confidence when living in complex situations, which reflects an 'emotional intelligence' that is important in one's processing encounters with other cultures."

4.5.1 Identity

Embracing one's true self-emerged as one of the strongest themes in this research. Describing both the retreats that she participated in as an awardee as well as the retreats that she participated in as a facilitator, one focus group participant stated that the cohort "not only helped me to understand different elements of my identity, it challenged me to explore and to embrace them!" She went on to add that she appreciated

"see[ing] where other people were in their journey and talking about their experiences. And to see people standing strong in the parts of their identity that they had explored and that they had fought for, and that at this point, they were reinforced. It was inspirational and helped me to better understand myself."

Referring to one particular guest speaker at a past retreat, she added, "I remember hearing [her] speak with so much confidence, and I remember looking at her and thinking 'it's okay to be yourself! It's okay to do your thing!... It's okay to embrace yourself! And that was amazing!"

For several participants across all three focus groups, the diverse cohort was instrumental in positioning them to better embrace their identities. According to one highly-involved student, she is used to being the only person of color in most of her classes and student organizations. However, as her cohort was about 50 percent women of color, she affirmed that "there was a very different dynamic." Another focus group participant and current graduate student described the racial composition in the academic spaces in which she was a part of to be "nearly all white." She went on to share that the racial and ethnic diversity in the VIH cohort afforded her the opportunity to "be her true self." At that point, another focus group participant chimed in by self-identifying as Asian American. Referring to a past VIH awardee and returning facilitator, she affirmed, "I really related to her because she's also Asian America. And I felt really, really inspired by her." Referring to this student's additional international travels, she exclaimed, "I realized that I can go again if I really want to!"

There is an important distinction to be made between identity formation and identity negotiation. In speaking of their intrapersonal growth and development, focus group participants did not associate the cohort model with helping them to *find* their identities but rather in supporting them in *embracing* their identities. "I knew who I was before I got to the retreat but I actually *got*

84

to be myself in the retreat. And I wear a lot of different hats in my life. I work in law enforcement and that carries its own set of standards." She went on to explain that, "I don't really ever talk about this but I also raise kids and I am in a same-sex relationship. So it was really good to just be in the retreat because you can just be who you are and you can just let it all go, and you don't have to worry." And in embracing what one student referred to as her "true identity," focus group participants articulated a kind of pride and empowerment gained from their fellow cohort members.

> "Before the retreat, I saw myself as this small person in a small town in PA, and I was just going to go to school…have the same boyfriend, and then be on this one path my whole life…But then, I realized that it is not just one path!... We must be courageous, be assertive, and you can go out and do whatever you want!"

Speaking of authenticity and embracing your true self, one focus group participant referred back to one of the fall retreat activities: imposter syndrome, and the impact that the accompanying roundtable discussions made on her.

> "I feel like I have always had imposter syndrome….And the retreats really changed my views on how I view myself…how I was able to go abroad and I was able to accomplish so much more beyond my previous identities of being a low-income, first-generation college student…I have always felt the obligation to hide those identities because I feel ashamed to have to talk about them."

Another focus group participant stressed the importance of, "having that self-awareness because I don't think that I had that before VIH! And I having talked to people even now that are my age who don't understand who they are as a person! And that's so important to get! I think that's a major component of what I gained out of VIH!"

4.5.2 Affect

As cited above, the definition of affect centers on confidence in working through complex cultural situations. By far the most dominant theme to emerge across all focus groups was confidence. The VIH focus group participants consistently referred back to their fellow cohort members in giving them confidence. Yet this confidence was not framed in terms of cross-cultural interactions but rather in exercising their own agency in their own spheres of influence. "I think that VIH is the reason I am who I am today. I've always had these big goals and these big ideas but I have spent so much of my life trying to shrink down and not take up space, and not be seen or heard," one focus group member shared, adding that "And then I got thrown into this group of women, who wanted to encourage everyone and to inspire each other. That was not what I was used to, and it was just so refreshing and I started to find myself and my voice."

When pressed to articulate what exactly about this group, or cohort, inspired this sense of confidence, the answers of focus group participants centers on two axes:

First, cohort members stressed the importance of seeing past VIH awardees who returned to the retreats to facilitate activities because it was like "seeing into the future" and it planted the seed that "this can be me!" One focus group member summed up in her thoughts in the following way. "You get a lot of confidence just from the past VIH awardees. I think that's a really important component during the retreats. I remember talking to [a past awardee] after my first retreat. And it made me realize how much this program can help you." As first-time travelers, VIH awardees are often open in recognizing their initial fear of going abroad. As such, the real-life example of other first time travelers who had not only gone abroad but had done it successfully gave cohort members a feeling of support and empowerment.

Second, focus group members recounted how the transformation that they saw in their fellow cohort members motivated them to also set loftier goals and to reach higher. One focus group participant shared that by the fall retreat, she could feel herself transforming. Of even greater inspiration were those fellow cohort members who were also getting out of their shells and "by the end of the retreats, they were the ones constantly talking and raising their hands. And that was really great seeing the confidence bloom in others as well." As fellow cohort members further opened up, a kind of ripple effect passed through the cohort. Speaking of the closing at the spring retreat, one student exclaimed, "hearing others be so open, I started to say, you know what, I am scared to do this but I am going to do this! Because I believe in myself! And I believe that I am strong enough!...it gave me the confidence to go and try new things."

When further pressed for the reasons as to why confidence was generated through the cohort, another reoccurring theme that emerged across all three focus groups was the importance of structured and deliberate reflection. One focus group participant and self-described introvert affirmed that learning how to engage in critical reflection enabled me to take "the time to try to understand how I was feeling, why I was feeling this way…Trying to determine why my emotions are like this, and how I can use everything that I just learned in the future." As the cohort went through the critical reflection activity together and practiced the skill throughout all three days of the fall retreat, the connection with fellow cohort members and past VIH awardees who returned as facilitators was instrumental. The skill of critical reflection was modeled by the past awardees and the cohort members practiced it together. Tackling this skill development together was a key factor in developing self-confidence.

4.6 GROUNDED THEORY THEMES: LANGUAGE, LEVEL PLAYING FIELD, & SISTERHOOD

In addition to the six subdimensions of the global perspectives inventory that I had originally identified as themes: knowledge, knowing, social interactions, social responsibility, identity, and affect, I carved out space for the identification of grounded theory themes. These grounded theory themes, although not initially identified at the time of the research design, speak to the value of the cohort model in ways that I did not initially anticipant or intend to capture. Three grounded theory themes were identified and substantiated across all three focus groups: language, a level playing field, and sisterhood.

