

Global Understanding through International Study:

Learning from Experience at an American University

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留学を通しての国際理解： アメリカの大学留学経験から得るもの

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Abstract

International educational experience is widely presumed to have a wealth of benefits for both students and participating institutions, yet the amount of empirical study has not reflected these trends. A means for assessing international experience was developed at a four-year university in the U.S. Northwest and initiated with both outgoing and incoming American and visiting Japanese students. Particular attention was directed to exploring potential impacts of international study experience for academic and career decisions as well as overall world view. This research also informs on how curriculum and program development can build on individual-level experiences and changes associated with study abroad.

Key words: study abroad, program assessment, student change, Japanese students, American students

(Received October 1, 2010)

抄 録

本稿は、留学生における国際経験の調査方法について考える。国際教育経験が学生、及び、学生の留学先などの関係機関にとって有益であることは現代では周知の事実である。にもかかわらず、この分野における研究は未だ進んでおらず、留学（受け入れ、派遣双方を含む）が加速している昨今、留学に関する研究は必要不可欠である。この研究では、アメリカ北西部の4年制大学から留学しに行くアメリカ人学生と留学しに来る日本人の学生について、国際教育経験が学生たちのその後の人生において、学問的探求、仕事を選ぶ時の条件、その他、様々な世界観がどう変化したか、留学がそれらにどのような影響を与えたかについて調査している。調査結果をふまえて、大学のカリキュラムやプログラムに留学に関連した経験や変化をどのように取り入れていくかにも言及する。

Introduction

In an age of global economic integration, pervasive international linkages, and human movement there is compelling reason for developing the ability to communicate and work effectively across cultures and borders. Awareness of cross-cultural issues and understanding of the history and nature of world issues is increasingly seen as essential for effective economic relations as well as for long-term world peace (NAFSA 2010b). Heightened security concerns only deepen the need for such knowledge and perspective. Higher education is critical to this emerging outlook, including through curriculum that provides exposure to global topics. Direct international academic experience – popularly referred to as “study abroad” – is generally regarded as having the most far-reaching benefits, not only for participants but also for home institutions and even for places and peoples that are visited (IIE 2010). Student participants regularly express enthusiasm during and immediately after studying abroad and universities readily cite numbers of participants and exchange agreements as evidence of institutional international commitment (NAFSA 2010b).

Despite the ubiquity of positive assertions about international study, some from when this was a fairly new venture (Gardner 1961; Sell 1983), empirical studies of the international experience have been slow to accumulate (Lambert 1989; Burn, Cerych and Smith 1990; Brabant, Palmer, and Gramling 1990; Kauffmann, Martin, Weaver and Weaver 1992; McCarthy 1998, Cohen, et. al. 2005) and much of this research examines language acquisition (e.g. Collentine 2009). Assessment of international programs remains unsystematic on many campuses. Typical in this regard is Western Washington University (commonly referred to as Western or WWU), located in the northwest corner of the continental United States. Despite a strong record for substantial participation in study abroad by both outgoing and incoming students, Western has lagged in evaluating its international programs. Annually, 300-500 students (of a student population of about 12,000) opt to study outside the country at least part of the academic year, and comparable numbers of international students come to Western each year, including a large annual cohort of Japanese students. Still, only limited attention has been directed to addressing institutional climate for international programs, impacts of studying abroad, and levels of support offered outgoing or reentering students (Work 1995; McDonald 1998; Schafermeyer 2002).

In the mid-1990s, Western Washington University identified the need for greater institutional commitment to international education (Loucky 1997). Two different research projects were also beginning at WWU at this time, albeit not directly affiliated with the

institution's renewed commitment to international education. The first project looked at the experiences of one cohort of Japanese students studying at WWU and the second built on this and focused on WWU students studying abroad. Both studies were designed to address both individual-level impacts of international experience and their implications for the host institution, with particular focus on: 1) the nature of personal changes and educational decisions associated with studying abroad; 2) impacts of international experience on subsequent career options; and 3) potential benefits for program improvements and for establishing ongoing evaluation procedures.

Rationale for International Education

Reports of the benefits of study abroad experiences are innumerable, especially coming from student participants immediately on return to their home country or campus. The need for systematic confirmation of anecdotal evidence persists, however (Dolby and Rahman 2008). How does study abroad influence global perspectives, subsequent academic choices, broader intellectual development, and personal growth? Knowing whether and how these domains may change can help inform current practices so as to maximize program benefits at universities and colleges, while contributing to greater understanding of the value of international education more broadly.

Since World War II, tens of thousands of college students have taken advantage of study abroad programs to leave campus-bound learning environments for global destinations. According to the latest available statistics compiled by the Institute of International Education, over 160,000 international students studied in the United States in graduate and undergraduate programs in the 2008/2009 academic year, an increase of over 37% from four years prior (IIE 2009c). Over 240,000 American students studied abroad during the 2007/2008, a fourfold increase over the previous two decades (IIE 2009a). Although the number of Japanese students studying abroad has fallen since its peak in 1997, in 2008/2009 nearly 30,000 Japanese studied abroad in the United States (IIE 2009b). As they are challenged to think and act in new ways, students report learning significant life-changing lessons regarding intellectual development, perspective on global issues, and personal development (Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimowicz 1990; Kauffmann et al. 1992). "It changed my whole life" is a common statement affirming the transformational quality of international experience.

On campuses worldwide, mission statements in student and faculty programming are increasingly oriented to creating learning environments that encourage interdisciplinary perspectives, interpersonal understanding, and practical applications of such knowledge (Teichler, 2004, Pearson 2003). International study has not always been central to institutional mission or support, however. While usually seen as valuable, it may remain peripheral to an

academic structure grounded in departments and subdivided through colleges. Sometimes it is even dismissed as essentially an unstructured opportunity for travel and fun. Fortunately, as evidence of the connections between a quality liberal arts education and study abroad experiences has grown with increasingly focused research efforts, calls for increasing support for international education is becoming more widespread, both within academia, private think tanks, and Congress (NAFSA 2010a, Committee for Economic Development 2006, S. 473 2009).

In addition to programmatic implications, the primary benefits of study abroad experiences lie at the individual level. These relate to four principal areas: intellectual growth (including academic and language skills), deepening of a global perspective, personal development, and career influences (Kauffmann et al. 1992, Tillman 2005).

With regard to intellectual development, proficiency in world language acquisition has long been perceived as the most direct educational benefit of study abroad (Goodwin and Nacht 1988; Opper, Teichler, and Carlson 1990). This is confirmed in Akande and Slawson's (2000) finding that 26% of students identify increase in language proficiency as the primary benefit of their experience. Time spent using another language as the primary mode of communication is critical (Dwyer 2004), though proficiency is also affected by prior knowledge of the target language and level of cultural immersion (Watzke 1998; Kauffmann et al. 1992; Euwema 1986; Carlson et al. 1990; Goodwin and Nacht 1988). Studying abroad also encourages rethinking of further subject areas and career choices. The vast majority (86%) of students surveyed by the American Institute for Foreign Study (Adelman, 1998) felt that study abroad was a worthwhile investment in their future, and other studies have found the experience to make a strong positive difference in career choice (Akande and Slawson 2000; Wallace 1999, Tillman, 2005a).

