TRANSFORMING EDUCATION ABROAD FOR FIRST-GENERATION
STUDENTS: LEADERSHIP, STUDENT VOICE, AND POLICY CHANGE

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
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The Requirements for
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Doctor of Education
In
Educational Leadership

by

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San Francisco, California

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *Transforming Education Abroad for First-Generation Students: Leadership, Student Voice, and Policy Change* by Janelle C. Waldrep, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree: Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University.

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2017

For many first-generation college students the opportunity to participate in education abroad is an important part of college success, achievement, and growth. However, the opportunity may feel unattainable for some. This dissertation examined interviews with selected CSU administrators, a self-study of my work, and first-generation college students at SF State before, during, and after participating in education abroad. Two research questions guided the inquiry: How do education abroad professionals and leaders perceive and respond to the needs and talents of first-generation college students and include them in education abroad programs? How do first-generation college students who participate in education abroad perceive the study abroad opportunity in higher education? Findings from the education abroad professionals demonstrated a strong interest in diversity for education abroad such that participants match campus demographics, including first-generation college students. The students' perspectives aligned somewhat with the leaders', although they provided examples drawn from personal navigation resources including stories of immigration, coming to college, developing a family abroad, and wanting to be an inspiration for others. This study shows how an examination of education abroad for first-generation college students can better support this high impact educational practice and promote stronger advocacy for first-generation college students across campuses.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this dissertation.

Chair, Dissertation Committee

Date

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Chapter One: Introduction

Trying to pursue the dream so you know when you got to United States you want to pursue that American dream. And somehow I want to pursue [that], to get in touch with the French culture... [I want to] teach others how to live away from home and travel to a new country that you never expected. You were going to live the dream to be there. That's what I definitely would teach and encourage [others] to get out of the box that they live in. Experience something new and learn a different experience of going out from your home institution (Juan, interviewed while abroad).

Research Focus

The education abroad experience is an important part of college success, achievement, and growth for many first-generation college students. Juan, a first-generation student whom I interviewed while he was abroad in France said, "I want to pursue [the American dream abroad], to get in touch with the French culture...to live away from home and travel to a new country...to live the dream to be there." Education abroad has become part of the college dream and achievement for an increasing number of first-generation college students. Furthermore, empirical studies have shown the experience of participating in education abroad increases student learning (Rhodes, Biscarra, Loberg, & Roller, 2012; Sutton & Rubin, 2004), personal development (Black & Duhon, 2006; Lindsey, 2005), and professional opportunities after graduation (Norris & Gillespie, 2009).

To achieve this new narrative of first-generation college students achieving their dream of higher education and education abroad, this dissertation examined

the insights of both first-generation college students and education abroad professionals in the field to better understand how to support first-generation college students in education abroad. Two research questions guided the study: How do education abroad professionals and leaders perceive and respond to the needs and talents of first-generation college students and include them in education abroad programs? How do first-generation college students who participate in education perceive the education abroad opportunity in higher education?

Problem and Background

The opportunity to live and study in another country may feel like nothing more than a dream for some students, especially when it has not even been certain that they would even attend college. First-generation college students have achieved their first dream of attending college, although they face a number of challenges. Ward, Siegel, and Davenport (2012) note that first-generation college students are like “frontier explorers” as they navigate higher education (p. 2). The first-generation college students in this study took diverse paths to college—some directly from high school and others transferring from a community college (or even multiple community colleges), which is a common path for many first-generation students (Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014; Monaghan & Attewell, 2015). Furthermore, many must also take time out to work (Ishitani, 2016), placing

extra pressure on their time and mental resources that extends their time toward their degree (Petty, 2014).

The term “first-generation college student” does not have a set definition either in academia or in the research literature, reflecting the diversity of the group (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Jehangir, 2010; Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012). For the purpose of this dissertation, the study focused on first-generation college students attending San Francisco State University, either directly or transferring from a community college and whose parents or guardians did not attain a degree at any level of higher education.

First-generation college students account for more than one-third of the entering first-year students in the California State University (CSU) system (About CSU International Programs, 2013), though the proportion is likely to match enrollment or be higher as many first-generation college students transfer from a community college and do not go directly to a four-year institution. The CSU system encompasses 23 campuses, educating 474,000 students each year. Among the 23 CSU campuses, 18 qualify as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (CSU Diversity, n.d.). The campuses also share the California State University International Programs (CSU IP), which have been managed by the Chancellor’s Office in Long Beach, California since 1963. CSU IP students from all 23 campuses have the

opportunity to pursue an academic year abroad. Since 1963, more than 15,000 students have participated, earning CSU resident academic credit as full-time students. The CSU IP programs are primarily reciprocal partnerships with universities abroad including 18 countries and more than 70 universities (About CSU International Programs, 2013). However, additional education abroad opportunities exist at all the CSU campuses.

Despite the growing number of first-generation college students, institutions are not always well prepared to serve them (Black & Voelker, 2008; Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012). There are structural and psychological barriers to their success, including social and personal concerns (Petty, 2014), familial guilt of achievement (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015), funding (Ishitani, 2016), and academics (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014), and lack of advising (Davis, 2012; Strayhorn, 2015).

The students, themselves, struggle to find and access the necessary resources. While they often have family support, the students and their families do not have the generational knowledge obtained from earning a college degree (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). Without their parents holding higher education degrees, students can feel uncomfortable negotiating the challenges and culture of education (Davis, 2012; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012;

Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). They tend to be unfamiliar with how to interact with college faculty and often feel a sense of uneasiness and intimidation from the interaction (Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012). First-generation college students often feel that administrators and faculty members do not understand them and see them as “insignificant” (DeRosa & Dolby, 2014).

Education Abroad Participation Beneficial for Students

As a social justice and equity goal, public institutions of higher education, such as the CSU system, have a moral and social responsibility to support and graduate first-generation students in increasing numbers in all areas of higher education. An education abroad opportunity, in particular a semester or year in an academically immersive and rigorous program, enhances the undergraduate degree for students, including underrepresented students in education abroad (Jackson, 2006; Wick, 2011). Education abroad is an important high-impact practice for students in higher education that has received limited attention for first-generation college students. Additionally, education abroad participation can enhance students’ degree attainment and offers academic, personal, and professional benefits (Foresy, Broomhall, & Davis, 2011; Orahood, Kruze, & Pearson, 2004). The bulk of the

literature on education abroad benefits, though, focuses on general student participation, rather than the experiences of first-generation students.

The academic benefits of participation.

In general, education abroad participation has been shown to strengthen student engagement in their academic development (Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014), improve degree completion rates (Sutton & Rubin, 2004; Rhodes, Biscarra, Loberg, & Roller, 2012), increase job attainment (Norris & Gillespie, 2009), and promote of additional higher education degrees (Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Education abroad alumni possess higher levels of global awareness knowledge than their counterparts who do not go abroad and yet have the same GPA (prior to participation) and share the same field of study (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Sutton and Rubin (2004) found that education abroad had positive effects on student learning outcomes that are not attributed to prior abilities or assumptions that students who participate in education abroad traditionally have higher grade point averages after participating in education abroad (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). The study included almost 4,000 students from thirty-four public campuses from the university system of Georgia that ranged in size and location. Similar to California's two system-wide programs (CSU IP and the University of California Education Abroad Program), Georgia has a system-wide international education office. The Georgia study

provides important insight in cementing learning outcomes in education abroad while looking at grade point averages and graduation rates across a state.

Education abroad is a high impact practice. Kuh (2009) emphasized the importance of student engagement in their academic development along with high impact activities—including education abroad—improve the quality of undergraduate education. Hadis (2005) found that after participating in education abroad, education retention increased as students' views and value on education shifted. A slight majority of the participants (53.2%) studied more for enjoyment than for a letter grade after studying abroad (Hadis, 2005).

Research also indicates a potential relationship between education abroad participation and student retention (Rhodes, Biscarra, Loberg, & Roler, 2012; Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Academic enhancement and retention are highlighted by Barclay Hamir (2011) who also found that students engaging in education abroad tend to have higher degree completion rates, though it remains unclear which aspects of education abroad can be directly attributed to this success. Thus, rather than seen as beneficial only for the most academically-prepared students, it has been suggested that education abroad programs can benefit students in need of additional academic support, such as those with lower graduation rates or grade point averages (Barclay Hamir, 2011). Although additional research is needed to

fully understand the impact on graduation rates and grades, some speculate that education abroad can improve five and six-year graduation rates, as long as additional student support is provided (Xu, Silva, Neufeldt, & Dane, 2013).

Personal benefits of participation.

Education abroad participation enables students to strengthen their social, cultural, and academic lives, language acquisition (Kinging, 2011), values development (Boateng & Thompson, 2013), global awareness (Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014), tolerance for ambiguity, intellectual flexibility, multicultural skills (Harrison & Brower, 2011), cognitive development (Lee, Therriault, & Linderholm, 2012), and personality development (Zimmermann & Neyer, 2013). Moreover, participation has been linked to increasing personal growth and tolerance for others (Black & Duhon, 2006) as well as increasing openness to new viewpoints and more globally aware. Students also develop a more positive attitude towards education and ways of thinking (Lindsey, 2005; Milian, Birnbaum, Cardona, & Nicholson, 2015).