4.6.1 Language

Language in the application process and throughout the entire VIH Program was identified by multiple focus group participants as one of the key variables that set the tone for their learnings. One focus group participant initiated this thread of the conversation by affirming, "I'm going to go a little deeper and say language…The language of women, leadership, and global perspectives." In her own words, this is language that "requires you to show up!...maybe it's taken for granted, but I think that it means a lot!" Another focus group participant built on her thoughts adding that "[t]he rigorous requirements means that people are doing this program because they are goal oriented; it is not just about ticking off boxes." While the language of the name of the program established a framework for applicants, focus group participants delved into the language used throughout the retreats and examined it as a determining factor in establishing high expectations for their learnings. Throughout the two three-day retreats, facilitators and program leaders

discourage current VIH awardees from using the word 'trip.' The so-called 't-word' was brought up in all three focus groups. "Like the 't' word! It is not a trip; it is an international experience!" One focus group participant exclaimed, adding that,

"I always use [the phrase] international experience because I think about the retreats and how it is not a trip!...Oh my God! Who says it was a trip? Like you're going around, and you're sharing your story with people, and you say that you are a scholarship awardee in the VIH Program, and that means something! And we are all saying international experience because we have been trained to say it that way. When I think of VIH, I think of women and leadership and showing up and accountability, respect, poise, and I think that those words have a lot of value."

Another focus group participant chimed in, building on her counterpart's thoughts,

"I think that you are on to something…because we all came in [to the retreats] with the idea that 'yes, we want to do something!' And the retreats are really like, 'what are your goals, how do you get to that? Like, goals & action plans' and I think [that language] puts people in a place of 'wow!' It makes you realize that this is definitely more than just a trip or traveling to another country."

Focus group participants across all three focus groups also referred to how certain language was introduced into the VIH community. Key examples included 'learning community,' and 'imposter syndrome.'

Speaking as the number of program requirements, the vetting, application, and interview processes, as well as the 15 individual offices and campus coordinators at each of the VIH institutions, one focus group participant questioned, "how many essays, even just to apply?" She went on to recount the components comprising VIH: the retreats and the CEE. According to her,

the VIH Program attracts a specific type of application. "If you really do believe in it, and you really want to get the most out of it, you want to get all of those challenging experiences." Language, according to the focus group participants, serves a useful function in first discouraging less committed women from applying, and once the cohort has been selected, language continues to reinforce the message of high expectations and lofty goals. As one focus group participate emphatically stated, "I think we know how rigorous the application process is and how rigorous the review process is and if you are here, you're meant to be here, you belong here." Language, as identified by focus group participants, sends a clear message about the program and is continuously reinforced and harnessed as a mechanism through which to set and hold the VIH awardees to high expectations.

4.6.2   Level Playing Field

The VIH Program is exclusively open to women with no previous international experience. Every year, dozens of women across 15 institutions inquire as to whether they are eligible to apply given the fact that they have taken a cruise to the Caribbean or been on vacation with their parents to Europe, among many other reasons. While recruitment would infinitely be easier were the eligibility requirements to expand so as to encompass these students, the VIH leadership has held steadfast in reinforcing the 'no previous international experience' requirement. As such, having never traveled abroad remains one of the most important criteria for application to this program. Focus group participants constantly referred back to this requirement with a sense of gratitude. One focus group participant shared that, "[a] lot of people I knew, my other close friends had started study abroad, or at least had traveled with their families, and I hadn't done any of that." Another woman described herself as "shy" and "nervous," saying that "there were people that I

met in the past who traveled like since they were born, basically, they have been to tons of countries…so I personally really liked that everyone was in the same boat. That was a great way of connecting with people."

Being in a cohort with other women who had never left the country gave one focus group participant the "feeling of coming into a support system." A kind of leveled playing field was created as a result of this requirement in which, in the words of another focus group participant,

"not one person thought that they were better than anyone else. Not one thought that they were more entitled than anyone else. We were all there to learn; we were all there at the same base level, and I feel like that also fostered a great environment to be in because I never felt ashamed of myself. I never felt like 'oh this girl is more traveled than me!' I never felt that I was making a dumb statement or anything like that because I could just be myself."

A similar parallel in terms of experience and levels can be drawn with language classes. Take, for example, the case of a class where half of the students have had previous experience learning a given language while the other half of the students had never been exposed to this language. A kind of leveling will automatically result in the class in which those with previous language experience are considered to be brighter, or at the very least, will be more comfortable participating. This part of the focus group conversations resurrected insights from (Steele)'s cautionings around domain identification and stereotype threat and how educational success requires that the student identifies and feels a sense of belonging in a given educational setting. While one focus group participant described the initial feeling at the beginning of the spring retreat as a kind of "shared anxiety," she went on to affirm that the leveled playing field quickly changed that sensation and she realized that the "VIH women really respected the fact of where I was in

my life and who I was." Indeed, many focus group participants expressed how they arrived at the spring retreat with such a high level of anxiety that they believed that they didn't even belong in the program.

> "I was talking with [another student] and we had this connection where we both felt that we didn't belong at the spring retreat! And I remember thinking when I received the acceptance email that it was a mistake and kind of anticipating an apology that it wasn't supposed to be me. And I think there are women in the program that sometimes arrive here thinking that they are not supposed to be here."

A kind of camaraderie formed around the lack of international experience in which VIH awardees described the mentality as "Hey everyone, let's do this and let's do this together!

4.6.3 Sisterhood

The camaraderie, or sisterhood, was the third and final grounded theory theme to emerge from the focus groups. Below are some of the focus group participants' thoughts around sisterhood:

- Previously, "I hadn't known some of these people at all but then their triumphs are so exciting and they became my triumphs. I feel like our world is very competitive all the time. So I feel just so proud. I wrote 'proud' over there [points to the affinity diagram]. It is so incredible the opportunity that we have been able to have together that brought us together. Just try to understand how to go about not breaking people down but really just try to help people grow and help us move as a society towards something greater!"

- "In the real world it seems women are always competing against each other…but when you got here, whatever personal problems that you were dealing with, it was like a fresh start."

- Thinking back to the start of the spring retreat, "[w]hy did you come to VIH? And then you start talking and it is like oh my god! I understand why!... That does not really happen at Club Volleyball."

- "I had never really fit into a specific group. And to come into a group of women where no one was jealous, no one was tearing each other down. As [pointing to another focus group participant said] it wasn't a competition. It was I see what you're doing and I want you to continue doing that! But if someone did screw up, we held each other accountable. Like I don't think you should have said that. Here is how I would have handled it. And it's very mature and professional! And I want more of that in the world!"

- "I think also during all the activities with women that there has been a huge emphasis on personal growth and personal reflection that I didn't get in other orientations or clubs or sports or other stuff. You just don't get that sense of that self-reflection. It's like professional development, networking. I feel like I got professional development within also kind of like finding who you are and being inspired by all these women and helping you to find yourself."

- "I work in science. So to go to medical school, you have to be at the top of your class. If you're not it's like it doesn't matter, you are not good enough. So you are always competing with people and comparing yourself to other people. With VIH, you're just you and you are trying to be a better you and not better than others! You are just being a better you to what you were yesterday! And other people acknowledge that. They are not competing against you either. So its kind of like a level playing field where you are not competing. It's just very supportive.

- "Everyone in this program is honestly there for a reason! Like we care about the world, and we all want to make a change in the world. It is really nice and supportive, it's kind of like a little sisterhood."