Second, the complex situations inherent in study abroad experiences have been shown to encourage personal growth, particularly in terms of maturity, self-confidence, and sense of well-being (Euwema 1996; Carlson and Widaman 1988; Kauffmann and Kuh 1985). General increase in interpersonal skills as well as tolerance are perhaps the strongest effects of international educational experience. The impact of study abroad on formation of personal values was confirmed in a comprehensive study of 21,000 study abroad alumni, 27% of whom reported greater open-mindedness and comfort with diversity as the primary benefit of their study abroad experience (Akande and Slawson 2000). On the other hand, culture shock, re-entry problems, and academic difficulties have also been reported, along with anecdotal evidence that the sojourn experience can entail stress-related outcomes such as eating disorders for some participants (Euwema 1966; Opper et al. 1990, Ward, Bochner, & Furnham 2001).

A third widely acknowledged goal of study abroad programs is deeper understanding of global issues and cross-cultural awareness. In the process of acquiring and integrating

knowledge from multiple sources as well as from working independently, those who study abroad appear to come to value more highly a variety of intellectual perspectives and increase interest in international affairs as a whole (Carlson et al. 1990; McCabe 1994). Beyond openness to cultural diversity and deeper intercultural sensitivity, participants also seem to develop a more critical view of both the opportunities in, and the shortcomings of, their own countries, consistent with a more critical evaluation of their own values (Kauffmann et al. 1992; Carlson and Widaman 1988; Opper et al. 1990, Tillman 2005b). In their review of related research, Goodwin and Nacht (1988:12) speak of personal metamorphosis in those who participate: "Students...become...more mature, sophisticated, hungry for knowledge, culturally aware, and sensitive. They learn by questioning their own prejudices and all national stereotypes. They ask new meaning on national culture. Their horizons are extended and they gain new perspectives."

The nature of experiences abroad, including degree of interpersonal contact and length of stay, combine with expectations and prior international experience to influence the overall impact of participation. The greater degree and more positive the interpersonal contact, the more likely study abroad seems to engender changes in attitudes (Kauffmann et al. 1992; Sell 1983). Similarly, duration of study affects direction and magnitude of attitude shifts (Dwyer 2004). Some researchers find less evidence of lasting impacts following study abroad (Carlson et al. 1990), especially for those with shorter stays (Kauffmann et al. 1992). On the other hand, another longitudinal study of study abroad participants revealed growth in independence and maturity even for those involved in programs of short duration (Cash 1993).

Motivated by such findings and the need for basic assessment at a university which has hitherto not comprehensively addressed its international dimensions, this research sought to examine how students may develop personally and intellectually from these experiences, and whether they contribute to a more "global" perspective or foster career-related skills. The influence of motivations and prior experience, and the potential for further program improvements, also contribute to the broader rationale for the efforts reported here.

Methodology

This paper coordinates two related longitudinal studies that sought to elucidate student perspectives of the outcomes of their study abroad experiences. The first study examined the experiences and perspectives of Japanese students studying in the United States. A qualitative longitudinal format permitted open-ended interviews with students 3 times, once during and twice after their sojourn. The second study examined American students studying abroad outside of the USA. This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. 5 point Likert scale questions were used to assess a variety of aspects of the study abroad

experience and students' perspectives, but these questions were assessed in an interview rather than a self-administered questionnaire. This allowed researchers to use open ended questions to elicit further detail and follow-up. The American students were interviewed prior to their departure overseas and a second time after they returned.

This research on the American students was designed to provide feedback from participants in international programs which could inform current practices so as to optimize student intellectual growth, personal development, and global perspective. Developing a viable interview protocol was a methodological objective accompanying theoretical and policy-related goals. One limitation in study abroad research is the dependence on self-administered questionnaires that are inadequate for gathering more detailed information via followup questions and discussion. Conversely, interview methods are capable of getting this kind of detail but are subject to the limitations of the researcher, especially time. This project thus included the aim of developing an interview protocol that was comprehensive, generated results that could be easily compared, and could be administered by trained research assistants.

Pre-experience interviews with WWU students were aimed at generating information about participant demographics, attitudes about upcoming or recently completed international study experiences, and worldview (See Appendix 1). A post-experience version consisted of similar questions, along with others relating to language, academic and cultural activities undertaken while abroad, perceived benefits, and other feedback about the program (See Appendix 2). Many questions were open-ended and modifications were made at various times in order to generate the most accurate and useful information possible.

Respondents were contacted by phone to arrange for face-to-face interviews or were interviewed during or soon after pre-departure orientation meetings that were designed to prepare them for upcoming study. Between 2000 and 2002, 85 pre-experience interviews were conducted, representing 75% of those invited. Unfortunately, far fewer interviews were completed with returning students, in part because of difficulties in tracking down students after their time abroad.

Profile of the American students

Respondents were age 18 to 26 years old and all were U.S. citizens, mostly (85%) from Washington State. The vast majority (82%) were female, reflecting a national pattern among study abroad participants (IIE 2010). Significantly, 95% (81 of 85) reported previous travel or work outside the United States, in large part because of the proximity of WWU to Canada. Three-quarters (75%) reported Caucasian as their ethnicity, which accords with the general profile of the student body. About 3/4 (78%) of the students engaged in study abroad during their third year, and 2/3 (69%) were participating in a program that was a single academic

quarter in duration; these patterns coincide with national trends toward “junior year” and short-term study (IIE 2010).

The analysis of the American students draws on a random sub-sample of 10 pre-experience and 10 post-experience interviews; unless otherwise stated, percentages reported are based on this sub-sample. Given the limited sample and timeframe, results presented here are preliminary, yet they are offered as promising directions for continued research.

Profile of the Japanese students

The American students participated in a variety of programs of variable length and destinations, precluding close analysis of the particulars of their overseas experience. The Japanese students, however, were all participants in the same program. This cohort of Japanese college students studied in a group of 110 in a structured, specialized study abroad program. This group was selected in part because of its duration (22 weeks). Students in this program were not integrated in standard classes at the host institution but had classes from a custom designed curriculum that met students’ needs with regard to both content and language abilities.

The Japanese students in this study were all participants in a well-established and long-running program at a Tokyo-area university. The home university offers four major courses of study: Economics, Business, Law, and International Relations. The program is required for all students in the International Relations course and is optional for all others. Importantly, there is no minimum English requirement for participation; all students who can afford the program are welcome. All participants study at one of three host schools in the U.S. for 5 1/2 months. Law and Business students study during the fall of their second year and the International Relations and Economics students go abroad at the end of their second year beginning in February. This overlaps with the beginning of the start of their third academic year in Japan and this group was involved in this study. About 2/3 of the students in this sample were International Relations majors.