Global awareness is now seen as an integral component of higher education (Foresy, Broomhall, & Davis, 2011; Norris & Gillespie, 2009; Orahod, Kruze, & Pearson, 2004), an additional potential benefit of education abroad participation. Through participation and cultural interactions, students learn about other cultures,

intercultural interactions, global interdependence, different governments, and world geography, all of which enhance students' global knowledge and awareness (Sutton & Rubin, 2004).

Education abroad engages students in learning about world affairs and opens them to new ideas and there is an intrinsic value to the experience (Hadis, 2005). When compared to their non-participating counterparts, education abroad alumni demonstrate and report being more open-minded, independent, and confident while experiencing higher levels of intercultural sensitivities (Movassaghi, Unsal, & Göçer, 2014). When students make an effort to engage with locals abroad (and not just interact with their American companions), they demonstrate higher levels of growth in independence and intercultural development (Covert, 2013).

Education Leaders

Although there is limited literature on examining how leaders and administrators in education abroad can best support first-generation college students, there is research on effective leadership for first-generation students in general. For example, academic advisors are critical for supporting first-generation college students in terms of access, retention, and degree completion (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, and

Hawthorne (2013) argued that student success is directly impacted by academic advising and the effectiveness of the interaction. They found a significant difference regarding self-efficacy of first-generation college students, and thus, the need for additional support and access to resources.

Relevant Literature: Education Abroad for First-Generation Students

In the first section, the literature on education abroad in higher education is reviewed focusing on the history in the United States, types of programs, and education abroad as a high impact practice, benefits, and challenges. Then, in the second section, the emphasis shifts to first-generation college students, specifically their talents and experiences, barriers to inclusion, financial barriers, and family affiliations. While there is literature on first-generation students' general social and educational participation in higher education, their experiences in education abroad are still largely missing from the literature.

First-Generation Students: Talents and Experiences,

Barriers to Inclusion, Financial Barriers, and Family Affiliations

This section offers a brief review of the literature focused on the experience of being first in their family to attend higher education, their talents, barriers (including financial hurdles), and the role of family.

Talents and Experiences of First-Generation Students

Discussions of first-generation students' successes and strengths are only beginning to emerge in publications (Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012) and a few dissertations (McKenzie, 2014; Torres, 2013). First-generation college students offer perspectives from multiple identities (race, class, and gender roles) and personal experiences. They also experience a weight and special status in their family as the first to attend higher education (Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012). Students found the drive within themselves to live up to family expectations, and/or to obtain the prospects afforded from education (Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014). Although, they frequently thrived, especially when they have supporters or "pushing agents" (such as role models), realistic professional goals, and resiliency (Torres, 2013).

Torres (2013) also found that first-generation college students bring strengths of drive and independence to the college experience that make them successful academically, professionally, and personally. First-generation college students' personal self-advocacy and drive play critical roles in overcoming the challenges of participating in higher education. Martin, Galentino, and Townsend (2014) found that students' personal motivation and drive played a critical role in their success in completing community college. One student in the study noted that

individuals in college should be capable of pushing themselves to succeed academically.

Barriers to Inclusion, Academic Success, and Degree Attainment

In spite of numerous reforms, first-generation college students continue to face critical issues in access, retention, and degree completion at the undergraduate level due to a variety of factors ranging from lack of knowledge of college norms to lack of financial resources (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). As a result, they tend to be unfamiliar with how to interact with college faculty and often feel a sense of uneasiness and intimidation from the interactions (Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012).

Financial Barriers

Many first-generation students face financial challenges and then must often choose work over spending time with friends. They can also feel discomfort interacting with more privileged peers that do not have the same financial restrictions. First-generation college students may also feel that others do not see them as successful and potentially believe there is a stigma associated with being known as first-generation (Desa & Dolby, 2014). Bui (2002) found a relationship with being first and coming from a lower socioeconomic background. Therefore, they depend upon and worry about financial aid to attend college. Bui (2002)

recommend that student services understand first-generation students and work with them individually to confront their challenges and anxieties. Engle and Tinto (2008) argue that additional funding beyond financial aid is needed to support first-generation students in higher education. In this study, I argue that this extends to education abroad.

Feelings of Guilt of Being First

First-generation college students embody their parents' aspirations for the American dream and may feel a sense of guilt and obligation to earn a college degree, as their parents sacrificed so much for this opportunity in the United States (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Moreno, 2016). For some the first-generation students, they are also from families who are recent immigrants to the United States. Kanno and Cromley (2013) note that personal agency has a greater impact on student success than the assistance from parents. While these students often have family support, which is important for their academic success, their family members do not have the knowledge or personal experience obtained from earning a college degree (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012).

While first-generation college students, recent immigrant or not, experience pride and joy along with their families for reaching higher education, they also feel a sense of guilt that they have opportunities not accessed by their family and friends

(Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). They may also feel a sense of isolation and not connect with peers that have parents who have a college degree, which can hinder their persistence and engagement in higher education (Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012). This can manifest itself as survivor guilt impacting their emotional well being in leaving others “behind” (Tate, Williams, & Harden, 2013).

Education Abroad in Higher Education:

History, Types, High Impact Practice, Benefits, and Challenges

A Brief History

Education abroad has historically been viewed as an enrichment opportunity for the elite and has its origins in wealthy Europeans taking a grand tour to expand their education (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Today, education abroad offices are prevalent throughout the United States and have grown into an industry to give students an educational opportunity to take coursework in another country (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Education abroad programs have been at the forefront of globalizing higher education while building social responsibility (Patel & Lynch, 2013). Although there has been limited progress in diversifying the ethnicity of participants of education abroad (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2015; Henry, 2014; Sweeney, 2013; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015), it has gained increased federal, state, and campus level attention and resources (Altbach, 2015).

Much of the attention focuses on the number of students, with increased interest for instance in supporting CSU non-traditional students. Campuses have worked to internationalize their institutions and offer education abroad programming, while the federal government has moved to support more students studying overseas (Altbach, 2015; Institute of International Education, n.d.).

The offices for education abroad provide students educational opportunities to take coursework in another country and experience new learning spaces. Education abroad leaders and administrators focus on academics, student development, risk-management, local and global partnerships, forming collaborations within the international office and across campus, and tasks related to immigration and other national policies impacting student movement.

The field of education abroad uses both profit and non-profit business models (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Education abroad exchange programs have been at the forefront of globalizing higher education and many of these programs are also grounded in building students' social responsibility through intercultural exchange (Patel & Lynch, 2013). Programs for education abroad have also grown significantly on college campuses, and student participation has steadily increased every year. From 2013-2014, the number increased by 5% over the previous year with one in ten students going abroad to study (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2015). In part,

this is because education abroad has been viewed as a key strategy for meeting the new demands of the 21st century for jobs and as educated citizens of the world (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). Nationally, since 2011, most growth has occurred with shorter education abroad programs (January, spring breaks, summer). The Institution of International Education's Open Doors Report now reports on programs shorter than two weeks, which has seen the most consistent growth since the category was included in its 2010/2011 publication (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2015). In contrast, the California State University International Programs, open to CSU students, has maintained its focus on yearlong programs. However, even with a yearlong program at each of the CSU campuses, the national emphasis is on shorter programs. This influence and emergence of shorter programs can be seen throughout the CSU system except for San Francisco State University, which features semester and yearlong direct and immersive, exchange, and CSU IP programs.

There have been calls to diversify education abroad participation nationally. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs created a national U.S. Study Abroad Office in 2015 focusing on increasing the diversity of education abroad participants to foster globally competent citizens for the United States' future (McCauslin, 2015; US Department of State, n.d.). The federal government has also

attempted to increase diversity through federally-funded, global mobility programs with diversity initiatives including the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which supports under-represented students, including first-generation college students, who might not otherwise have the financial means (Institute of International Education, n.d.).

Empirical research on education abroad participation has also increased. Nguyen (2015) found that studies in the early 1990s focused on why students in higher education elected to participate and who these students were. Research confirmed that primarily White females participated, while students who stayed at their home campuses made the decision based upon personal interests, academic concerns, a lack of institutional support, negative social perceptions about study abroad, and concerns about funding (Albers-Miller, Prenshaw, & Straughan, 1999; Chieffo, 2000; Cloughly, 1991; Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Moving into the 2000s, researchers shifted their emphasis to students' knowledge of programs, duration, and personal constraints, including the social and financial (Booker, 2001; Brux & Ngoboka, 2002; Chieffo, 2000; Kitsantas 2004; Nguyen, 2015; Peterson, 2003).