The concept of sisterhood reverberated throughout all three focus groups on numerous occasions. When the concept of sisterhood is disaggregated, it is understood in three main parts: a) a group (i.e., cohort), b) women, and c) support. While language was indicted as a crucial part of setting the tone for VIH and by extension, for establishing high expectations, this particular word choice of 'sisterhood,' traces its origins to its usage by a VIH awardee during the closing activity of one of the fall retreats. In other words, the term 'sisterhood' was not coined by the VIH leadership, nor from The Heinz Endowments, nor from the administrative apparatus at the University of Pittsburgh. It is important to reflect on whether the impetus for change stems from a top-down mandate or a bottom-up social behavioral change.   It will be interesting to see how VIH cohort members continue to shape the program, the organizational culture, and this sisterhood in the future.

4.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of three focus group discussions comprising engaged, underrepresented VIH awardees from 2013-2017. Throughout the focus groups, the participants discussed several questions, and their answers to these questions position us to examine the effect of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the three dimensions of the global perspectives of first-time women travelers. Both the frequency diagram and the wordle presented in section 4.2, depicted the following three themes that emerged across all three focus groups in

their respective Affinity Diagrams: a) the development of new knowledge; b) behavioral changes; c) solidarity and/or self-confidence. Sections 4.3- 4.5 each respectively addressed the three research questions of this study. For example, section 4.3 centered on the cognitive dimension, section 4.4 focused on the interpersonal dimension, and section 4.5 examined the intrapersonal dimension. While this study was structured around the three dimensions of a global perspective as articulated by L. Braskamp et al. (2014), it also remained open to grounded theory themes. The three grounded theory themes that emerged across all three focus groups were: a) the importance of language in the application process and beyond; b) a level playing field; and, c) sisterhood. Section 4.6 was dedicated to exploring these themes.

5.0   CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

5.1   KEY FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to explore the effect of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the six subdimensions of a global perspective of underrepresented first-time women travelers. The results of these focus group discussions illustrate varying degrees of growth across the six subdimensions of a global perspective as well as in terms of the three grounded theory themes that were identified.

Within the knowledge dimension of a global perspective, a key theme to emerge was global commonalities. Through the goals and action plans activity, VIH awardees were put into conversation with each other, through multiple interactive, experiential activities, they were exposed to their cohort members' goals and action plans during the spring retreat and later, to their cohort members' learnings on their international experiences, during the fall retreat. In turn, this exposure resulted in a more robust understanding of issues, which at first blush are understood at a local level. As a result of these conversations, awardees were able to more deeply understand how these issues play out globally, across different countries and cultures. In other words, instead of looking at an economic, political, or sociocultural issue strictly through the lens of the nation-state, cohort members shared their knowledge of this issues to the end of drawing out commonalities across countries. The learnings articulated by the focus group participants in this subdimension closely parallel the new construct of global education rather than the traditional construct of international education. One notable theme that was absent in the focus group discussions was any reference to the importance of learnings around language development. This

may well be a function of the discipline-centered nature, as examined in Chapter 2, of the study abroad programs themselves. This may also be a reflection of the fact that notable gains in terms of language development are difficult to make on a short-term program.

Other research using the GPI as a methodological framework has tended to report 'knowing' as the subdimension in which participants experience the least amount of growth. The leading intellectual architect of the global perspectives framework, L. Braskamp et al. (2014) has speculated that this is due to a traditional emphasis on "formal didactic classroom instruction" and an under-reliance on more interactive pedagogical practices including the "integration of experience and reflection" to the end of holistic student development (p. 114). Indeed, most assessment tools, including those explored in the review of the literature provided in Chapter 2 do not make mention of 'knowing,' or any comparable theme. This may well be indicative of the inherent difficulty in measuring concepts such as cultural complexity, cultural relativity, and cultural context. In the case of the VIH focus groups, participants, in spite of the absence of direct questions regarding this subdimension, did speak to their learnings around positionality, - in particular, racial positionalities – as well as in-group and out-group status. The focus group participants traced their learnings on the subdimension of 'knowing' to one particular activity during the fall retreat: the cultural continuums. The Cultural Continuums activity afforded the VIH awardees the opportunity to explore a range of approaches, from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, to different culturally critical incidents.

The analysis of growth in terms of the interpersonal dimension illustrated that the VIH awardees clearly valued the juxtaposition of the diversity and the like-mindedness of the cohort, and they attributed the intersection of these two factors to their learnings around how to hold, as one focus group participant stated, "difficult conversations." It is important to note that the focus

group participants appreciated having these "difficult conversations" in an empowering way that bridged differences and did not "tear each other down." Interacting with those who are different from you is one of the important skills, in the literature around global competencies in general and global perspectives, specifically. Yet discussions were not articulated in terms of a checklist or a series of checked boxes. Rather, behavioral traits such as professionalism, active listening, and holding each other to account were spoken of across the focus groups. This indicates that the focus group participants were not interested in a manual and certainly not a list of 'do's and don'ts of social interactions but rather in enhancing an introspective orientation to the world. Instilling cultural humility, supporting each other, and teaching each other to ask complex questions to the end of unraveling sometimes contradictory answers was the goal. The cohort, by challenging each other's mental models and previously held beliefs, were pushed out of their comfort zones and were more likely to build relationships with those who are different from them from a place of empathy and respect.

Focus group participants spoke to their development in terms of social responsibility scale primarily in terms of their Community Engagement Experiences as well as their behavior on their respective campuses, for example, with international students. In other words, growth, behavioral changes, and development in this dimension primarily almost exclusively occurred in a local context largely confined to their universities or college environment. Social responsibility and activism were hence deepened at a local level. This is perhaps to be expected as many of the focus group participants have yet to graduate or are recently graduated.

Growth reported in terms of identity was one of the strongest themes to emerge in this research. Focus group participants articulated this growth in terms of embracing their identity, rather than in terms of understanding it. Describing herself as "awoke, aware, and conscious of

98

my being," one focus group participant credited her fellow cohort members with helping her to *own* who she is. She went on to add that, "as we make meaning around other cultures, it is important to have self-knowledge and an understanding of how your positionalities influence our views." This may well be one of, if not the greatest gains, of the cohort model. "Authenticity! There is so much power in that! Just owning your true self and knowing yourself and what your strengths are." Societal expectations and dynamics have increasingly made it difficult to feel a sense of acceptance and pride in one's identity, especially at the stage of young adulthood. Focus group participants attribute the cohort model as successful in making much-needed contributions in these areas.

The final subdimension of the global perspectives framework is affect, or the confidence with which one acts in different intercultural settings. Confidence also emerged as a strong theme throughout the focus groups, although it also was articulated more in terms of national diversity than global diversity. Perhaps also, there are certain skills or orientations such as affect that are nurtured throughout time and not fully cultivated immediately. They prove difficult to recognize in their incipient stages, and as such, may well have been underreported. This newfound confidence in exercising agency in their own spheres of influence came from both past awardees who returned to the retreats as facilitators as well as fellow cohort members. It is important to emphasize that the cohort's sense of confidence was directly attributed by the focus group participants, not to the international experience, but rather to the collective experience during the spring predeparture retreat and the fall reentry retreat of preparing for and later debriefing the international experience. Perhaps this also is a function of the in-depth interactions that took place within the cohort at the spring and fall retreats whose intensity was not mirrored during the

international experience with the focus group participants' counterparts on their respective study abroad programs.