While abroad this group of students take classes together in a custom-designed curriculum that aims to improve the 4 literacy skills of English and introduce and strengthen students’ understanding of American history and culture. Classes are taught in English and students are organized in classes based on language ability. Participants live in the dormitories and while efforts are made to place them with American students, many share a room with another participant. The program also organizes students into groups of 10 and assigns a volunteer International Peer Advisor (IPA) from the WWU student body who lives in the same residence hall and serves as an orientation guide, academic and cultural advisor, and group activity planner.

This program was characterized by the inclusiveness of the group of students. All

participants were from the same home university in Japan and were the same age. While abroad, they took classes together, separate from the classes students at the host institution attend. Those who were not assigned host institution roommates shared a dorm room together. They took weekend day trips together and shared other organized activities. Because of this living situation, the students had a comparatively low amount of contact with American students at the host university. While not particularly optimal from a cultural contact or immersion view, it was an excellent opportunity to examine what effects students in such a low-immersion environment surrounded by other Japanese would experience. The aim of the study then was to determine if substantial changes were seen in spite of the barriers to immersion and contacts with students at the host school and to document how perceptions developed over time. This latter goal was addressed by adopting a multiple interview approach that interviewed students three times over a six month period, including twice after they returned to Japan.

After introducing the project to the full cohort, volunteers were sought for a series of interviews. Of the 32 initial volunteers from a cohort of 110, 22 interviews were scheduled and completed. These first interviews were conducted 4 1/2 months into the 5 1/2 month sojourn. Followup interviews were conducted in Japan about one month after the students had returned and again 5 months after the conclusion of the trip to the U.S. 15 of the 22 initial interviewees were available for the first of the followup interviews and 11 of these were interviewed a third time. The analysis and results of this research is based on the responses of the 11 students (five males and six females) who completed all the interviews. All of the students were second year Japanese college students aged 19-21.

The first interview covered issues regarding students' experience in overseas travel, motivations for study abroad, current perceptions of the sojourn (in its fourth month at the time of the interview), and expectations for the return. The second interview was intentionally scheduled soon (one to four weeks) after students returned to Japan and fell during the adjustment phase of the experience. Here the overall aim of the interview was to get as broad a view of students' thoughts during the reentry and adjustment to Japanese society. The final interviews took place after about the same amount of time that students had spent overseas (5-6 months) and was a reflective interview. The questions were open-ended and the discussion topics were amended as needed over the course of the fieldwork (See Appendix 3).

Implications for Participants

Motivations & Characteristics

Students who elected to study abroad did so in part because they believed they would acquire first-hand knowledge that they might not otherwise gain through coursework at their

home institution. In discussing their choices, most voiced pragmatic reasons, particularly relating to academic matters and careers. About half specified language learning as a key to their choice of study location. Language majors comprised the largest group of students (by major), though many others had studied the language spoken in the country they selected. Others mentioned topical concerns as reason for seeking an international experience, especially those relating to social change and human needs. These trends were common among both Japanese and Americans.

In both groups, student perceptions of the quality and impacts of their international experience were strongly affected by their motivations for pursuing international study opportunities, prior international experiences, and characteristics of a particular program. Both personal and academic themes emerged in response to questions regarding choices about living and studying in another country, corresponding to what others have reported (Kauffman, et al. 1992, Akande and Slawson 2000, Tonkin 2003).

Prior to international study, virtually all students cite personal growth as a principal reason for studying abroad. When asked what they believe will be the most important benefit from international study, 80% of the Americans responded that they anticipate significant change in the way they would come to understand other cultures and peoples. They believed this would come through direct experience and exposure to different modalities, as well as through increase in factual knowledge per se. Students also believe that broadened cross-cultural awareness will lead to greater understanding of self. For example, one anticipated "understanding the way that we do things in the U.S. is not the only way or right way to do things." Many of the Japanese were motivated by a perceived need to know and experience foreign cultures, especially the United States. Several commented that they had not experienced much of the world, even though they were aware of it. College and study abroad presented a chance to resolve this.

One distinction between the American and Japanese students is that the American students seem to be using international experience as a way to explore various disciplines. Those who were considering a teaching career saw that exposure to different cultures and peoples may help them become more effective educators. One student mentioned how the experience would "increase (his) organizational and time management skills," while others identified expected language proficiency and job skills that would be beneficial in a future global economy. The chance to explore may be particularly important for the roughly half who reported uncertainty about their future career. In contrast, the Japanese students were typically not looking for help in deciding a career path, although many of them did take the experiences into account after the fact. One Japanese male commented that "before going to America, I just wanted to become a salaryman and work hard to get money. But now I think it is also important to enjoy life so I want to get a job that I enjoy." The international experience

and language development associated with studying abroad is generally expected to help them in the future, but along paths that have already been decided.

Other aspects of the American sample deserve mention. Besides a predominance of female students and those beginning the second half of their academic program, American participants identify themselves as being self-motivated and independent even before undertaking the international experience. They evaluate themselves as highly able to express their own point of view, cooperate with others in academic work, and accomplish things on their own. A majority also report feeling knowledgeable about the family/social relations, customs, and geography of their host country, though not about political and economic systems. This may reflect typical content of language courses as well as pre-departure orientation, which mainly covers general rather than country-specific information. Level of income is generally not cited as a predominant career goal. This suggests relative affluence but perhaps also that study abroad, with its expense as well as concomitant lack of financial support, is still beyond the reach of some students, such as those needing to work during their college years.

The structure of the Japanese program (low English skills, large group, non-integrated classes, program participant roommates, group extra-curricular activities) contributes to a relatively insular environment for the Japanese participants. Many have low English abilities that compound the physical distance between students created by the separate classes and group activities. The result of this is that the degree of immersion in American culture is much less than the American students experienced in their travels. This aspect of the Japanese experience is important to remember when assessing changes from the experience since programs that present greater opportunities for cultural contact and immersion would be expected to have more pronounced results than seen among the Japanese.

In spite of these apparent deficits in the program structure, students still displayed a significant shift in their personal development. The insular nature of the program also provided benefits such as aiding in the transitions between home and host culture (both during arrival and return) as well as providing a rich opportunity to discuss the experience with native speakers of their own language in real time, which increased reflection on the experience and likely contributed to the quality of the outcomes. From a research perspective, an additional benefit of studying the Japanese program is that the students' environment is consistent and shared among all participants and is known to the research team. This uniformity of the experience provides novel opportunities for identifying how study abroad affects students.