Forms of Education Abroad

There are five major forms of education abroad programs: Study Tour, Short-Term Study, Cross-Cultural Contact Program, Cross-Cultural Encounter Program, and Cross-Cultural Immersion Program (Engle & Engle, 2003). The Study Tour (level one) has a short duration of at least a week or only a few weeks where students learn in English and did not have cultural interactions and learning. Short-Term Study (level two) is a little longer lasting from three to eight weeks during the summer studying mostly in English, but may have some coursework in the local language. Students interact with locals living in homestays, but still limited to no cultural interactions and learning. The next level is Cross-Cultural Contact Program (level three) spanning a semester. In this level, students study mostly in English with more opportunities to study the local language and more, but limited, cultural learning. Cross-Cultural Encounter Programs (level four) are semester and/or academic year in length with more integration and learning with locals. Engle and Engle (2003) classified the level as “pre-advanced to advance” (p. 11).

The final level (five) is Cross-Cultural Immersion Program. A key feature is the duration of semester and academic-year programs where the coursework that integrates local and cultural norms (Engle & Engle, 2003). This is the type of

program offered by SF State. The programs are bilateral exchange agreements between a U.S. institution and an institution overseas. At SF State and the CSU system, this also includes a consortium of exchanges through the California State University system-wide provider, known as California State University International Programs (CSU IP), exclusively for the CSU universities. CSU IP programs are based upon shared agreements among the 23 CSU campuses with foreign institutions administrated through the CSU Chancellor's Office in Long Beach, California. The other CSU campuses offer programs at all levels outlined by Engle and Engle (2003).

Education Abroad as a High Impact Practice

Education abroad has been identified as a high impact practice promoting student success (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2009; Stebleton, Soria, and Cherney, 2013). Ward, Siegel, and Davenport (2012) argue that educational leaders must not overlook opportunities, like education abroad, to engage first-generation college students in higher education. Garcia (2010) studied first-generation college students and found a positive relationship between participation in such high impact activities and student engagement in academics. High impact practices have been identified as leading to greater student engagement, higher levels of persistence, and increased graduation rates.

Education Abroad Challenges

Several barriers impede successful participation in education abroad education for undergraduate level students at a range of institutions, though scant literature exists on education abroad challenges specific to first-generation students. In this study, I briefly highlight three potential challenges for education abroad: degree progress, personal concerns, and funding.

Concerns about degree progress.

In considering education abroad, many students are interested but worry that education abroad might delay graduation, and are concerned about whether their coursework abroad will apply toward their degree at their home institution (Doyle, Gendall, Meyer, Hoek, Tait, McKenzie, & Loorparg, 2010). Some faculty members can be strong advocates for encouraging students in seeing how the opportunity aligns for degree completion; yet, others may also discourage students from participating in education abroad, especially in regards to degree completion (Schnusenberg, de Jong, & Goel, 2012).

Personal fears and concerns.

Too often, students create barriers for themselves without actually looking into the possibilities of participating in education abroad (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Additionally, students may have personal fears (such as leaving their friends and

family members), student life on campus, as well as learning another language, which can influence their participation in education abroad programs (Deviney, Mills, & Ball, 2014; Payan, Svensson, & Høgevold, 2012).

Funding as a potential challenge for education abroad.

Even when students recognize the value of education abroad and want to participate, they fear the cost and without looking into what the actual cost would be, they may dismiss it as infeasible (Schnusenberg, de Jong, & Goel, 2012).

Working students have an additional barrier beyond funding for education abroad. Deviney, Mills, and Ball (2014) found that students, especially students working over 40 hours per week (around thirty percent), take their employment into account in the decision-making process regarding education abroad. This study suggests that there is a difference between students working part and full-time. However, the study did not ask about students working fewer than 20 hours per week. Although the study did not specifically address first-generation college students, it is reasonable to conclude that they would have similar concerns regarding leaving their employment.

Improving Education Abroad Programs for First-Generation Students:

Space and Time Dimensions

This dissertation extends the literature on education abroad and first-generation students by considering the role of space and time as critical dimensions throughout the education abroad experience. In this discussion, I rely on the work of Gulson and Symes (2007) and Wick (2011).

Space and Time in Education

Gulson and Symes (2007) formulate that space is more than the physical area of education, but the process of learning and policy tied to an individual's place in the world. This includes how students construct their identity and understanding of the influences on their education and how they are taught and viewed by others (Jackson, 2006). In this view, students' learning is linked with a narrative experience of education and feelings of inclusion and access.

Knowing one's place has a powerful sociological resonance; stories and narratives mediate the way space is apprehended and comprehended. Because spatial maneuver is such a key part of quotidian life, much of our ordinary vocabulary is concerned with specifying the fundamental ordinates of space, with communicating information about position, direction and movement, a sense of belonging and absence, of being home or estranged. Words such as 'here' and 'there' are critical to establishing proximity and immediacy, and in conjunction with modifiers such as 'closer,' 'further' and 'nearer' provide ways of calibrating and mapping spatial experience (Gulson & Symes, 2007, p. 99).

Higher education is more than a physical campus or classroom; it exists simultaneously in different spaces and time for students, staff, and faculty (Gulson & Symes, 2007). What students bring and how they learn influences their education. First-generation college students offer an important new perspective on education abroad because they simultaneously occupy multiple spaces as they navigate higher education with little social capital, parental guidance, or funding.

The current form of globalization influences students' experiences of space and time in education abroad. "Globalization has transformed notions of space and time, leading to the phenomenon of time-space compression" (Hemphill & Blakely, 2015, pp. 81). Our knowledge, culture, and economy are intertwined in new global spaces. Harvey (2000) as well as Hemphill and Blakely (2015) note the increased compression of time and space, especially since the 1970s, impacting the goods we buy, our economy, as well as political and military decisions. "Youth have been particularly affected by globalizing forces of time compression, as they rapidly construct, revise, and consume new identities based upon information that becomes available to them" (Hemphill & Blakely, 2015, pp. 81). Education abroad enables students to step into a new global time-space compression that presents knowledge, culture, politics, and identity in new contexts and dimensions.

Additionally, institutional education abroad policy shapes the campus and the educational space that students navigate. Thus, when education abroad leaders make policies in their home institutions, it can influence the educational space of education abroad experiences of first-generation college students. As first-generation students may bring their strengths, identities from home, and community to college and education abroad, they may experience unique and challenging space-time compression.

Third-Space in Education Abroad

Wick's (2011) use of Third Space in education abroad focused on the value of facilitating the opportunity for students to culturally, socially, and epistemologically while they grow, learn, and construct their identities. His dissertation focused on minority students who had successfully completed an education abroad program at San Francisco State University (SF State). Through focus groups of alumni, his work built upon that of Bhabha (2004) as well as Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, and Collazo (2014). Wick (2001) employed Third Space as a disrupter of inequity as well as operationalizing interpersonal interactions.

Education abroad participation empowers students to negotiate their identity and experience transformation (Wick, 2011). Students of color participating in

education abroad programs at San Francisco State University employed personal capital and agency that launched their transformation once they began the application process and continued through and after participating in education abroad (Jackson, 2006; Wick, 2011). The education abroad experience offered a unique space for students to grow outside American society, freeing them from restrictions and offering an alternative Third Space. Therefore, students experienced growth that they could not have achieved by remaining the United States through experiencing multiple spheres of learning.

My dissertation looks at education abroad for first-generation college students who crosscut multiple identities as they see themselves change from before to after participation and how they navigate the multiple dimensional spheres of learning. As well, this study includes the physical and psychological space of administrators working and how they can support first-generation college students.

Using a space, time, and place dimensional frame, there are a few key links to my project goals, findings, and implications. First, first-generation students have transferable strengths before, during, and study abroad. This view helps construct a counter narrative to a deficit perspective that does not fully account for students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005) and their aspirational and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). The students are transferring social,

cultural, and educational strengths from high school and community college to the CSU undergraduate experience and study abroad, and they are transferring other strengths from their families and communities. Second, I examined the extent to which a small group of CSU education abroad professionals demonstrated awareness of the students' transferable strengths, the depth of education abroad experience for the students, and their education abroad offices' ability to promote further student development and growth in a new way cultural and educational space. Third, this transfer of funds of knowledge and strengths on the part of students links to a focus on equity and social justice, as I examined how students used the compressed time and space of education abroad to reflect on and develop their personal and educational goals, wishes, and talents.

Dissertation Organization

Chapter 1 outlines the problem of practice as the need to work to better support first-generation students in education. In this chapter, I also examine the relevant literature in education abroad, on first-generation college students, and on education abroad engagement through the lens of time and space. Chapter 2 explores the two-fold nature of the research design, as this study incorporated both education abroad professionals from four other CSU campuses as well as first-generation college students at SF State University. Chapter 3 reports on the

experiences and perspectives of CSU education abroad administrators, regarding education abroad support and resource allocation for first-generation college students. Chapter 4 highlights the education abroad experiences of first-generation college students at SF State University, hearing their voices before, during, and after education abroad participation. Chapter 5 offers a series of policy recommendations for education abroad programs and research implications.