Three grounded theory themes that consistently emerged across all three focus groups were: a) the importance of language in the application process and beyond; b) a level playing field; and, c) sisterhood. In addition to constituting grounded theory themes, including only women who had no previous international experience, the use of language as a means to set high expectations, and sisterhood were consistently pointed to as pivotal in shaping the dynamics around the cohort's interactions, and by extension, their learnings. It is important to note that while sisterhood was a clear theme in all three focus groups, one word that did not come into play with parallel frequency was 'feminism.' The focus group participants spoke of equality, equity, and empowerment, in essence, the very definition of feminism. They also discussed gendered disparities, sexual harassment, and the double bind, but feminism as a concept was only mentioned in one of the three focus groups. While this is not directly related to the framework of the global perspectives, it is noteworthy, given the gendered nature of the program.   One plausible explanation is the still heavily negative connotation around this word (although not its meaning) in present-day society.

In analyzing the data of the focus groups, it is fitting to make mention of concluding remarks as participants left the room as well as in follow-up communication via email. Almost half of the focus group participants lingered at the end of each of the two-hour focus group sessions. Amongst themselves, they chatted about relationships, the whiteness of academia, and the #MeToo movement. They also spoke to the depth and quality of the focus group conversations. As one focus group participant stated at the end of one session,

"May I just speak about this [focus group] conversation? I haven't been able to have these amazing thought-provoking conversations since I graduated, and it's been so beautiful to hear how much people have accomplished. I feel like [hesitates] my heart is just beaming right now. I don't have kids but if all of you were my kids, I would be so proud of you."

Another post focus group topic of conversation was a continuation of the conversation around advice for future cohort members. Furthermore, over one-third of focus group participants, of their own volition, sent emails expressing what the program meant to them and reiterating their own learnings. These emails were unsolicited and were not in response to a post focus group email correspondence.

Select clear trends emerged across the three focus groups although certain focus groups did a 'deep dive' into certain topics. In summary, the wrap-around cohort model provided a source of support, before the international experience, and by extension, through social media outlets, during the international experience. After the international experience and graduation from the VIH Program, focus group participants expressed how this support continued, of their own volition. The support of the cohort resulted in the enhanced development, albeit to different degrees, in the six subdimensions of their global perspectives. This growth and development were articulated more within a national rather than an international context.

5.2   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study constituted the first attempt to do research on the VIH Program, and data collected and analyzed from the focus groups produced a preliminary set of findings. The subsequent limitations

can be extrapolated from the design of this research: a) non-generalizable results; b) participants included in the study; and c) the number of dimensions and overlap between these dimensions.

First, it is important to reiterate that the research design of this study was an impact assessment evaluation of a specific program: the VIH Program. The qualitative methodology employed in this impact assessment evaluation was focus groups. As this particular qualitative methodology is framed within the constructivist epistemology, objectivity is not a concern. As such, this research solely concerns itself with the evaluation of one particular program: the VIH Program. Along these lines, focus groups are regarded as an exploratory research method, and as such, the results of focus groups should not be generalizable (Menter, et al. 2011). Thus, the results of this study directly pertain to the VIH Program, and the degree of applicability that these results have around enhancing the six subdimensions of a global perspective of engaged, underrepresented, first-time women travelers who are not apart of the VIH Program is yet to be determined. While the results of this research are not generalizable, this study may still inform or prove useful in orienting those who are interested in enhancing the quality of the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented students in global education, more broadly.

A second key limitation of this research was who was included, or in more precise language, who was not included. The rationale for including exclusively underrepresented, engaged first-time women travelers has been detailed in Chapter 3. However, there are other people and organizations who are involved and invested in the VIH Program. For example, the funder of this program, The Heinz Endowments, continues to generously fund this legacy program. Over the course of the past 10 years, The Heinz Endowments has also consistently played a pivotal role in designing the programmatic parameters of the components of the program. Their

continuous support of the VIH Program has been instrumental in its success, and a future study would necessarily include their voice.

Along these lines, each VIH institution has a Campus Coordinator. The VIH Campus Coordinators, some of whom have served in this capacity for almost ten years, have wholeheartedly embraced the task of marketing the program, administering the application processes, coordinating the interview processes, and overseeing the advising processes of the three VIH awardees on their own respective campuses. They have invested countless hours of unremunerated work in this endeavor, and this program would not function without their dedication, energy, ideas, and support. As they are not directly compensated for their work as Campus Coordinators, this is truly a labor of love and their perspective also deserves to be taken into consideration in a future study.

Finally, the research design of this study was complex and multifaceted. This research examined the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the six subdimensions of a global perspective. In addition, the research later identified and explored three grounded theory themes. As a result, oftentimes during the multiple passes at coding the transcriptions, the amount of overlap between different subdimensions of a global perspective was noted. Within these six subdimensions of a global perspective, there exist seemingly innumerable intersections and intertwining concepts between and across themes. For example, there is overlap between the results of affect (confidence) and other subdimensions such as social relationships. As one focus group participant noted,

"I keep going back to social justice…before the retreat I was more like, alright, I'm just going to take a backseat on most things…then the girls kind of motivated me and hearing them speak and seeing how changed they were through their experiences and coming back and still

processing it, it made me feel moved to do something! And be like, no I'm going to be more assertive than this!" and to say "this is okay for me to stand up for myself!"

Another example around intertwining themes stems from the numerous insights shared by the focus group participants around the Women and Islam activity. The VIH awardees enhanced their knowledge of Islam (knowledge) but also became more comfortable in interacting with women whose religion differed from theirs (social interactions). Also, several focus group participants shared sentiments along the lines of being "surrounded by confident women helps us to find our voice," which could be interpreted as the following subdimensions: social responsibility, identity, or affect. Deciding how to code these, and other insights shared by focus group participants, was difficult, and thus these decisions invariably influenced the findings of this research. Weaving together some of the most salient interwoven 'ah ah! moments proved to be one of the greatest challenges with this research. These limitations: a) non-generalizable results; b) the voices included in the study; and, c) the number of dimensions analyzed, also constitute opportunities to strengthen the study were it to be replicated in the future.

5.3   IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Against the backdrop of the recent shift from international education to global education, this research presents new and innovative 'good practices' for international education practitioners. What can be gleaned from this research on the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers? How can we apply these findings in the contexts of our own institutions, global education departments, and study abroad offices?   Four key implications for practice emerge from this study.   First,

international educators must prioritize interpersonal and intrapersonal development alongside the cognitive learnings of our students. Second, international educators must not only increase compositional diversity but also support underrepresented students through culturally responsive pedagogy. Third, the wrap-around cohort model has the potential to not only develop our students' global perspectives but also to fine-tune their ability to navigate diversity domestically. Fourth, and finally, interinstitutional collaborations can provide fertile ground for global education.