Among the Japanese students in this study, the International Relations students were motivated more by the career benefits of the experience than the Economics students, although the desire to improve English language skills for personal and professional

enhancement was salient in both groups. Although Law and Business students were not involved directly in this study, discussions with program administrators both at the home and host institutions suggest that the experience is more opportunistic for the non-International Relations students (Hansen 1999). Because of this, the program has a strict attendance policy (100% class attendance is expected) that results in premature repatriation when violated. Truancy and absenteeism is not a problem at the host school and thus it is reasonable to conclude that in spite of the opportunistic motivations of students, they are not using the time abroad as a play time. All but one of the Japanese students commented that they wanted to study abroad to remedy a perceived deficit in understanding about the world. They felt that their world was restricted to Japan and that it was important to see and experience more outside their national borders. "Japanese don't know the rest of the world" was a common perception and one that they were dissatisfied with. The one exception to this was the student who had lived in Indonesia and thus did not feel this lack of exposure to the outside world. Her motivation was to continue to develop her understanding and experience so that she could continue to pursue a career in international relations. She said she wanted to go back to both Indonesia and America because she "hadn't accomplished anything so [she] want[s] to go back there and achieve something".

The two samples in this study differed in ways that reinforce the general conclusions, namely that international experience fits with strong goals of personal growth as well as perceived benefits of wider experience for enhancing further options.

Intellectual Development

The impacts of international study on knowledge and on overall cognitive and intellectual development is a persistent concern of research, as noted above. This is also intertwined with development of self-identity and interpersonal relationships. Evidence of expansion of cultural knowledge, deepening of linguistic competency, and general intellectual growth was sought through both structured and open-ended questions asked of students on their return.

Novel situations and rich cultural contexts, as much as academic activities, provide students with tremendous opportunities for learning. 90% (9 of 10) of American students said that they developed new interests which varied widely among students while abroad and all of the Japanese indicated changes in awareness and perspective. Nearly all of the Americans reported being very involved in social activities as well as cultural events. Most mixed regularly with other program participants. Some were successful in developing relationships with host country peers. This varied, however, depending largely on how insulated their program was; a common complaint of students was that separate courses or living situations prevented meaningful kind of interactions with people from the host country that were

expected, desired, and even promised.

The Japanese were more insulated from their host culture than the Americans but didn't voice as explicit complaints, most likely because in spite of the insulated experience, students still underwent dramatic learning and development. Even though the Japanese students took classes and meals together, travelled on excursions in International Peer Advisor-led groups, and in general stuck to themselves, they did have opportunities to interact with Americans via structured opportunities with Japanese language students as well as the shared on-campus experience. Random and minor interactions with students on campus from buying a coffee to being asked for a cigarette stood out in students' memories and had visible impact on their perceptions of America and the people who live there. The natural environment also was key in the perspectives of the Japanese students. The host school is picturesque and overlooks an island-studded bay, a sharp contrast to the urban jungle of Tokyo where they live and study. Although not a cultural experience per se, the physical environment can affect students regardless of degree of cultural immersion. Several Japanese students mentioned that after living in the United States, they had shifted their priorities from achieving material success to seeking a life that balanced career and enjoyment of one's life outside of the job.

The American students used a variety of resources and strategies for increasing their knowledge about the host country. They reported watching television and talking with people as keys to becoming informed about current events. Since most lived with host families, talking and interacting with host family members and their friends were vital ways to share experiences and gain insights into everyday life as well as local and national culture. The Japanese students did not participate in home stays with Americans.

All students also took courses which were distinctly different than those available at their home institution, including those with specific cultural and historical content. Being in a country and speaking a language that they may have only read about or studied resonated in a particularly profound way. As part of a course of study associated with a college degree, especially when utilizing local situations, such courses draw deeply on context while benefiting academic goals. This accords with other research which finds that greater immersion in language and culture provides invaluable and sought after learning contexts that complement in-class learning done on campus or abroad (Collentine 2009).

Not all goes smoothly, however. Part of the challenge of studying abroad is making requisite adjustments and successfully confronting new problems (Coelho 1982; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham 2001). Half of the American students reported encountering social problems while abroad, particularly associated with culture shock such as when adjusting to new gender roles or social etiquette. 40% (4 of 10) experienced academic dilemmas, primarily when "having too much fun" impeded academic focus. The Japanese did not report substantial feelings associated with culture shock on their arrival in the United States and the

group structure of the program is likely responsible for diluting stress associated with adjusting to a novel foreign environment. There were no academic or disciplinary problems among the Japanese either and this can be attributed to the strict policies in place designed to avoid such problems and ensure that students do not take advantage of the time abroad to play or otherwise neglect their studies. Upon returning to Japan, there were reports of unease and confusion indicative of reverse culture shock but the study abroad group and new bonds of friendship formed within help allay these issues quickly. Students found that their primary friendship networks had shifted away from peers who had been good friends prior to the trip abroad but now were judged to have less in common than the new friends made while abroad, which indicates a recognition of and preference for characteristics associated with the experience of living overseas. Generally, however, readjustment difficulties were seen in a positive light by most students as it help to reinforce the changes they had undergone and made it easier for them to understand themselves and their countrymen.

Personal Development and Worldview

Students' responses reveal how significantly their international experience changes the way they view themselves, people and places visited, their home country, and the world as a whole. 80% (8 of 10) of WWU respondents reported affirmatively for each of these. Among the Japanese, there was unanimous agreement that the overseas experience had changed their perspective in valued and appreciated ways.

Student participants report increasing personal maturity, self-confidence, and independence. They acknowledge greater maturity in statements about being more concerned with "what to do with [their] life" and "things that matter." Most American students saw themselves as self-confident prior to going abroad, a common characteristic of those who seek out such programs, yet afterwards most acknowledge further growth as a result of the international experience. One acknowledged her new ability to "make friends quickly and easily now," and another "looks at [herself] as stronger." Most also expressed less need for extensive support systems, as expressed by the student who was "amazed that [she] could go somewhere and do something like that on [her] own." On a 5-point scale, 80% ranked their study abroad experience as a 4 or 5 with regard to making them more eager to make friends with people of different backgrounds and as enhancing their personal character overall.

Conversely, most of the Japanese felt a sense of inadequacy prior to studying abroad and for many, the trip was intended to address this personal shortcoming. In this regard, the experience was successful with all students reporting a greater sense of self-confidence and widespread belief in one's ability to accomplish unknown and intimidating tasks. Among the Japanese males especially a shift was noticed with regard to anticipated career tracks. Prior to studying abroad, the males all subscribed to a common metric of success in Japan,

one dependent on the status and type of job one finds following graduation. Even those who did not intend to follow this track indicated that they acknowledged the superiority of this standard. Following their international experience, the students indicated that they had learned of a new standard for judging success. Quality of life and personal happiness were now divorced from the measure of success in the job market and were given more consideration in charting a future course. Students felt liberated at the newfound awareness of different ways of considering themselves and this independence, although creating a visceral sense of differentness, was one of the most valued lessons learned. "How much money I make doesn't matter as much anymore," was one of the most powerful expressions of this change.

Worldviews changed along with perceptions of self. All students report developing a deeper understanding of the host country and culture and modified their own views as a result. 80% of the American students acknowledged revising previously-held stereotypes. "Mexico is stereotyped as dirty and poor, but now it doesn't seem so bad after living there," said one, while another acknowledged that "Costa Rica wasn't a tropical paradise" as had been portrayed. "Everyone thinks America is so dangerous but it is a really friendly place" was one of the most common comments among the Japanese. Certainly a stronger sense of interconnectedness of cultures and countries was engendered through their experience. "I didn't understand before how much everyone interacts with each other and how much they influence each other with cultural trends," said one student after studying in Germany. Another noted the reality of globalization when stating "I didn't realize how small Europe is."