Chapter Two: Methodology

This dissertation examined first-generation students and education abroad through three lenses: current participation through the perspective of education abroad administrators, my work as a professional in the field, and students in education abroad at San Francisco State University (SF State). I included a self-study of my own work to provide a perspective from SF State to compare with perspectives gleaned from interviews with education abroad colleagues, who were drawn from international offices at four California State University (CSU) campuses. These findings are presented in Chapter 3. Then, the study shifts to first-generation college students at San Francisco State University who have studied abroad. Data were collected from speaking with them before, during, and after participation, and these findings are presented in Chapter 4. In this current chapter, I begin with the role of the researcher, explain the study design, and describe the participants, before turning to the collection, analysis, and organizational presentation of data.

Role of the Researcher

As a Study Abroad Advisor at San Francisco State University, a diverse and large public institution in Northern California, I guide first-generation college students in education abroad. Through advising my students on the Benjamin A.

Gilman International Scholarship, I gained insights into SF State students' background, challenges, and economic concerns for education abroad. Repeatedly, I hear students say that they are the first in their family to attend higher education. I hear them express their determination despite going it alone, while managing personal and financial concerns, to fulfill either a dream or new hope of participating in education abroad. In my work, the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is aimed at financially enabling underrepresented students to participate in education abroad (Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, n.d.). SF State students have enjoyed much success in receiving the Gilman Scholarship (SF State Abroad News, n.d.), and it has helped me better understand my students' stories and challenges beyond academics and the education abroad process. It was important to me to work with my doctoral classmates and committee members to address potential biases throughout the research process. In my role as an insider in the field and as an insider at SF State it was crucial that I was open to critical feedback from outsiders to the education abroad field.

Study Design

This dissertation examined two central research questions: How do education abroad professionals and leaders perceive and respond to the needs and talents of first-generation college students and include them in education abroad

programs? How do first-generation college students who participate in education abroad perceive the opportunity in higher education?

In addressing the first question, I conducted one-on-one phone interviews with two education abroad professionals from each of four CSU campuses during the summer and fall semesters of 2016. I selected leaders who could offer a perspective on existing support structures and provide an education abroad knowledge base as well as experiences with first-generation students. Given the relative similarities in student demographics and institutional structures, I sought education abroad colleagues from four other CSU campuses to participate. To conduct the self-study part of this data collection, I wrote journal entries based upon my reflections on my own role as a Study Abroad advisor at SF State. In part these reflections had been prompted from insights I gained from the education abroad professionals I had interviewed.

In addressing the second research question, since the voice of students is limited in the education abroad literature, I spoke with a total of 27 students at three different stages in their education abroad experience: (1) just after they had been selected to participate in education abroad, (2) while they were abroad, and (3) once they had returned to California. This design allowed me to create a synthetic-longitudinal sample of first-generation college students participating in a semester

or yearlong education abroad program at SF State University. I spoke with students at all three stages to understand their experiences and the evolution of their thinking as they moved through the process of education abroad.

I utilized focus groups with the students before and after education abroad because I valued the opportunity for the students to speak with each other as well as with me. For the students abroad, it was not logistically possible to conduct focus groups, so I conducted one-on-one calls using Skype, What'sApp, or FaceTime during the middle and second half of their time abroad, so that they could provide me their insights while engaged in their experiences overseas. Because of the constraints of students' availability, I spoke with them during the academic terms. I had conducted a small pilot study with students prior to departure for education abroad in the fall of 2015. Then, I held the majority of my "before" focus groups during the spring of 2016. During the middle of the spring semester, I also spoke with the students abroad. In fall 2016, I conducted my focus groups with education abroad alumni.

Five California State University Education Abroad Offices

In this study, I examined five campuses, including my own. I only refer to San Francisco State University directly by name and reference the other four as

CSU A, B, C, and D. Additionally, I have given each of my colleagues a pseudonym.

San Francisco State University

San Francisco State University (SF State) primarily serves students from California (91%), and 37% of first-time freshmen identify as first in their family to attend higher education (SF State Facts: Students, Fall 2015). The campus is nationally recognized for its commitment to international education and addressing global issues (SF State News, 2012). Education abroad at SF State features long-term study abroad exchange programs, primarily focusing on semester and yearlong exchange programs through direct bilateral agreements and the California State University International Programs (CSU IP). SF State is also recognized for its 35 students who have been awarded the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. Nationally, SF State was first in the nation for number of students winning this scholarship in fall 2016 (SF State Abroad News, n.d.).

There are three key features of SF State Abroad Programs aimed at breaking down barriers and ensuring accessibility for SF State students. First, education abroad is academically feasible. Through either SF State Exchange or CSU IP, all SF State students have at least one option in their undergraduate major. Additionally, they have options to study their minor, many of the requirements of

general education, and languages abroad. Second, the coursework earned abroad is evaluated as resident credit just as if the students took the course at SF State.

Residence credit is particularly valuable on the SF State campus, where students experience competition for classes. Third, students pay the same tuition. All SF State Exchange Programs and the majority of the CSU IP programs operate on the exchange model (sending and receiving students with tuition costs and fees remaining with the home institution). Under this model, the differences in cost are living expenses as well as airfare, visa, and insurance expenses.

CSU Campus A

CSU A is a large, Hispanic-serving institution, not unlike SF State. CSU A and SF State share important similarities in student demographics and their focus on education abroad. Additionally, CSU A offers an interesting comparison in their emphasis and approach to their commitment to international education in creating an internationally focused learning environment. The campus' internationalization strategy permeates the university, including education abroad, through a wide array of program types, durations, and destinations. One of the Study Abroad Advisors, John, noted, "There is a lot of support and encouragement for students, even when it is not even a requirement."

CSU Campus B

CSU B has a large, diverse student body in an urban location. Like SF State, CSU B serves a diverse student body and nationally recognized for serving undergraduate Hispanic/Latino/a students. More importantly, CSU B is a diverse campus serving a number of first-generation college students. CSU B education abroad administrators see first-generation college students as part of the campus norm. Like CSU A, there is a strong global focus on the campus.

CSU Campus C

CSU C has a strong focus on first-generation college students throughout the campus along with the diversity of the student body as a whole. The campus serves its local region, especially lower income students. CSU C offers a planned insight and keen awareness for serving first-generation college students. Renee, a leader at CSU C, remarked that:

[Our] County is one of the poorest counties in California. When most people think of [us] they think the City, not the County. So, they think it's a very wealthy area when in fact it's very, very diverse. There are very high income and very low income [populations]. That's what we're trying to address is the lower income so that [everyone can] be part of the success of whole county and the whole state.

First-generation college students make up 52% of the student body, and 72% of the students receive at least some financial aid to support their education (CSU Mentor, n.d.). Although the institution is one of the smaller campuses in the system, the

university is highly diverse and serves a large Hispanic/Latino/a community. CSU C is nationally ranked for sending students on long-term (year) education abroad programs (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2015) and its international office works with their diverse student population to show that education abroad is a viable option for them and as one of the administrators put it, options extend “not just [to] college, but [to] the world.”

CSU Campus D

CSU D has the smallest student population of the five campuses. Campuses C and D are focused on a strong community life at the university. Among the CSU system, CSU D remains more traditional than SF State in its institutional demographics for education abroad; there is recognition of more work to be done. Both education abroad administrators I interviewed described CSU D as interested in increasing the campus diversity. CSU D emphasizes the application of real world concerns in the classroom, empowering students with the skills to prepare students for meeting the needs of California and the world. Students at CSU D have an array of education abroad program types and a national option. Students can select semester and yearlong exchange programs, California State University International Programs (CSU IP), affiliated and non-affiliated third party providers, and faculty-led classes abroad.

Participants

Starting in late 2015 and throughout 2016, I gathered data through interviews with education abroad professionals throughout the CSU system (Appendix A) as well as 27 first-generation college students at SF State (Appendixes B, C, and D). The two subsequent sections offer an overview of the participants from both populations.

Administrators

During the summer and fall of 2016, I interviewed eight other administrators in education abroad from four other CSU campuses just highlighted above along with my own self-reflections regarding SF State. I selected CSU administrators mostly because of the diversity of the student population and number of first-generation college students these institutions serve. Among the 23 CSU campuses, I selected eight individuals from among those I knew and others who were recommended to me by colleagues. Their number of years and experience, from 1 to 46 years of experience, within the CSU system and field provided a range of experiences and perspectives. The sample included five women and three men, fitting with the field as predominantly female (Table 1).