Institutions of higher education tend to invest in study abroad as a means to develop cognitive knowledge and workforce readiness. Knowledge and professionalism are important. As Chapter 2 explored, there are many concepts, understandings, variations, deviations, applications, and ways to measure these constructs and competencies. In her discussion around terminology, Deardorff et al. (2012) cite scholars who argue that "the term competence is in itself flawed in that it suggests completion of the learning process and relatively low-level skills." She goes on to argue that "terms such as development, awareness, understanding, maturity, or capability would be considered more representative of the processes involved" (p. 284). As the wrap-around cohort model illustrates, communication, empathy, and humility can also be developed domestically, by putting underrepresented students in conversation with each other. As institutions move from international to global education, educators must think creatively about "self-awareness, knowledge of relationships, and synthesis" (Nair, 2017, p. 10) as they support students not only in their cognitive development but also in terms of their interpersonal and intrapersonal development.

Second, in recent decades, international educators have tried to increase the number of underrepresented students in study abroad, primarily through innovative marketing techniques. As the VIH Program illustrates, setting the bar high in terms of directly targeting not only members of a specific underrepresented group but also first-time travelers, increases diversity, overall.

While expanding access to international education for underrepresented groups is crucial, international educators must also evaluate the degree to which our curricula intellectually and emotionally validate and support underrepresented students. This question moves us from issues of compositional diversity to culturally-relevant pedagogical practices. In her thoughtful argument on supporting diverse students, Gay (2000, 2002) compels educators to completely revamp our pedagogical practices from a culturally responsive teaching standpoint. Deardorff and Jones (2012) concur in urging educators to "utilize course materials from multiple cultural perspectives" and ensuring "that the courses go beyond knowledge transmission related to intercultural materials (i.e., a few 'international readings added in) to address actual skill development" (p 298). The wrap-around cohort model constitutes a powerful example of culturally responsive teaching in international education. It also challenges us to reframe our thinking around compositional diversity in study abroad and to holistically examine the curricular design and pedagogical practices, more broadly.

Third, the wrap-around cohort model has implications for practice regarding the juxtaposition of intercultural competencies and competencies centering on domestic diversity. Leading intercultural scholars J. M. Bennett and Bennett (2001) explore the nexus between global and domestic diversity. While intercultural competencies are considered to center on differences between and across nation-states, as well as across cultural units, religions, and geographical entities, competencies around domestic (i.e., U.S.) diversity deal with race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and class, among others. They argue that diversity is an intricate mix of international culture and domestic aspects. Their exploration of the complex symbiotic yet asymmetric relationships between intercultural competence and intercultural communication constitutes a powerful call to action. In short, our students must be able to apply their global competencies,

106

domestically, with people who are culturally different from them. The changing composition, or increase in the numbers of underrepresented students, in international education, is fertile ground to cultivate these learnings. As Chapter 4 illustrated, a well-designed wrap around cohort model provides the opportunity for students to learn from each other. The wrap-around cohort model not only empowers our students to develop their global perspectives but also supports them in learning to navigate diversity, domestically.

Fourth, given the shift from international education to global education, recognizing the value of domestic opportunities such as interinstitutional partnerships to enhance students' global perspectives is paramount. In questioning whether "institutions [will] remain institution-centric?" Deardorff et al. (2012) challenge us to consider a mix of learning environments, including online, on-campus, abroad, and abroad (p. 458). As the wrap-around cohort model illustrates, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development, can occur domestically, at an interinstitutional level. In fact, given the 'bubble-like' environment of some institutions, or the fact that a certain cross-section of the population, be it racial, socioeconomic, or a given intellectual aptitude as measured by standardized test scores and QPAs, tend to flock towards certain institutions, institutional diversity tends to occur only in certain forms and is no longer (if it ever was) to be taken for granted. By extension, should we not also question the degree to which a university-run study abroad programs can provide enough exposure to either domestic or international diversity to result in any meaningful development? Consider a university-run program, comprising faculty and students from the same institution. This type of program also constitutes a cohort model, albeit one who travels together. While their cognitive learning will (most likely) deepen through their study abroad experience, does this model serve as a driver or barrier to growth at an interpersonal

and intrapersonal level? The wrap-around cohort model in this study flipped the traditional on-site study abroad cohort experience in which a group travels, studies, and lives together on its head.

Wrap-around cohort models that pool students from interinstitutional partnerships can constitute a new, a more diverse, type of academic ecosystem. This, in turn, provides fertile ground for global learnings and their ensuing application on a local level. In fact, over the course of the past two years, national organizations such as Diversity Abroad and CIEE have funded national-level cohort models in study abroad exclusively for underrepresented students. While these models center on the study abroad experience itself, they are expanding to include a more robust pre-departure and re-entry components, in short, the wrap-around cohort model. Moreover, as these models are only two years old, they may well be interpreted, along with VIH, as spearheading nascent trends in the field of global education.

Implications for practice from this research are numerous, and only four possibilities were detailed above. Facilitator training, scaleability, and replication are all factors to be considered, and ultimately, the viability of the wrap-around cohort model will depend on the political will of a given institution to articulate new priorities as well as to reallocate resources from experiences abroad to domestic curricular endeavors.

In summary, there is merit in building on our cognitive learning objectives so as to include interpersonal and intrapersonal learning objectives. Previous efforts around increasing compositional diversity on study abroad must shift to include developing culturally-responsive pedagogical practices so as to better serve underrepresented students. The juxtaposition of global competencies and valuing domestic diversity are closely related, and both are important. As such, nascent initiatives in global education must necessarily value both. Finally, possibilities for interinstitutional partnerships that develop our students' cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal

development are virtually limitless. Certainly, the wrap-around cohort model holds important learnings for the future of global education and has much to offer.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As a result of this study, recommendations for future research are three-fold: a) timing; b) discourse analysis; and c) sociocultural theory. As the learnings of the focus group participants are brought to light and analyzed, it is important to reflect on timing, from a developmental perspective. When the VIH awardees are admitted into the VIH Program, their focus is almost exclusively centered on their international experiences. As they progress through the retreats, they begin to speak of cultural learnings and global perspectives. In tackling their CEEs, the conversation shifts to leadership and their newfound realization of the challenges inherent in mobilizing people and working in a diverse team. Concomitantly, they oftentimes develop a heightened awareness of social justice and agency. Upon graduation from their respective institutions, their focus begins to center on sisterhood, support, and relationships. While focus group participants express their interests, areas of focus, and learnings in different ways throughout different stages of the VIH Program, they are, almost exclusively, confined to their own localities; i.e., their universities and immediate surrounding communities. A necessary step for future research is to analyze if, or the degree to which, these learnings shift from a local to a national or even an international framework within the next 5 to ten years.

The second recommendation for future research centers on the coding methodology employed. As expounded on in Chapter 3, the coding methodology employed in this research was primarily axial coding. However, a fourth and final coding pass was driven by discourse analysis,

guided by the overarching communication theory of social constructionism. The latter is defined in the writings of Davis (2016b), the examination of not only "what people say (their language usage)" [but also] "how they say it;" i.e., their communication patterns (p. 85). However, discourse analysis, rather than simply constituting a fourth coding pass, could have driven the coding framework. A more in-depth analysis of social constructionism or the "negotiate[ion of] public or shared meaning may well yield a more in-depth understanding of group dynamics, and by extension, group learnings. An analysis of the shared meanings through the lens of social constructionism and how these interpretations are a function of multiple factors could provide additional insights into the value of the cohort model (Davis, 2016b).