Views of one's own country seem to be affected at least as much as views about places visited. Nearly all Americans voiced critique of the United States, primarily in recognizing that people in the U.S. were "very sheltered," if not "egocentric, ethnocentric and materialistic." Many spoke to the greater privileges that U.S. citizens enjoy. A common lament was that few Americans realize "how lucky we are". The Japanese students felt that Japanese culture was sterile, cold, and "dark, with everyone walking around with their eyes on the pavement." Compared to the friendliness and openness in the USA, Japan was seen as highly deficient. Such "ethnorelativism," or tendency to report positively about host country while identifying negative aspects of their home country, echoes the findings of Goodwin and Nacch (1988). The final interview with the Japanese students several months after their return found that the strength of these criticisms had abated and that appreciation of their home culture had grown, resulting in a more balanced perspective that both criticized and praised Japanese culture and people.

A greater cosmopolitan perspective was perhaps the area of strongest growth in both the American and Japanese groups. While most pre-departure students voiced interest in political, social, and current events in both their prospective destination as well as the United States, all students (100%) also reported much great interest on return. Participants in both groups

were unanimous in stating their intent to return to their host country and in recommending study abroad to others. Besides revealing powerful personal experiences and interpersonal connections, such statements point to a shift toward sensing oneself as a “global citizen” if not also new dedication to an international lifestyle. Indeed, several of the Japanese students mentioned that they now felt as if they were “part of America” and that they were invested in the world as a whole, hence their attentiveness to international events.

Career Formation

Studying outside one’s home country can strongly impact academic decisions and subsequent professional development, especially for those pursuing international careers (Wallace 1999). On a 5-point scale, 60% (6 of 10) of the American students rated the experience as 4 or 5 in affecting academic decisions after return to the home institution. They report greater confidence within a chosen major, interest in a new major, or a generally refreshed outlook on their academic future. All also indicated their intent to continue travel in addition to a desire to work abroad in the future. When asked to evaluate skills and knowledge gained through the study abroad experience, nearly all rated highly (4 or 5, in a 5-point scale) their foreign language ability, understanding of cultural differences/similarities, and general global understanding. This rating was also high prior to the experience, suggesting that students may no longer participate in study abroad programs solely to improve language ability as a marketable skill. Rather, they seem to be affirming its benefits for promoting greater personal and professional effectiveness in an increasingly multicultural and global environment.

Institutional Implications

Although not every student provided extensive additional feedback concerning their experience studying outside the United States, many made very informative and useful recommendations for how to better support and serve students both at home and in host sites. This research yields some practical suggestions for positively affecting study abroad programs at the sending institution, and eventually also for discerning potential implications for programs and perhaps even for host families.

Program Characteristics and Duration

In addition to the impacts on academic life as well as beyond campus that are outlined above, attention is merited towards the implications of participating in programs having different characteristics and duration. It makes a difference whether a program is mainly “stand-alone” or is integrated with settings and students of a host country. Degree and

“quality” of interaction appear vital to effective cross-cultural learning. The Japanese sample suggests that the concerns regarding the limited effects of low culture contact associated with programs based largely on group or cohort study may not be universal and that there may even be positive benefits in group study, at least for Japanese students. Length of study, as well as site and curriculum particulars, are also critical. Given that shorter (e.g., single-term) international experiences are increasingly common, attention is warranted to the special challenges this presents. Gains in short-term study are heralded by some (Arenson 2003), while others caution that far from guaranteeing greater cross-cultural understanding, impacts can instead be almost stereotypic. Similar to “packaged tourism,” this may especially be the case if limited time and exposure reinforces preconceptions about things more “exotic” or “others” who possess something called “culture” which is supposedly absent at home (Feinberg 2002). These concerns are more urgent for programs of extremely short duration (weeks rather than months) but this research indicates that significant gains can be found in single-term sojourns. Due to the interactions of myriad variables, it is difficult to make accurate assessments on the value or contribution of any single variable (location, curriculum, group size, duration, orientations, personal differences, etc) on the effects on students.

Program curriculum

Courses, non-classroom based learning opportunities, and other resources all need close scrutiny. When structured to allow progress toward a degree, international education benefits academic goals while making use of context. Opportunities to explore new subjects and to draw meaning from unique surroundings are consistently reported to be fundamental to choices about study abroad, and ultimately those are among the most valued benefits for careers and life direction.

Preparation and Integration

Essential to effective international education programs are fully integrated pre-departure and re-entry components. These are critical for helping to promote realism, comparative acuity, and transference of cross-cultural skills (Hanratty 2001; Elzey 2000). The Japanese students agreed that they felt fully prepared for departure by their orientations. This success can be attributed to the long-term stability of a decades old program that annually sends multiple cohorts of students to regular hosting institutions. In regard to pre-departure orientation, many American students felt that greater and more country-specific information would have been useful during their upcoming experience. It can be difficult for institutions to meet this demand, however, since there are so many different programs and destinations involved. More capable advisors, lists of contacts, and earlier timing were also seen as essential.

The value of group study is highlighted when we look at the reentry period. Once back

on their home campus, 60% of the Americans reported not having adequate opportunity to speak about their study abroad. Most see a great need for organized activities to help with the re-entry phase of their experience, including invitations to speak to prospective study abroad participants and in classes that relate to where they studied. The Japanese students did not voice similar complaints but did acknowledge some difficulties associated with reengaging old friends after their absence. It was quite easy for them to find people to talk about their overseas and reentry experience with since so many of their classmates had shared in the same experience.

Such activities would correspond with growing recognition of re-entry as an important stage in the cultural adjustment process of an international education experience. This is also consistent with current learning theories that advocate the need for reflection and discussion to process an experience, make meaning of it, and finally incorporate it as new knowledge (LaBrack 1993, Paige et. al 2004). Lack of quality opportunities at home or host institutions, on the other hand, can even result in negative outcomes such as poor cultural adjustment and feelings of being isolated and excluded.

Many of these complaints were not present among the Japanese sample and this absence can be attributed to the unique structure of the program. As an established and long-running program, the orientations and processing of the program are honed. Student awareness of the host country is easily established via program literature as well as contact with students from previous years. The group structure of the program unquestionably reduced the amount of contact with host students but did provide essential help in cultural transitions. Once they returned home, the close intra-class friendships established abroad remained strong which further eased the transition. The Japanese students often mentioned that they would have liked to have stayed longer, perhaps a full year. Opportunities for host family stays were also desired.

Bridging on-campus and international learning

The immersion language acquisition that is part of most international education experience differs from most learning based on campus and classrooms with respect to target skills and modes of instruction. Numbers and types of language models, awareness of sociocultural aspects of communication, and conversational and grammatical skills need to be examined. Such questions can lead to measures of how much is learned while abroad. Ultimately this may also encourage innovative approaches to language learning on campus that break down social barriers to language acquisition and motivate further learning, such as pairing incoming and outgoing students as “conversation partners” (Townsend 2004).