Table 1: CSU Administrators Profile

CSU Campus	Pseudonym	Years in the Field	Programs
CSU A	John	5 years	CSU IP, exchanges, ISEP, faculty-led, non-CSU programs, internships, service-learning, research
CSU A	Robin	9 years	CSU IP, exchanges, ISEP, faculty-led, non-CSU programs, internships, service-learning, research
CSU B	Lena	1 year	CSU IP, exchanges, non-CSU programs
CSU B	Mark	16 years	CSU IP, exchanges, non-CSU programs
CSU C	Renee	11 years in education abroad, more at CSU C	CSU IP, exchanges, affiliated non-CSU programs, NSE, faculty-led
CSU C	Jesus	3 years	CSU IP, exchanges, affiliated non-CSU programs, NSE, faculty-led
CSU D	Pam	46 years	CSU IP, NSE, DIS, CIEE, USAC
CSU D	Ann	3 years	Exchanges, TEAN, USAC, CEA, CIEE

Program Terms from Table:

CEA: Cultural Experiences Abroad

CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange

CSU IP: California State University International Programs

DIS: Study Abroad in Scandinavia

ISEP: International Student Exchange Programs

Non-CSU programs: independent, third party provides (approved/affiliated and not)

NSE: National Student Exchange

TEAN: The Education Abroad Network

USAC: University Studies Abroad Consortium

First-Generation SF State Education Abroad Students

Through my work at SF State, I have always had students who self-disclose that they are first in their family to attend college, a pattern that increasingly stood out to me. After students had been selected to participate in education abroad, I followed the guidelines and protocol of San Francisco State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in reaching out to students I knew had identified as first-generation and inquired if they would be interested in participating in my study. Since I primarily learned about students as first-generation while assisting them with their Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, all the participants in the study received a Pell Grant and financial aid, requirements of the Gilman Scholarship. The majority applied for the Gilman Scholarship. A few could not because they are residents and not citizens or their country abroad was not eligible (e.g., Turkey) during the time they went abroad.

I spoke with students before, during, and after their time abroad. Fifteen students participated in semi-structured focus groups after they had been selected, before going abroad. Then, I interviewed five students with Skype, What'sApp, or FaceTime during their time abroad. Later, eleven students participated in semi-structured focus groups after they returned from abroad. Three of the eleven students had also participated in either previous focus groups before education abroad and/or interviews abroad. A small group of students agreed to be part of the study at multiple stages. Gabriela and Karen participated in the study at all three stages. Andromeda participated in the focus group before and then was interviewed while abroad in Scotland, but could not participate upon her return. I first spoke with Juan during his semester in France abroad and then again in focus group after he returned. All of the students' demographic information with accompanying pseudonyms is listed in Appendix E.

All the students participated for at least a semester program abroad with one student doing both a summer and year program, as that length of time participating in education abroad is a degree requirement of the Chinese Flagship Program. All students went abroad to complete an academic objective to help them make degree progress. The majority of the students selected a program to make degree progress

towards their major with a few participating for their minor, general education, and language study.

Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects

To protect all my participants in this study, I carefully followed the regulations of SF State's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I was especially concerned about my students. All the students attended San Francisco State University as a degree-seeking student during their time abroad. To protect their identity, I assigned them pseudonyms that I have used throughout this dissertation. For my colleagues and students, I made it clear that I would not be naming institutions. The recordings and transcripts are stored on my laptop, which is password protected.

Data Collection

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry enabled me to focus on the personal stories of the students and document the educational, social, and cultural meanings of their education abroad experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). Narrative inquiry is a “way of thinking about experience” in how a “person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). In particular, it focuses on events in time based upon

personal and social conditions (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007), and the lived experiences of participants and how interactions occur in life and social relations (Clandinin, 2013).

In collecting the interview data from education abroad administrators, narrative inquiry helped me view and understand the experiences of first-generation college students. To draw meaning for the findings, I sought to learn their pivotal experiences and perspectives to illustrate their education abroad experiences. Student voice was central in shaping this dissertation. Their narratives and memories were constructed through the interview process. I wanted to capture a holistic perspective of personal and human aspects of the education abroad process, including students' experiences, feelings, and understandings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative inquiry helped me understand how students who did not have the benefit of growing up with parents who understood higher education and education abroad programs created new stories for themselves as first-generation students. While there is an increased awareness of first-generation college students among leaders in higher education, I did not know their education abroad stories either from my work or the literature. Moreover, before recommendations can be made to

support first-generation college students in education abroad, it is important to hear from them directly and understand their education abroad experiences.

Interviews with CSU Education Abroad Administrators

In speaking with the eight administrators, I used structured interviews to learn how education abroad professionals view and support first-generation college students. Since I spoke with colleagues from different institutions and varying office and student dynamics, the interviews provided consistency across the findings and create comparable data, thus, limiting variation error (Bryman, 2015). In crafting the structured interviews (Appendix A), I sought to learn about their individual backgrounds, their view of their institution, current education abroad structures and future goals. I also wanted to understand the education abroad professionals' perceptions of first-generation college students' needs and talents, and approaches to support these students. As not all administrators may be aware if a student self-identifies as first-generation, I inquired broadly about working with diverse students in addition to their specific knowledge of first-generation college students. Thus, my questions were aimed at understanding what staff and institutions do structurally to support first-generation college students, which enabled me to better compare the different institutions and education abroad programs.

Over two cycles, I gathered data so that I could first hear from an administrator at each of the institutions before going back the second time to the same institutions to build upon my understanding and data. The two cycles transpired over the summer of 2016 and then fall of 2016. In the second round interviews, I asked the same questions, but based upon my previous responses I paid closer attention to their responses on inclusiveness along with their responsiveness to first-generation college students. My goal was twofold. First, I sought to confirm what I had previously learned. Second, by speaking with a second individual from each of the campuses, I could better gain an understanding of campus dynamics for first-generation college students.

I conducted structured phone interviews and, with their consent, recorded them to later transcribe for accuracy (Deppermann, 2013; Seidman, 2013). I used a speakerphone and audio recorded the amplified conversation, and before recording I asked for permission and turned on the recorder only after our introductions, so that privacy of names and institutions would be kept confidential. Furthermore, I made the calls in a private office or my apartment for privacy. During the interviews, I made some supplemental field notes. Additionally, I wrote reflections and summaries after the conclusion of each interview. I sent the audio files to an

outside agency for full transcription and I then edited the transcripts for accuracy before coding.

Education Abroad at SF State

Two of my education colleagues asked at the end of their interviews about my interest in this topic and my work with first-generation college students in education abroad. In a sense, I switched from interviewer to interviewee with the opportunity to directly answer questions similar to those I had asked about my work. They asked me the same questions I had asked them. These instances provided me with a valuable opportunity to self-reflect. At times, I found myself in agreement or having had similar experiences in working with first-generation college students in education abroad, although there were differences in campus approaches. Other times, it was fascinating to learn differences and the context behind them to consider with respect to my work. I wrote reflection memos to myself after my interviews with colleagues, first focusing on their remarks and then turning to my own work and what led me to consider the research questions for this study.

Focus Groups and Interviews with First-Generation College Students

This study utilized four focus groups with students before they went abroad (after they had been selected to participate) (Appendix B). Additionally, it included

interviews with five students abroad that provided insight while overseas (Appendix C). Then, I used four focus groups with 11 education abroad alumni (Appendix D). While I requested that students speak with me multiple times across the education abroad process (before, during, and after), I primarily spoke with different students at each stage, as data were collected during a concentrated period between the spring of 2016 and the fall of 2016. As the majority of students only spoke to me at one stage, some of the questions are repeated while others are new and reflective of the particular stage.

I began my focus groups with students before they went abroad during the fall of 2015 and continued through the spring of 2016 with 15 students. A few students from fall 2015 also agreed to speak with me while they were abroad in spring 2016 and then again when they returned in fall 2016. The majority of the participants were new students at each stage with interviews abroad in the spring 2016 (total of 5 students) and then focus groups with alumni during fall 2016 (11 students). The majority of the participants in this study went on SF State Abroad Exchange Programs (22 students) for either a semester or year with only a handful on CSU IP (5 students) for a year. In part, the timing of when data could be collected for this dissertation, the periods aligned better with SF State Exchange

Program participation, than CSU IP programs so more students participation on SF State direct exchanges are included in this study.

Data Analysis

I examined the interviews with education abroad administrators for cross-campus similarities and differences regarding education abroad program structure and administration. Then, I analyzed their approaches to working with first-generation college students in education abroad. Additionally, I examined interview and focus group data from first-generation students at SF State to understand their lived experiences in education abroad.

Grounded Theory

I used grounded theory for understanding the interviews and focus group data, a process that involved recursive cycles between data and evolving analysis (Charmaz, 2014). The meanings and interpretations of the data gradually emerged through initial topics and codes presented in the focus groups and interviews, which I then expanded into categories and formalized as themes (Charmaz, 2005). I conducted an initial focus group of first-generation college students before they went abroad as my initial data to code before additional data were collected. The coding of this earliest data became my foundation before moving forward. I also

used memo writing throughout to reflect on patterns and form initial understandings (Birks & Mills, 2015; Saldaña, 2013).