Finally, a crucial area for future research centers on the application of Russian psychologist Leo Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to the interactions within the cohort model. Drawing on ontology, Vygotsky argued that enhancing learner capabilities can be achieved through symbolic mediation and dialogic interaction. Several Vygotskian theories could shed light on how best to harness the cohort model to the end of developing global perspectives. For example, Vygotsky postulated that learners best deepen their learnings when they are in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), or the instance during which they are most sensitive to new information and likely to be pushed into a place where they deepen their learnings. Students can be pushed into this zone by the teacher but also by a fellow student whose knowledge surpasses their own. In Vygotskian terminology, this person is deemed a 'more knowledgeable other,' or the 'MKO.'

Both the MKO or the educator is able to 'scaffold' the student, or provide the assistance that they need to advance to the next level of knowledge or learnings. For example, there are VIH awardees who arrive at the spring retreat and are not confident in their ability to make a concrete, tangible, specific, and focused goal and action plan. During the first evening, these awardees are

110

placed in trios, and these groups of three begin to give each other feedback on their goals and action plans. Invariably, one of the three emerges as the most knowledgeable other, or MKO. This MKO scaffolds the other two learners. The next day at the retreat, the VIH awardees are reshuffled into different groups, and the same process occurs. A new MKO emerges, and scaffold their fellow cohort members to a higher place of development and knowledge. No matter the situation, an MKO will always emerge, although the degree to which they push their fellow learners into the ZPD is contingent on many factors.

In summary, Vygotsky's works offer a new framework through which both the cohort model and the development of global perspectives can be analyzed. Viewing knowledge development as a function of mediated activities in which the participants' own lived experiences and their social interactions with each other are instrumental in shaping their learning processes, is a worthwhile direction for future research. Harnessing this framework may well provide additional insights into the micro-interactions between cohort members that push them into the ZPD. Vygotskian theory, timing, and discourse analysis all constitute areas for future research.

5.5   DEMONSTRATION OF SCHOLARLY PRACTICE

As part of the Ed.D., all cohort members must complete a Demonstration of Excellence. In this way, we are able to disseminate our results and perhaps even position other research-practitioners to make use of our findings by incorporating them into their own respective practices. While the formal requirement is only to complete one Demonstration of Excellence, I believe that the time and effort, and well as the personal investment in our dissertations warrants that Ed.D. graduates find multiple ways to disseminate our findings. In May of 2018, I gave a formal presentation of

this research at the annual VIH Campus Coordinators meeting with the VIH Campus Coordinators. I will also give a similar presentation to the funder of this program, The Heinz Endowments. Moreover, I am in the process of submitting abstracts to practitioners journals, for example to a leading quarterly publication in the field of international education: Diversity Abroad. Finally, I have also applied to present my findings at an international conference.

5.6   CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the effect of a wrap-around cohort model on the development of the global perspectives of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. The compositional diversity of underrepresented groups such as racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA, Pell Grant recipients, students registered with their disability offices, and STEM students, has increased in study abroad programs throughout the experiential paradigm. However, international educators can do more to ensure that these groups not only do not succumb to Steel's Stereotype Threat but also are well-positioned to develop their global perspectives.

The results of this research illustrate the impact of a wrap-around cohort model on the six subdimensions of a global perspective of underrepresented, first-time women travelers. Focus group participants spoke to enhanced knowledge in terms of the global interconnectivity of issues and commonalities across nation-states. Throughout focus group discussions, participants' insights consistently demonstrated an acknowledgement of cultural context, a grappling with cultural relatively, and an appreciation for cultural complexity. Moreover, their self-exploration of their respective positionalities, and how they change depending on context, demonstrated learnings within the knowing subdimension of a global perspective. In terms of the interpersonal dimension

112

of their global perspective, focus group participants shared a newfound comfort with having 'difficult conversations' in a constructive, respectful way. Departing from a place of cultural humility, they spoke not only of the value of but also their ability to build relationships with those who are different from them. Moreover, they are already putting these newfound mindsets and skills to the test, at home, in terms of their activism, or social responsibility. Their Community Engagement Experiences illustrate this, as do the behavioral changes that they have implemented, at home, in the context of their local universities and communities. The strongest growth was reported in the dual constructs of identity and affect. Focus group participants shared how they "owned" their identities with a newfound sense of pride. Finally, their confidence in their own agency and ability to exercise that agency, domestically, was directly attributed to the cohort model and to their fellow cohort members. While this newfound confidence was articulated within a local framework, with time, focus group members may well also articulate this dimension on a global level. Beyond the construct of a global perspective guiding this research, focus group participants also identified language, a level-playing field, and sisterhood, as programmatic constructs that shaped their experiences and guided their learnings.

By conducting a series of three focus groups with underrepresented, invested graduates of the VIH Program, I gleaned a series of 'good' practices for international educators around a wrap-around cohort model. Four key implications for practice emerge from this study. First, international educators must prioritize interpersonal and intrapersonal development alongside the cognitive learnings of our students. When international educators open up space for underrepresented, first-time women travelers to share their experiences with each other, to reaffirm the value in their respective narratives, and to deepen their understandings of others' respective cultural capital, these students become well-positioned to deepen their interpersonal and

intrapersonal learnings. Second, international educators must not only increase compositional diversity but also support underrepresented students through culturally responsive pedagogical practices. My personal and professional experiences have convinced me that international educators need to better serve underrepresented, first-time women travelers. Pacification by pedagogy, or the memorization and regurgitation of cultural stereotypes and the glossing over of issues of power dynamics at both the local and the global levels, does not serve our underrepresented, women first-time travelers in the development of their global perspectives. As such, the wrap-around cohort model can contribute to comprehensively diversifying the field of international education. Third, the holistic development of the global perspectives of our students will contribute not only to valuing different cultures at a global level but also shape our students' abilities to communicate openly and respectfully with the diverse peoples throughout the United States. Fourth, for decades, study abroad has been at the forefront of efforts to internationalize the curriculum. The institution is no longer the default environment. For example, there is great value in interinstitutional collaborations as they can provide fertile ground for global education.

We are on the brink of a widespread shift in thinking about study abroad within the larger trend of global education, and global education *globally* (Deardorff et al., 2012). Study abroad is no longer the default experience to be taken as synonymous with global education, and previous assumptions around learning outcomes in study abroad can no longer be taken for granted. Our willingness to pivot in response to these nascent trends, to shift our use of language, to develop holistic, culturally-relevant programmatic offerings, both at home and abroad, and to reallocate resources in function of personalized domestic experiences that result in global learnings will shape global education in the next century. In this rapidly-shifting context, the wrap-around cohort model also provides an innovative response to how, as Nair (2017) suggests, global learning can

114

be achieved through many different means, not only study abroad. Some of these programmatic offerings may center on service learning, intentionally-structured domestic and global internships, and culturally relevant and critical coursework, both at home and abroad. In short, there are many forms in which global education can manifest, and we are only starting to acknowledge the value of global learning, domestically.