The Japanese students at WWU had some experience with informal conversation partners. “Japan Talk Time” was a weekly meeting for Japanese students and WWU students

studying Japanese organized by one of the Japanese language teachers. While there were some scheduled or organized activities (origami, games, Japanese television), JTT's intended purpose was to give students time and encouragement just to talk to each other, in English or Japanese. The same teacher organized a "student for the day" program where host students from her Japanese class "adopted" a visiting Japanese student for the day and took them to classes and other activities with them. There was no formal assessment of the contribution these programs and activities had on the linguistic development of the participating students but all students reported that the experience was both educational and enjoyable.

Conclusions

In a global age of accelerating interconnectedness, accompanied by persistent inequities and narrow visions which threaten world peace, tolerance and cross-cultural knowledge is vital. International education, then, and higher education in general, plays an increasingly critical role in preparing effective contemporary citizens and leaders.

The research reported here, though preliminary, contributes insights into several arenas of international education debate. The effects of university-level study in an international setting appear to be mainly in areas other than academics and language acquisition, as others have noted. Hanratty (2001) speaks of cross-cultural competence, and Opper et al. (1990) of global competencies such as adjustment, innovation, and perspective-taking. For incoming Japanese students at WWU, Kobayashi (1998) earlier found tolerance and movement beyond prior group-orientation to be the most salient changes, beyond expanded knowledge of English and of the United States. Hansen (1999) also reports growth in cross-cultural confidence and "openness" among Japanese students in the U.S.

Similarly, a relationship between international experience and personal, social, and career skills is evident. In particular, WWU students express greater self-confidence, more outgoing behavior, and deeper understanding of others following international experience. They also report better understanding and tolerance of differences, clarity in goal-setting and decision-making (such as with respect to further education or career), and acquisition of cross-cultural knowledge and language facility that may serve them well in the future. Gender-related differences may also exist, although sample sizes were too small to track their significance. The Japanese students reported greater sympathy for foreigners in Japan, greater confidence in using English in spite of persistent low confidence levels regarding actual ability, and a critical awareness of previously unrecognized naive assumptions that developed as a result of experiencing a different culture and then viewing their own from the outside as if new.

Systematic ongoing inquiry would appear to be invaluable. The success of the longitudinal interview scheduled taken with the Japanese mentioned in this study in

highlighting the changes over time in student perspectives affirm the need for periodic checks on the development of international study participants. This could involve both outgoing and incoming students, as well as follow-up with participants some time after return, when less salient yet potentially more significant long-term impacts may be evident. Such a long-term and continuing method holds promise for comparative investigation of the long-term benefits of study abroad. Does the realization of the value of intercultural diversity or cross-cultural communications facility grow as the experience has had time to gestate? Do benefits persist, or generate other changes, over time? Do students make some kind of life-long commitment to international learning or to greater civic engagement, as Akande and Slawson (2000) ask?

While this sample sizes of this research are not large, the results are nonetheless useful for suggesting areas for further attention. The research has influences on the prioritization and content of evaluation procedures. Comparison of motivations, impacts, and cultural and national differences in outcomes could also emerge through efforts to encompass different sets of students. In addition to outgoing students, these could include participants from International Programs and Exchanges offices or English language programs, as well as students who do not go abroad as a control group.

In the end, significant further benefits may be anticipated. Besides the potential contributions to theoretical and methodological refinements in international education highlighted by the use of longitudinal approaches, this research promotes a more consistent evaluation of student impacts and institutional implications of international experience. Options are also advocated in regard to more effective re-entry support, both for students returning after study abroad and for students returning to other institutions after study in the U.S. Finally, direct as well as indirect benefits of such international education research include a deepening of international knowledge among students and faculty overall and consequent strengthening of the global profile of the university.

Acknowledgements:

Several colleagues and students assisted in this effort, most notably Jerrod Hansen and Karin Kersteter. The contributions of Liz Partolan-Fray, Viva Barnes, Steve Robinson, Shari Lippman, Harriet Richardson, and Jen Daniels are also gratefully acknowledged. A start-up grant from the Association of International Educational Administrators and support services of the Bureau for Faculty Research at Western Washington University were instrumental in initiating this research endeavor.

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Appendix 1: Pre-departure interview protocol (WWU)

The purpose of this project is to determine the impact and effectiveness of international programs at Western Washington University. This interview is entirely voluntary and identity of students participating in this project will remain confidential. Your signature affirms your understanding of the purpose and voluntary nature of this project, and does not obligate you in any manner.

Student Signature: _____
 Student number: _____

Date: _____
 Interviewer: _____
 Completed by self: _____

Contact Information

Name: _____
 Address & phone: _____
 e-mail (local): _____
 e-mail (home country, if different): _____
 May we contact you for future interview: yes ___ no ___
 If yes, permanent address, phone or e-mail (if different): _____

I. Student Background

1. Age: _____ /__
 2. Sex: F ___ M ___ /__
 3. Hometown (Country, if not US): _____ /__
 4. Nationality: _____ /__
 5. Home university: _____ /__
 6. Destination (country & university): _____ /__
 7. Year in school: 1st (Fr) 2nd (So) 3rd (Jr) 4th (Sr) 5-6 Grad /__
 8. Dates of stay: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ /__
 9. Sources of support for international study: ___ Personal ___ Parents ___ Loans ___ /__
 (check all that apply) ___ Work-Study/Job ___ Scholarship (specify) _____

II. Interests & Goals

10. What is your expected occupation/career? _____ /__
 Regarding your expected career, how important is: Not important Very
important

	1	2	3	4	5	
11. Level of income	___	___	___	___	___	/__
12. Freedom to travel	___	___	___	___	___	/__
13. Ability to work in another country	___	___	___	___	___	/__
14. Chance to meet different people on regular basis	___	___	___	___	___	/__
15. What is your major?	___	___	___	___	___	/__

How important/relevant to your expected career is: Not important Very
important

		1	2	3	4	5
16. Studying abroad	—	—	—	—	—	/___
17. Foreign language ability	—	—	—	—	—	/___
18. An understanding of cultural differences/similarities	—	—	—	—	—	/___
19. An understanding of global issues	—	—	—	—	—	/___
Do you feel that your involvement in a Study Abroad (SA) program:						
		<u>Not at all</u>			<u>Most definitely</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5 /___
20. Looks good on your resume?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
21. Enhances your personal character?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
22. Makes you more qualified than persons w/o SA experience?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
23. Why?						/___
24. Have you studied another language? yes ___ no ___						/___
25. If yes, which?						/___
26. If at [your home university], what level?						/___
In general, how do you feel about your ability to:		<u>Very weak</u>			<u>Very strong</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5
27. Express your own points of view	—	—	—	—	—	/___
28. Cooperate with others in academic work	—	—	—	—	—	/___
29. Accomplish things on your own	—	—	—	—	—	/___
30. See things from another's perspective	—	—	—	—	—	/___
Presently, how interested are you in:						
		<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5
31. Social & political aspects of [the SA country]?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
32. International issues in general ?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
33. Current events in your home country?	—	—	—	—	—	/___
Rate your current level of knowledge of the following aspects of [the SA country]?						
		<u>Minimal knowledge</u>			<u>Very knowledgeable</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5
34. Politics	—	—	—	—	—	/___
35. Social issues	—	—	—	—	—	/___
36. Economics	—	—	—	—	—	/___
37. Geography	—	—	—	—	—	/___
38. Family and social relations	—	—	—	—	—	/___
39. Customs/traditions	—	—	—	—	—	/___
40. What aspects of [the SA country] interest you the most?						/___