Coding

For first coding cycle, I found descriptive coding to be insightful for understanding my students at each stage as well as allowing me to extract a helpful overview of topics using short nouns. By utilizing focus groups and interviews with students at different stages of the education abroad process, I looked for key incidents and stories pertinent to a particular education abroad stage and also across all three periods. In analyzing transcript data, I used line-by-line descriptive codes to look for categories and then themes. Typically, transcripts consisted of seven to ten codes per page. In total, I had 54 descriptive codes for students with additional subcategories and overlap in my initial review. I gathered all my findings and codes in an Excel sheet sorted by source (focus group/interview and date), time period (before, during, and after education abroad), pseudonym, descriptive code, and the line of data.

Once the data was entered, I initially examined the codes within the timeline of before, during, and after education abroad for frequency. For example, my code on adjustment appeared primarily in speaking with students after they returned from education abroad and a little while abroad. It is not surprising that adjustment

would not be discussed beforehand, but it is interesting that it appeared much more frequently upon their return from education abroad than being abroad. I plotted and mapped out when codes appeared in a timeline with three distinct sections: before, during, and after education. Then, I started to see if there might be any connections or evolutions of codes across—I repeated this process three times, making adjustments until I condensed my initial descriptive codes to form themes.

Summary

The methodology centered on structured interviews and narrative inquiry with my colleagues from four other CSU institutions and the voices of first-generation college students from SF State throughout their time abroad in semi-structured focus groups and interviews. Using grounded theory, I gathered and analyzed data from both groups to form the findings. The findings for each are laid out in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

**Chapter Three: Perspectives of CSU
Education Abroad Leaders on First-Generation Students:
Issues of Awareness, Access, and Resources**

John, CSU A: We have a lot of faith in [first-generation college students'] abilities to succeed in any type of international program including longer term study abroad, because they have had to overcome some challenges potentially in coming to university and that cultural transition as a first generation college students. So we understand that and we feel because of that they can also succeed when they study abroad. So we encourage them to come in and pursue it.

Overview

In this chapter, I examine the experiences and perspectives of eight California State University (CSU) education abroad administrators based on interview data and highlight the key themes of education abroad administrators. Three main themes emerged from the interviews: awareness, access, and resources. Awareness creates an overarching frame for education abroad access and resources. Figure 1 illustrates the thematic and subtheme relationships.

Figure 1: Theme and subthemes relationships of insights from administrators.

Awareness and inclusion provide the overarching structure as it speaks to the knowledge and concern administrators have which frames their approach towards providing access and resources to support first-generation students. In terms of time, space, and place dimensions, education abroad administrators shape access on a campus both directly and indirectly through specific policies, structures, and actions. Examining the leaders' awareness of first-generation students' talents and needs in education abroad, I wanted to understand the varied administrative and leadership approaches and structures for promoting the transfer of student strengths and the promotion of equitable access and achievement in education programs. Then, as highlighted in Figure 1, resources are the secondary focus looking at their

usage and distribution. Similarly, access had two subthemes: important campus allies (Education Abroad/Educational Opportunity Program integration) and cross-campus collaboration and partnerships. Education abroad offices have partnered with key allies on campus that already work with diverse students they want to serve, especially Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) to improve equity of access.

Under resources, the role of alumnae/i as well as funding and scholarships materialized from the interviews. Education abroad alumnae/i are an invaluable resource, as they are living testimonials that education abroad is possible (Keup, 2016). Finally, funding along with the need and role of scholarships were identified as important barriers to be addressed by institutions for students. In all these themes, an underlying belief across the campuses was the assertion that first-generation college students participate and benefit from education abroad programs that was founded upon the leaders' awareness of first-generation college students' talents and needs.

Awareness and Inclusion of First-Generation Students in Education Aboard

Providing Space for Diversity and Inclusion

An important part of awareness and inclusion is recognizing the diversity of the student population that administrators serve. All eight education abroad advisors experienced a growing awareness of first-generation students' strengths and talents in education abroad participation.

John, CSU A: We have a lot of faith in their abilities to succeed in any type of international program including longer term study abroad, because they have had to overcome some challenges potentially in coming to university and that cultural transition as a first-generation college students. So we understand that and we feel because of that they can also succeed when they study abroad. So we encourage them to come in and pursue it.

The advisor believes that because first-generation college students may not have had the easiest path to college, and while in university, they are in some ways more prepared to take on new challenges. Similarly, the administrators at CSU C try to ensure that first-generation students know that education abroad is a realistic possibility for them.

Renee, CSU C: [First-generation college students need to hear that] they can do what anybody else can do and not just sit back and say okay you want this one, go for two weeks. That's fine. We need to offer them and push a little bit gently what their options are so that they see have as many options as other people...First generation students are like sure, sign me up. They're just really open. Well there are some limits of course. They have to look at finances. Everybody does. And they also have to talk to their family.

Awareness of their abilities goes beyond recognizing them to actively seeking to include them in education abroad.

Additionally, there was a strong interest in serving their diverse campuses and increasing diversity, specifically in education abroad. CSU D is moving towards increasing diversity and inclusivity at the international office. CSU A has a diverse student body, but it wants to increase inclusiveness and to ensure that they are serving their diverse campus student body.

Robin, CSU A: [We are interested in] comparing the diversity of our campuses to the diversity of our student study abroad population. I want to see if we are at least matching, because if they are so diverse, let see if the students are actually taking advantage of these opportunities are represented as well.

At CSU C, education abroad advisors want to support them without making assumptions about what they may or may not know about education abroad and traveling in general. CSU C's international office is very focused on their campus and working with their diverse student population to show that education abroad is possible and an option for them. As noted by the CSU C International Office, students should understand that their options extend to "not just college, but the world." She argued that when presenting options beyond a classroom in California, education abroad educators should not make assumptions about a student's background and prior experiences. Not only were the administrators aware of the

high number of first-generation college students on their campus, but also one of the advisors, Jesus, was a first-generation college student at CSU C, who went abroad for a year through the program.

As the international office is aware of their campus and first-generation college student population, both administrators said they take this into consideration in working with students. Primarily, they do not make assumptions that their students have experience or knowledge regarding international travel.

Renee, CSU C: With the language we use, we don't make assumption about previous travel and... whether they do or don't have a passport...[Education abroad is not a] closed club that you either understand the world or you don't get to come.

Jesus finds it helpful when his students do disclose this, which they do in his education abroad workshops and advising conversations. He shares with students that he has walked in their shoes and studied in Spain for an academic year. Jesus knows—from personal experience and working at CSU C—that first-generation college students can and are successful in participating in education abroad programs. Among my colleagues interviewed, he was the only one who directly related to the students as a first-generation college student.

CSU Campus A offered a new approach to this collaboration with the goal of community building. A little over two years ago, Robin (an education abroad leader at CSU A) realized a need to build a community relationship between her

office and the Educational Opportunity Program to increase awareness of education abroad among the EOP population. She pitched her idea to both offices and believes that this is a potential model for other campus collaboration. EOP is one of their strongest partners for the education abroad office and serves a diverse student population.

Robin: Be consistent, make sure that there's trust involved. You know, and that was the first layer become part of the community. Be expected to be part of that community. And then once you have that level of confidence that you'll be there, that you are someone they can trust, you're someone who is reliable, then some people are willing to open up and kind of ask questions or be curious or just talk about life and then it starts translate into others things like studying abroad.

Robin noted that once it was established, they worked hard together through professional referrals, participation in their regular meetings, and programming. Slowly, Robin found that each step moved towards a more natural collaboration.

Advising to Serve the Needs of Our Students

In providing support for first-generation students in education abroad, advising is key in inclusion (Strayhorn, 2015; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). John, an advisor at CSU A, argued that a holistic approach enables professionals to understand their students and better meet their needs. With an awareness of their students' diversity and backgrounds, CSU A's education

abroad office can take an individualistic approach to their students and seek to understand them without making assumptions.

John: Students with different cultural backgrounds may have different questions, different concerns. And when I'm advising, I try to observe what those may be and help students identify those that they haven't already by asking key questions about their background, where they come from, what their interests are, what do they see as questions and challenges and pulled those out and try to address them individually with them as an individual student. In addition, I cover with them the broad problematic and procedural questions that apply to everybody.

John recognized a need to take different approaches while covering the basics of participating in education abroad with the understanding that all their students have the ability to be successful in education abroad.

All the administrators understood the dynamics and make-up of their individual campuses and responded to their unique student populations accordingly. For example, Renee highlighted CSU C's campus focus on working with their diverse student population and building upon campus efforts to show that education abroad is possible and an option for them.

Renee: The campus itself was in a place where students often didn't go to college just because of how far away it was. It really welcomes the local population, which were unrepresented in traditional higher education...where Spanish is the primary language.

Both administrators, Renee and Jesus, were aware of the high number of first-generation college students on their campus.