Shifting our focus from study abroad as an isolated experience to how the wrap-around cohort model fits into an overarching curriculum in global education empowers educators to re-center our efforts on student learning outcomes and student development. It is my hope that the findings of this study provide useful strategies to orient international educators as they navigate the challenges of this new chapter of global education. As this research illustrates, the wrap-around cohort model has value for underrepresented students, and it will hopefully be capitalized on to empower additional underrepresented students in the development of their global perspectives.

TERMINOLOGY

Awardee – a student admitted into the VIH Program.

Bafa Bafa – a cultural simulation in which half of a group learns the values and behaviors of one culture, the Alphans, and the other half of a group learns the values the behaviors of a second culture, the Betans. Bafa Bafa positions students to deepen their knowledge of culture past what is 'visible;' i.e., the food, dance, clothing, etc., and understand, as one focus group participant remarked, "what the rules are or what their set of values is."

CEE – Community Engagement Experience

CIEE – Council on International Educational Exchange

Cohort – a formal learning community

Cultural Continuums Activity – The cultural continuums activity draws from Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofsteed's cultural dimensions. During the activity, the cohort works with Hofsteed's sets of values: polychronic vs. monochronic; individualism vs. collectivism; activity vs. people, etc. For each set of values, the cohort members place themselves on a line, first in accordance with where they situate their own culture on a given continuum of values (e.g., hierarchy vs. ascription) and second, in accordance with where they situate the culture of the place where they studied abroad in terms of the same continuum of values.

Dance – an activity during the spring retreat in which awardees are taught the movements of a particular dance, either from India, West Africa, or Brazil.

First-Time Traveler – a person with no previous international experience.

Global Perspective – "the capacity for a person to think with complexity taking into account multiple perspectives (cognitive), to form a unique sense of self that is value based and authentic (intrapersonal), and to relate to others with respect and openness especially with those who are not like her (interpersonal)" (L. Braskamp et al., 2014).

Goals and Action Plans – Working in pairs, trios, small roundtable groups, VIH awardees are put in conversation with each other and worked together to make specific, personal goals for their international experiences. From there, each awardee designs accompanying action plans to ensure that they are capable of operationalizing their goals.

Focus Groups – Data collection method where a small group of people with shared experiences are guided in a discussion by a facilitator.

IIE – Institute for International Education

International Fair – an experiential activity during the fall retreat in which awardees display their cultural learnings.

Intersectionality – "Is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social diversion, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2).

Miss Representation – a documentary analyzing how the media's oversexualization of women makes it difficult for them to assume positions of political power.

Stereotype Threat – "a general theory of domain identification that is used to describe achievement barriers…the theory assumes that sustained school success requires identification with school and its subdomains; that societal pressures on these groups (e.g., economically disadvantaged groups, gender roles) can frustrate this identification (Steele, 1997, p. 613)**.**

SAO – Study Abroad Office

THE – The Heinz Endowments

Underrepresented Students – populations who remain underserved in study abroad: Pell Grant recipients, STEM majors, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA students, and students registered with their institutions' Disability Offices.

VIH – Vira I. Heinz

Wangari Maathai – the protagonist in a documentary entitled Taking Root. The documentary depicts how Wangari Maathai's leadership abilities organized the women of Kenya and ultimately contributed to the downfall of a decades long dictatorship.

Women and Islam – Muslim women from at least four continents and at least eight countries facilitate three interactive stations: a) the hijab, b) henna; and c) prayer. These three interactive stations provide the VIH awardees with the opportunity to engage in small groups of about 10 students with different Muslim women, and it positions them to ask questions during our large group panel.

Wrap-Around Programming – predeparture and reentry programming, before and after an international experience.

RETREAT AGENDAS

Spring Retreat

AGENDA: FRIDAY
VIH Icebreaker: Find the Connections
Welcome & Intros
Program Overview
Goals & Action Plans
Creating a Learning Community
PreDeparture Presentation
Insights from Interview with International Student
Bridges to Africa & Tana

AGENDA: SATURDAY
Breakfast
BaFá BaFá Cultural Simulation
Women & Islam & Henna
Station 1: Prayer
Station 2: Hijab
Station 3: Panel
Debrief Women & Islam
The Art of Crossing Cultures
Global Perspectives Inventory
Goals & Action Plans
Cultural Coaches
Ethical Social Media
Miss Representation

AGENDA: SUNDAY
Breakfast
Community Engagement Experience
Miss Representation Roundtables
Dancing: India
Lunch
Experience Reports

Taking Root
Goals & Action Plans Breakout Groups
Report Out & Make the Most of Study Abroad
Close Retreat

Fall Retreat

AGENDA: FRIDAY
World Traveler Welcome Back Reception & International Fair
Cultural Continuums
Personal Culturally Critical Incident
Diversity Roundtables Internationalized

AGENDA: SATURDAY
Breakfast
Program Assumptions & Parameters
Women & Leadership in the 21st Century
Lunch
Women & Leadership Panel
Interview with a Woman Leader
Global Connections: Human Trafficking
Imposter Syndrome
Dinner / Intra & Interpersonal Flashcard Debrief
Cultural Activity
E-portfolios

AGENDA: SUNDAY
Breakfast & Marketing
Leadership: A Global Perspective
A Personal, Culturally-Critical Incident
Effective Communication: A Key Leadership Skill
CEE Overview, Timeline & Resources
Lunch & CEE Roundtables
Closing

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project on 'Group Dynamics' that is being conducted by Sarah Wagner from The University of Pittsburgh.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to hold a focus group to find out about 'group dynamics'; we will discuss our general ideas about 'group dynamics.'

I understand that the study involves a focus group interview that lasts two hours of less, which will be videotaped.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the study or to leave, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study, I understand that this will have no effect on my relationship with Sarah Wagner or any other organization or agency.

I understand that because of this study, there could be violations of my privacy. To prevent violations of my own or others' privacy, I have been asked not to talk about any of my own or others' private experiences that I would consider too personal or revealing.

I also understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and that the names of all the people in the study will be kept confidential.

I understand that I may not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, but that my participation may help others in the future.

The members of the research team have offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do. I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

_____   _____

Today's Date   Your signature

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact either Sarah Wagner (412-605-7631) or the chair of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

AFFINITY DIAGRAM / GALLERY WALK

- Learnings during the spring retreat.
- Learnings during the fall retreat.

Focus Group 1 Questions:

1. During the retreats, how did cohort members, give you confidence to go abroad, to do your CEE, to tackle the challenges ahead?

2. How did cohort members have inspired you to get out of your comfort zone, to make a difference, to think about things differently?

3. So, during the retreats how did your cohort members help you to deepen in your understanding of other cultures, countries, and other culture values? All of you had your own individual experiences but do you feel like you learned about other places and other cultures and the world as well?

4. How did participating in the retreats and interacting with your cohort members help you to come into a better understanding of who you are?

5. What makes VIH VIH? What creates the environment that is empowering and not destructive, in which you feel inspired to lift each other up and to support each other? How was that environment maintained between and after the retreats?