III. Experience and International Exposure

At your home university, how frequently did/do you: Never Very frequently

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----|---------|-----|--------|---------|
| 41. Travel | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 42. Participate in outdoor activities | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 43. Participate in clubs & organized sports | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 44. Do paid work | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 45. Engage in cultural events | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 46. Engage in social/night life | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 47. Interact with international students | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___/___ |
| 48. Have you been to the host country before this visit? | | yes ___ | | no ___ | ___/___ |
| If yes: 49. when/for how long? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 50. reason? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 51. with whom? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 52. Have you been to any other countries? yes ___ no ___ | | | | | ___/___ |
| If yes: 53. where? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 54. when/for how long? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 55. reason? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 56. with whom? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 57. Would you like to work in another country in the future? yes ___ no ___ | | | | | ___/___ |
| 58. Why/why not? | | | | | ___/___ |
| 59. If you would like to work in another country, what would you be doing? | | | | | ___/___ |

V. Expectations

60. What are your reasons for studying abroad? /___
61. What do you think will be the most important benefit(s) from international study? /___
62. Why did you choose to study in the host country? /___
63. Was the host country your primary choice? yes ___ no ___ /___
64. Have you tried to increase your knowledge of [the host country]? yes ___ no ___ /___
- If yes, how?
65. Reading or watching media about or from [host country] yes ___ no ___ /___
66. Corresponding/e-mail with persons from [host country] yes ___ no ___ /___
67. Talking with others who have studied in [host country] yes ___ no ___ /___
68. Taking course about or in the language of [host country] yes ___ no ___ /___
69. In what ways do you expect your international learning experience will affect you? /___

Appendix 2: Return interview protocol (WWU)

The purpose of this project is to determine the impact and effectiveness of international programs at Western Washington University. This interview is entirely voluntary and identity of students participating in this project will remain confidential. Your signature affirms your understanding of the purpose and voluntary nature of this project, and does not obligate you in any manner.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Interviewer: _____ Completed by self: _____

Contact Information

Name: _____ Student number: _____
 e-mail: _____
 Local address & phone: _____
 May we contact you in the future if necessary: yes ___ no ___

International Experience

1. Program/
 location: _____ / _____
 2. Dates of stay: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ / _____
Language
 3. While abroad, did you study a foreign language? yes ___ no ___ / _____
 4. If yes, which? / _____
 5. If yes, what were positive aspects of language study while abroad? _____

Activities

6. During your study abroad [SA], how frequently did you: [explain 1-5 scale here and below]:

Activity	Never		3	Very frequently		/ _____
	1	2		4	5	
7. Travel	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____
8. Participate in outdoor activities	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____
9. Participate in clubs & organized sports	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____
10. Do paid work	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____
11. Engage in cultural events (eg, museums, movies)	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____
12. Engage in social/night life	—	—	—	—	—	/ _____

Interests & Knowledge

13. How interested were/are you social and political aspects of [the SA country]?

	Prior to SA					After SA				
<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>			<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	/_____

14. How interested were/are you in international issues in general?

	Prior to SA					After SA				
<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>			<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	/_____

15. How interested were/are you in current events in [your home country]?

	Prior to SA					After SA				
<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>			<u>Not interested</u>			<u>Very interested</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	/_____

Rate your current level of knowledge of the following aspects of [the SA country]?

	<u>Minimal knowledge</u>					<u>Very knowledgeable</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5					
16. Politics	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
17. Social issues	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
18. Economics	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
19. Geography	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
20. Family and social relations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
21. Customs/traditions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____

While abroad, how much did become informed through:

	<u>Not at all</u>					<u>Extensively</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5					
22. Reading newspapers/magazines	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
23. Reading books	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
24. Hearing/watching radio/TV	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____
25. Talking with people [from host country]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	/_____

Educational Experience:

During your study abroad, did you:

26. Take courses with different content than at [home institution]? Yes__ No__
/_____

27. If yes, which: /_____

28. Develop new area(s) of interest? Yes__ No__ /_____

29. If yes, which: /_____

Compared with [your home institution], how would you compare:

30. Academic standards expected of you [at SA site] /_____

31. Your overall learning /_____

Teaching/learning emphases:

	Home institution					SA institution				
	Not		Very			Not		Very		
	<u>Emphasized</u>		<u>Emphasized</u>			<u>Emphasized</u>		<u>Emphasized</u>		
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. Providing different views	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
33. Active discussion in class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
34. Students own POV	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35. Regular class attendance	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
36. Independent work	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Value of International Educational Experience

Did you experience any social problems associated with living in a different culture?

37. Yes ___ no ___ / _____

38. If yes, what? / _____

Did you experience any academic problems associated with studying abroad?

39. Yes ___ no ___ / _____

40. If yes, what? / _____

41. What was most valuable about being abroad? / _____

42. What was most difficult about being abroad? / _____

With respect to your desired career, how important/relevant is:

important Not important Very

1 2 3 4 5

43. Foreign language ability? ___ / _____

44. An understanding of cultural differences/similarities ___ / _____

45. An understanding of global issues? ___ / _____

Perspective

How do you feel about your ability now to: very weak very

strong 1 2 3 4 5

46. Express your own points of view ___ / _____

47. Cooperate with others in academic work ___ / _____

48. Accomplish things on your own ___ / _____

49. See things from another's perspective ___ / _____

Did your [SA] change your way of viewing: ___ / _____

50. Yourself: yes ___ no ___ / _____

51. If yes, how? / _____

52. [Your host country] yes ___ no ___ / _____

53. If yes, how? / _____

54. [Your home country] yes ___ no ___ / _____

55. If yes, how? / _____

56. The world: yes ___ no ___ / _____

57. If yes, how? / _____

58. What aspect(s) of [the SA country] continue to interest you the most?

Perceived Benefits

Do you think that your involvement in [this SA program] has:

- | | <u>Not at all</u> | | | | | <u>Most definitely</u> | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|---|----|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Affected your academic decisions [at home institution]? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 60. If yes, how? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 61. Made you more eager to make friends with people of different backgrounds? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 62. If yes, how? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 63. Enhanced your personal character? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 64. If yes, how? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 65. Benefited you in terms of career opportunities? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 66. If yes, how? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 67. Do you plan on returning [to the host country] in the future? | | | | | | yes | | no | | | / |
| 68. If yes, why? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 69. Would you like to live or work in another country? | | | | | | yes | | no | | | / |
| 70. Why/why not? | | | | | | / | | | | | |
| 71. Would you recommend studying abroad to other students? | | | | | | yes | | no | | | / |
| 72. Why/why not? | | | | | | / | | | | | |

Feedback

73. Overall, did your study abroad experience meet your expectations? yes ___ no ___ / ___
 74. Why/why not? / _____

How satisfied are you with your preparation for SA?