As advisors, we know that students sometimes have misunderstandings or barriers about whether they can participate in education abroad, even when we are confident in our students. Ann (at CSU D) noted it is important to be aware and “break down barriers and perceptions [that students have] around academics...and study abroad.” In considering first-generation college students in this study, this means considering access and resources that the campuses provide students.

Providing Access Through Collaboration, Partnerships, and Structure

All of the education abroad advisors and leaders recognized that access and collaboration across a campus are important for supporting diverse students, such as first-generation college students. They mentioned offices and individuals whose mission is to serve non-traditional students—many of them first-generation college students, specifically the Education Opportunity Program (EOP) that exists throughout California public, higher education. In considering collaboration, partnerships, and existing structures, it is important to consider the community and how education abroad professionals might approach serving students from different backgrounds.

Additionally, all the administrators support the increased awareness and want to change the dialogue on who participates and for how long and in which programs.

Renee, CSU C: [First-generation college students need to hear that] they can do what anybody else can do and not just sit back and say okay you want this one, go for two weeks. That's fine. We need to offer them and push a little bit gently what their options are so that they see have as many options as other people.

In considering equity of participation, she argued that it is necessary to provide structure and support for students to equally participate in education abroad programs at an institution. Any student who wishes to participate in education abroad, regardless of their background, should have the opportunity. Renee notes that once first-generation students realize that education abroad is for them, they want to live that dream—"First generation students are like sure, sign me up. They're just really open. Well, there are some limits, of course. They have to look at finances. Everybody does. And they also have to talk to their family" (Renee, CSU C).

An Interest in Cross-Campus Collaboration

While support from an education abroad office is important, one office cannot do it alone as cross-campus collaboration is needed. At all five CSU campuses, collaboration and building partnerships with other offices on each campus emerged as critical in supporting first-generation students in education abroad. Mark (from CSU B) argued that partnerships are important and that education abroad leaders must meet students where they are.

Mark: I go and have meetings with students over there in their space. They don't come to my space. I go to their space. I have listening sessions and information sessions in their space because it's about me being respectful of the fact that they are a community in and of themselves and I need to come to them where they are and build a relationship with their director and their associate director and then we have that issue together.

Mark offered a unique insight about the power of physical space supported by CSU

B's approach to working with EOP as previously noted.

Additionally, Mark argued that creating partnerships do more than increase awareness and presence on a campus.

The study abroad office cannot drive that conversation. Those are the conversations that really need to happen on campus but those are the conversations that are uncomfortable. I am a fifth generation college graduate and a white male. I had to walk gently into a conversation about first generation college students and students of color needing study abroad. That doesn't mean I can't be part of that conversation, but that does mean that I need to approach that in a gentle and thoughtful way and with some really key partners on campus to help enact that.

Mark noted that not all leaders and administrators look like their students nor have shared backgrounds and journeys to higher education. However, there are offices on campus that do. Therefore, it is important to work together for each office to find a way to be a part of the conversation on diversity in education abroad and better support the campuses students in all their endeavors. Thus, partnerships become crucial for supporting students and increasing access across the campus.

As already discussed briefly several times earlier in this chapter, an important partnership for education abroad professional to build is with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). The EOP has offices throughout the CSU system, and are designed support and increase access and retention among “historically low-income and educationally disadvantaged students” (CSU Mentor, EOP, n.d.). They are structured to provide holistic support for diverse students in higher education. All of the education abroad administrators collaborated with their EOP offices.

Ann, CSU D: We coordinate with staff members and student academic services as well as EOP to promote persons that will have opportunity for the students, which includes first-generation college students about studying abroad. We do panels just for EOP [students]. Having a strong relationship with our EOP staff, we work with them to see how we can support students that are getting through the process and better understanding what might be barriers that they’re seeing.

Like CSU D and the other CSU campuses, SF State University’s Office of International Programs has a long partnership with EOP through workshops for students and check-ins between administrators in each office every semester. The panels with education abroad alumnae/i enable EOP students to see that it is possible for them to participate since their peers have done it. Through the panels, the students heard first-hand how their peers in how education abroad worked academically, financially (with scholarships), and with personal challenges. Thus, it

achieved the goal of giving EOP students a clear path for education abroad in their higher education career, if they desire.

Like other campuses, John noted that CSU A conducts workshops specifically for EOP students on education abroad. However, the defining difference is the physical presence of an education abroad advisor in the EOP office for almost two years. John said, "We have regular study abroad advising physically in the EOP office and that's been great success in increasing study abroad participation amongst EOP students of which great proportions are first-generation college students." Ann believes that their work with EOP is a potential model for working with other offices on campus.

Structure in Time and Place: Centralized International Committee

CSU A utilizes its central committee on international education to address the decentralized education abroad opportunities spread in multiple offices throughout the campus. Initially, this created a communication and duplication concern, which a centralized international committee helped to address and bring people across the campus together.

John: There is a lot of support and encouragement for students, even when it is not even a requirement... One part of bringing all of those different people together is we have an international education committee on campus that meets once a month. It's a full wide range of different professionals from the registrar to financial aid to academic advising and then of course international education professionals. The study abroad staff communicates

and works closely with disability services and the veteran's office, the financial aid office, and others on campus to support students that want to study abroad.

Both administrators remarked on the decentralization and multiple international education offices throughout the campus and felt that their committee serves a valuable role of bringing the campus together. While a committee or advisory board exists in varying forms at multiple campuses, the one at CSU A serves the structural need to bring multiple entities across the campus together. CSU A's committee helped bring together multiple offices and centralize international education. However, a centralized committee is not unique. Other campuses, like CSU D, utilize a central academic committee for international education.

DACA Case Study

All the administrators mentioned reaching out across the campus to support DACA/AB 540 students, as DACA students can participate in education abroad programs, and many of them are first-generation college students. DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. In 2012, President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano brought forth the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), impacting almost 2 million children and providing them with a legal path to work and higher education without granting them permanent status in the United States (Savino, 2014). California has passed

additional legislation pertaining to these students: AB 540 Non-Resident Tuition Exemption in 2001 as well as AB 130 in 2012 and AB 131 in 2013. Together, these are the legal basis for the California Dream Act (SF State AB 540 Financial Aid). Even with these multiple legislative actions at the federal and state level, it is challenging for AB 540 students to access and navigate higher education.

Under President Obama (when I conducted these interviews before the November 2016 election), there was strong interest and movement for supporting undocumented students on CSU campuses and in the field of international education to include DACA students in education abroad programs. Currently, within the CSU system of 23 campuses, only nine have Dream Resource Centers, which are offices that provide academic, professional, and personal resources specifically for undocumented students. Six of the nine have come into existence since May 2015 (The SF State Dreamer, 2016). CSU B is one of the nine campuses with a Dreamer Center.

Mark highlighted CSU B's partnership between the international office and their Dreamer Center. SF State has an AB 540 Coordinator dedicated to serving undocumented students, which works closely with the educator abroad staff and students. All the campuses mentioned DACA students regardless of whether their campus had a designed individual or center. Education abroad offices still have to

find resources for working with DACA students, as we are not immigration experts, but we can advise and help connect students.

Unfortunately, efforts have paused with the transition to a new president in January 2017 for fear that policy could suddenly change leaving students stranded away from their home in the United States. Before the start of spring 2017, it was heartbreaking to dissuade two DACA students from participating in an education abroad program because of fears we had that were shared all the way up to the CSU Chancellor's Office.

Funding and Resources

All of the education abroad administrators mentioned funding and suggested the role of education abroad alumnae/i, advising, and scholarships as ways to support students.

The Place and Role of Education Abroad Alumnae/i

Alumnae/i play an important role in education and a practice shared by all five campuses. Renee and Jesus from CSU C both felt that education abroad alumni inspire their peers and break down barriers because it is not just their advisor saying it is possible and for them. What may start as a dream or an idea becomes a possibility when a peer says, "I studied overseas." Renee also noted, "We also try

hire people, student assistants, who will be representing other populations that are not the traditional study abroad student.”

SF State utilizes a network of education abroad alumnae/i as Global Ambassadors on the campus. Many, although not all of these students are recipients of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which means they are diverse, non-traditional students who receive a Pell Grant and participated in an education abroad program for at least a semester, if not a year. The Global Ambassadors are visible in the center of campus as they have a table in the quad with the study abroad club, International Education Exchange Council. They also help by giving classroom presentations where students go into classes (with the permission of the professor) to tell other students that they studied overseas on a program through the university that enabled them to use their financial aid, pay the same tuition, and earn resident credit while seeing the world. Many are inspired by peers or learned from peers who were Global Ambassadors and are now paying it forward. Renee, a leader at CSU C, noted that it is powerful when a first-generation college student can tell another one, “I did it, and you can too.”

