Studying Abroad in College:
Investigating How A Living-Learning Community (LLC) Impacts Students

Rebecca Jackson, Eunice Sim, & Dr. Stella Erbes
PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

**INPUT:** What did students know about their host country before studying abroad in the living-learning community? What shaped their preconceptions about their host country?

**ENVIRONMENT:** Which elements of their living-learning community positively impacted the students?

**OUTCOME:** How did students grow intellectually, socially, personally, and spiritually?

**ABSTRACT:**
The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify which elements of a living-learning community (LLC) based in one of Pacific University's (pseudonym) signature study abroad programs influenced students' intellectual, personal, social, and spiritual growth. Thus far, 108 undergraduates completed an online survey composed of 32 questions that addressed five sections: 1) Consent, 2) Demographics, 3) Input, 4) Environment, 5) Learning Outcomes. Preliminary results found that personal travel, the educational field trip, and the program staff were the most influential factors in student development. Conclusively, 99.1% of participants reported intellectual, personal, and professional growth, while 76.1% reported spiritual growth.

**REPORTED GROWTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual</th>
<th>Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>Travel Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Awareness</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Relationships</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
<td>Local Cultural Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>Adapting to Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaning Comfort Zone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**METHODS:**

- Summer 2022
- Qualitative data from 108 American undergraduates who participated in at least one semester in one of Pacific University's* 2021-2022 study abroad programs. (*Pseudonym)
- Students' responded to a 32-question Google Forms survey with multiple-choice and open-ended responses that consisted of five sections: 1) Consent, 2) Demographics, 3) Input, 4) Environment, 5) Learning Outcomes

Top five factors that influenced students' preconceptions about their host countries:
1) **Media:** Google, News, Television, YouTube, Movies (76.1%)
2) **Friends** (58.7%)
3) **Social Media:** Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter (57.8%)
4) **Family** (55%)
5) **Personal Assumptions/Stereotypes** (51.4%)

Top three program elements that positively impacted students:
1) Personal travel
2) Educational field trip (EFT)
3) Program staff

**RESULTS:**

- Adapting to Change: 90.7%
- Leaving Comfort Zone: 90.7%
- Did Not Mature in Faith: 23.9%
- Matured in Faith: 76.1%

**INPUT:**

- Media: Google, News, Television, YouTube, Movies (76.1%)
- Friends (58.7%)
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter (57.8%)
- Family (55%)
- Personal Assumptions/Stereotypes (51.4%)