- | | <u>Not at all satisfied</u> | | | | | <u>Very satisfied</u> | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 75. Prior academic preparation | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 76. Prior language preparation | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 77. [Home] orientation for SA | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |

During your SA, were you satisfied with the support you received for:

- | | <u>Not satisfied</u> | | | | | <u>Very satisfied</u> | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 78. Living accommodations | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 79. Language training | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 80. Academic matters | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 81. Information about host country | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |
| 82. Personal/practical/everyday matters | — | — | — | — | — | / | | | | | |

83. Comments about any support-related matters:

84. List any activities [at home institution] that helped you to re-integrate [to home institution/country]:

How have you maintained contact/interest in host country since you returned home?

85. Reading or watching media of your own country yes ___ no ___ / _____

86. Corresponding/e-mail with persons from [host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 87. Reading journals and books about [host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 88. Joining organizations involved with [host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 89. Talking with others who have studied in [host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 90. By speaking the language of [the host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 91. By taking courses in the language of [the host country] yes ___ no ___ / ___
 92. To what extent have you discussed your SA experience in classes at your home institution?

How important do you think the following would be in extending your SA experience:

- | | <u>Not at all</u> | | | | | <u>Most definitely</u> | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|-------|
| 93. Doing papers/presentations that draw on [your SA] | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | _____ |
| 94. Making presentations or posters based on [your SA] | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | _____ |
| 95. Participating in further evaluation of study abroad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | _____ |
| 96. Participating in informational sessions on SA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | _____ |
| 97. Other (Please specify) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | / | _____ |

Based on your experience, do you have specific suggestions for improving:

98. Pre-departure orientation services:
 99. Host-site orientation:
 100. Host-site support services:
 101. Re-entry at WWU
 102. Any other suggestions:

Appendix 3: List of questions and concepts used in interviews with Japanese students

Sense of Self (ikigai?)

How would you define ikigai?

Is it important to have ikigai?

Do college students usually have ikigai? If not, why not?

Is college important for developing ikigai? sense of self? identity?

Is ikigai something that is chosen or found?

When do people usually get/ find ikigai?

When should people have ikigai? Can it be too early or too late?

Can ikigai change or develop over time?

Does ikigai correspond to happiness? Can you know and have your ikigai and be unhappy?

Is there a difference between knowing what your ikigai is and having your ikigai? (i.e. Can you have it but be unable to realize it?)

Is ikigai different than "a goal?" "a calling?" "a desire?"

Does ikigai have to be productive? Can it be purely self-interested? Should it be purely self-interested?

Do you have ikigai? How long have you known what it is? How did you know what it is?

Development of Self-identity

Do you have a concept of self-identity?

When is the single most important time for development of self?

Is there a difference in self-identity between people who don't go to college in Japan and those who do?

Study Abroad

Why did you go to college?

What do you want to do for a living? What goals do you have for yourself?

Family?

What is your major? Why?

Does your major correlate to what you want to do for a career?

Why did you come to study here? Did you have a choice?

What do you want to do after school?

Why return to Japan?

Why stay in the State?

Did you enjoy your stay?

Get info on:

parties or social affiliation with Americans

IPA?

watch much American TV

homestays

American friends

Japanese friends in America: How much did they associate with them

Dorm Life

Studies/Classes/ Curriculum

General Activities (travel, horror stories, exciting unique experiences, etc.)

Did you have any goals that you wanted to accomplish during your stay in America? Did you accomplish them?

Did your expectations of the trip match up with reality?

What are some of your favorite stories that you tell your friends and family? Are there any experiences that you don't tell them about?

What are some things that you are very glad that you experienced?

Were there any disappointments?

Effects of Study Abroad

Do you feel that the study abroad experience has changed you? In what ways? (i.e. How did the study abroad experience affect you?)

Do you feel different from other Japanese because of traveling abroad?

What did you learn here?

Does learning and speaking English affect how you think and act as a Japanese?

What do you miss about Japan?

What will/do you miss about America?

Have your plans for the future changed as a result of studying in the U.S.?

Do you think that you are different from other Japanese students who have not studied abroad? How? Why?

What are some of the positive/negative aspects of studying abroad? (esp. in terms of personality, personal relations, future plans, etc.)

What would you tell someone who wants to or is planning on studying abroad?

Do you think more Japanese (or college students in general) should study abroad?

In what ways are the U.S. and Japan alike? Different?

Are there things that you like more about Japan? America?

What is different about American college? teachers? students?

Are you glad that you came to study here? Why/ not?

What are some things that surprised you? offended you?

What do you think that Japan/ese sh/could learn from America? What sh/could America/ns learn from Japan?

What are some of the major aspects of college life that are different in America?

What are some things that you experienced during your time in the States that you would not have experienced had you stayed in Japan?

Are there any things about your experience that you think may be difficult to explain to your friends or family when you return to Japan?

Additional Questions

What do you see yourself as? (human, man, girl, student, nihonjin, family member, person, "Your Name"etc). How do you define yourself?

What is seishin? IS it related to ikigai?

How well did you know the others in this group before you went to America? How well do you know them now? Did you make any "best friends"?

Have you left most of the AUAP and gone back to your old friends, or did you stay with only AUAP and find it difficult to go back to your old friends? Did you try to introduce your new AUAP friends to your old friends?

Were there any difficulties in relating to friends and family after returning?

What differences did you notice in your friends and family? Do you think about Japan differently now? What do you think differently about Japan? What are some things that you think differently about your friends?

Do you expect your ikigai to change? Why? How? When?

Do you feel bound to do something a certain way just because that is the Japanese way, even though you may not want to do it?

Do you think you will get to do what you want to in life, or will you have to settle for something less in order to have a stable successful life? Which is more important: stability or happiness?

Do you want to/ plan on getting married? When? Why?

Do you plan on kids? When? Why?

If you have kids, is it more important to teach them to live their dreams or to be successful and provide for family, even if it means doing something that you wouldn't want to.

How is ikigai related to jiko jitsugen (self-awareness) and ittaikan (sense of oneness with ~)

Did you have culture shock?

What is your best memory about studying abroad?

What is the worst memory about studying abroad?

If given the opportunity, would you study abroad again?

Was this trip useful in your life?

Do you think Americans are inconsiderate

Did you ever feel in danger or threatened? Did you feel alienated in the US society? Were you ever treated bad because you are Japanese?