6. How did your cohort members inspire you to build relationships with people who are different than you?

7. Has your cohort continued to support each other either during the unstructured time at the retreats, or outside of the retreats, past the VIH graduation? If so, how?

8. What advice do you have for future cohorts from VIH?

Follow Up Questions:

1. Would you help us to understand what that means?
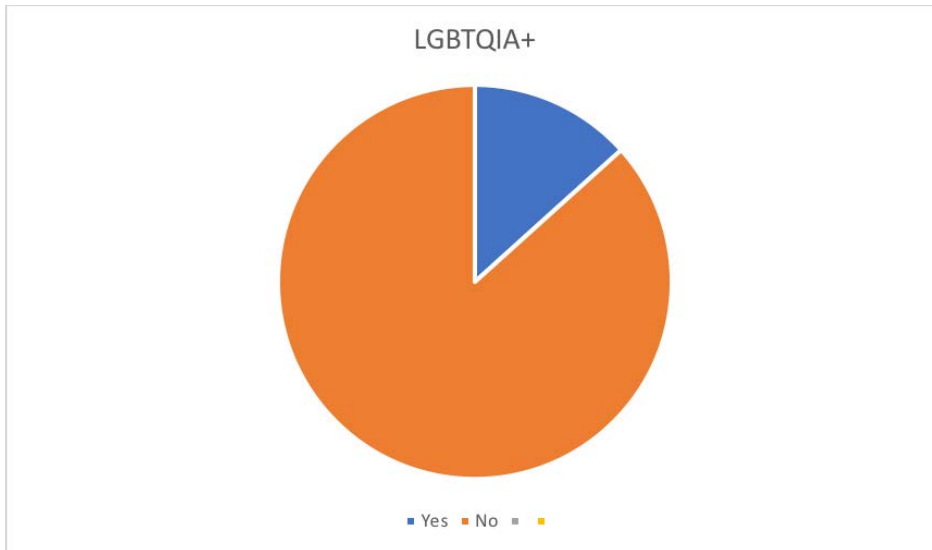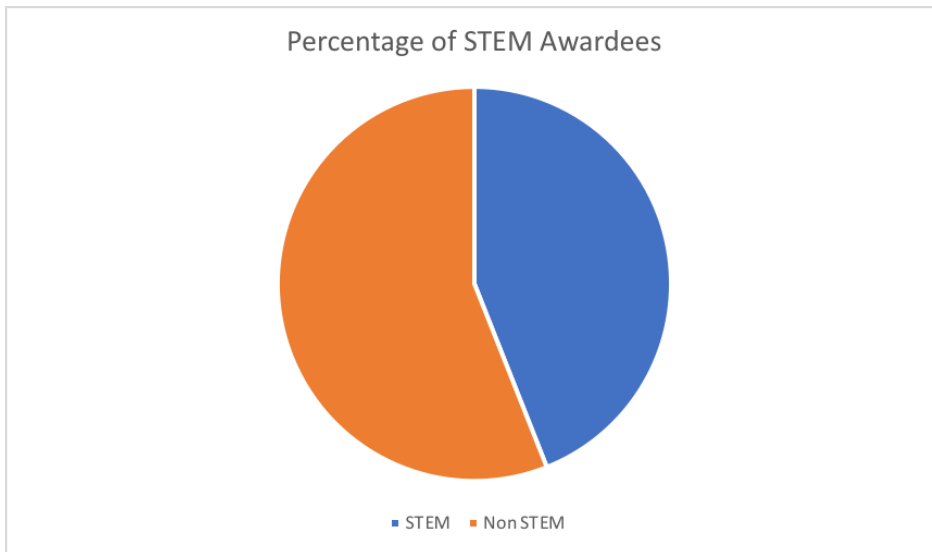
2. Would you say more about that?

3. Would you share an example of that?

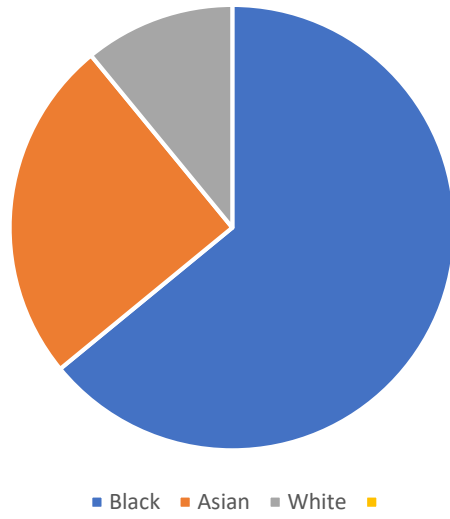4. Would you go a little bit deeper with that?
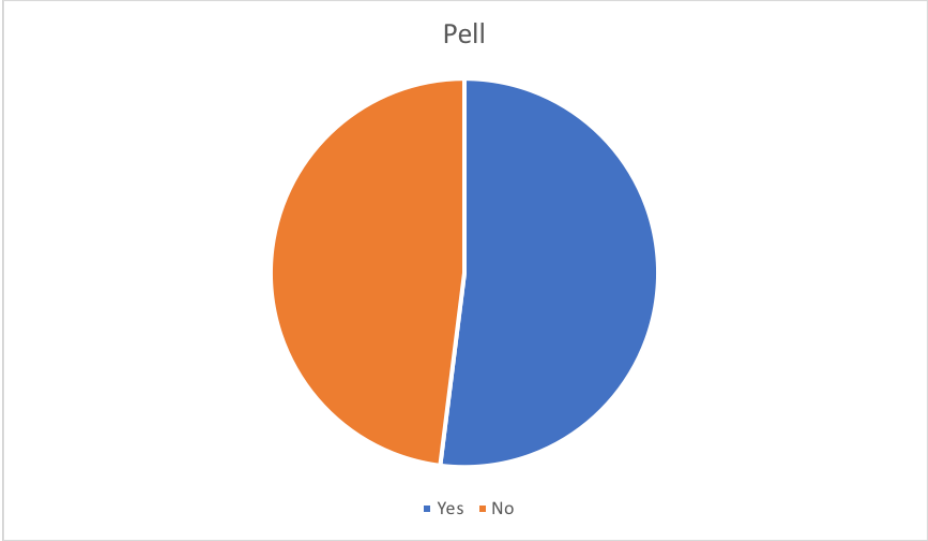
APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VIH AWARDEES

Percentage of STEM Awardees

STEM ■ Non STEM

LGBTQIA+

Yes ■ No ■ ■

Race

■ Black ■ Asian ■ White ■

Registered with Disability Office

■ Yes ■ No ■ ■

Pell

Yes   No
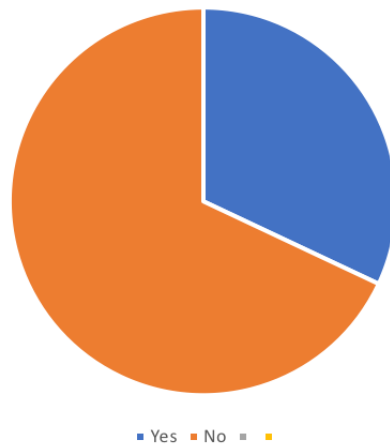
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