While it is not always possible to have an alumnae/i present, digital resources can convey that message. Pam, who works at CSU D’s education abroad office, spoke about the short film, “Breaking Barriers with Study Abroad,” that

highlights the before and after experiences of non-traditional students participating in education abroad. The film is shown to illustrate the experiences of a few non-traditional students at SF State speaking about their experiences before and after participating in education abroad on yearlong programs. It was created by Michael Yarabinec, a previous coordinator at SF State University, and showcases that participation on year-long programs are possible for all students, including (but not limited to) first-generation students, transfer students, single parents, and older students. Not only did these students participate, but they also made it happen financially, academically, and personally for an academic year. Pam noted that her office employs the video to launch conversations with students and administrators.

Pam's office (at CSU D) also utilizes students who received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship on many of their panels. These students share with their peers that it is possible for students who look like them or have non-traditional backgrounds to access education abroad. Pam utilizes a "panel of study abroad returnees who were underrepresented first generation students, and they really highlighted financial resources for study abroad. The majority of the students from the panel received the Gilman Scholarship."

Funding and Use of Scholarships

Along with utilizing peer and advising resources, funding and the use of scholarships surfaced as an important resource for supporting first-generation college students in education abroad programs among all five campuses. CSU D highlights group-advising workshops on funding for education abroad and wishes that they had more scholarships for under-represented students.

Ann: We hold financial and scholars workshops. We usually do about 5 workshops per quarter. Specifically for students on finances so they know about scholarship opportunities that are available. We are offering program developments for faculty programs, enough to increase the diversity of CSU D faculty-led program.

I, too, have found such workshops and group advising to be important in supporting diverse students in education abroad. It was my work in helping SF State students receive the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship that first made me aware of the number of first-generation college students participating in education abroad. I generally offer around 12-14 Gilman workshops each semester before the deadline to help students understand and create a strategy for approaching the scholarship. While SF State's student club, the International Education Exchange Council (IEEC), does offer an education abroad scholarship for students, we emphasize external funding, like Gilman.

John, at CSU A, emphasized the importance of providing funding for their students to participate in education abroad programs and offer scholarships for their students in addition to outside scholarships that they can also apply for, such as the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship and the Boren Award. In addition to students having access to federally funded scholarships, since 2008, CSU A has offered its own education abroad scholarship through the associated student government. The scholarship is funded through a student fee. For the 2015-2016 academic year, students with at least a 2.5 GPA participating on any of CSU A's education abroad program have been awarded collectively around \$420,000. The campuses offered a mix of financial support from either a combination of institution with external or focused exclusively on outside scholarships along with financial aid.

Discussion

The leaders in this study valued equitable access and inclusion along with the achievement of their students in education abroad programs at their institutions. Education abroad leaders grapple with logistical and administrative issues to include students in education abroad through awareness and access, along with the resources to open a unique learning experience for students. The leaders are aware of students' ability to participate and their talents as first-generation students who

have worked hard and succeeded in entering college, and also of education abroad's potential as a unique space and time to enrich students' social and educational achievement. The leaders also noted a number of leadership goals and structural mechanisms at their campuses that promoted increased access to education abroad programs for first-generation students. They also remarked on a few key areas that are problematic and that they are committed to improving, especially in the area of funding. In the discussion below, I discuss the leaders' awareness of the first-generation population on their campuses along with approaches to access, campus partnerships and collaboration, as well as financial resources and access for students.

Education Abroad Leaders' Awareness and Efforts to Ensure Equitable Access for First-Generation College Students

Education abroad is recognized as a high impact practice (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2009; Stebleton, Soria, and Cherney, 2013) that my colleagues saw as increasingly accessible to first-generation college students. Awareness and access in education abroad, according to two leaders, are two key factors in sending more students abroad that match campus demographics. Jesus, an advisor at CSU C and a first-generation college student and alumnus of the CSU IP programs, uses himself as an example for his students for education abroad and ability to participate for a

year. While Jesus can use himself as a role model for the students, not all leaders and advisors may match their students and use alumnae/i peers as examples for students. Jesus and the other advisors and administrators play important roles in offering support and guidance through processes and structures (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). Jesus' personal narrative is a powerful story for other CSU education abroad leaders to know about, and also for first-generation students who might be inspired by his story and current work. Additionally, we need to consider the insights from Mark and Robin about approaching a community as an outsider and being respectful while conscious of potential power dynamics that may dissuade students from applying for education abroad.

The literature on first-generation students references the need to better serve these students in higher education as institutions are not always prepared to meet the needs of first-generation students by understanding and supporting their experiences and needs (Black & Voelker, 2008; Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012). By extension, institutions need to take a holistic view at supporting students in all aspects, including education abroad. Through their work on CSU campuses in education abroad, the leaders demonstrated varying levels of knowledge of first-generation students, but a consistent message of support and belief in their students.

John (from CSU A) passionately remarked that they “have a lot of faith in [first-generation college students’] abilities to succeed in any type of international program including longer term study abroad, because they have had to overcome some challenges potentially in coming to university.” Therefore, John expressed awareness of that first-generation students had transferable skills and knowledge for navigating higher education without direct family experience in participating in higher education or education abroad.

However, not all administrators knew who their first-generation students were or how many participated in education abroad from their campus. John took a holistic approach to his students and expressed great awareness of the diversity of the students on his campus, including first-generation students. He also highlighted the transferable skills of first-generation students for education abroad. Jesus drew upon his personal experience to connect with the first-generation students on his campus while also understanding his campus’ population. Other advisors were not as familiar or had such personal connections and experiences. Nonetheless, they wanted to support them. All the leaders singled out campus alliances and partnerships as a key resource in supporting first-generation students in education abroad.

Campus Partnerships: Aligning to Better Serve

Engel and Keeley (2015) conclude that fostering campus partnerships are vital for education abroad programs, which need a network of resources and knowledge from across the campus and advising to support first-generation students in higher education (Davis, 2012; Strayhorn, 2015). The leaders in this study include quality advising and consider the multiple identities of first-generation students. Additionally, leaders also respected communities on campus where first-generation students may already reside and have support that can be built upon. CSU Campuses A and B offer interesting approaches for campus partnerships of physically going to other offices and joining their communities. Mark (at CSU B) was mindful of power dynamics of space and how to approach the conversations. Furthermore, Mark argued that leaders, who do not identify as being first-generation college students, should be part of the conversation, but not necessarily lead the conversation. What we can do is collaborate with those on campus who are part of those communities and be conscious in how we do that. Mark found that physically going to another office or community on campus shifts the power dynamic to that of a more collaborative nature.

In a similar approach of being mindful of space and collaboration, Robin from CSU A established a collaborative partnership with her campus' EOP office.

She did this by integrating herself and her colleagues into the EOP Office. Her goal was to have consistent presence in their office, where education abroad advisors would attend EOP staff meetings and became highly visible to all who enter the office. For her, it was more than visibility, but joining the community or, at least, being accepted in their space after being present for several months (Gulson & Symes, 2007). Collaborating or partnering with EOP was a common practice among the CSU campuses in the study, especially as they want to serve their diverse students. However, Robin took a new approach by integration of herself physically there and becoming part of their community. This new approach recognizes the power of space and the community that already exists there.

At SF State, we have enjoyed a long collaboration and attend EOP staff meetings, but not on a regular basis. Like other campuses, we collaborate with EOP to offer two workshops per semester for EOP students. A representative from EOP and I and a panel of alumnae/i conduct the workshops at SF State. However, the workshop is held in the Office of International Programs, but this is in part at the request of EOP because our office has the physical space. The EOP office has told me that they want their students to be familiar with our office and this is a way for them to bring them over. Therefore, it is a balance for leaders to consider in terms of integration into the community as well as campus dynamics and preferences of

the communities being served. Nonetheless, leaders can learn from CSU A's example and CSU B's insights, as they leverage existing physical space on campus to create new spaces for inclusion of first-generation students.

EOP is a natural ally as they serve the diverse students that we want to support. However, it is important to align partnerships and collaborations with EOP or other offices and organizations beyond outreach and marketing, as was illustrated by CSU A. Leaders need to think about how are we contributing to their community and mission while being respectful of their space. Additional communities and spaces on campuses should be considered to move beyond pockets within a campus that vary among institutions. Physical space holds symbolic and financial power.

Resources and Funding

Funding is a concern for participation in education abroad, even when the learning experience is highly valued and sought after by students (Schnusenberg, de Jong, & Goel, 2012). For first-generation students, Engle and Tinto (2008) found that financial aid was not sufficient to support higher education. Therefore, in considering first-generation students in education abroad, it is important to consider total program costs and look at program structures that will keep costs to those similar to attending the home institution. Moreover, as financial aid for the home

institution may not be sufficient, leaders need to also examine additional funding sources for first-generation students.

In considering program structure that is equitable for the participation of first-generation students, SF State University offers a promising model. To break down financial barriers, the office focuses primarily on Engle and Engle's (2003) Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs (level 5) utilizing direct bilateral exchange programs between SF State and an institution abroad, as well as through the CSU IP system. In focusing on exchanges, students pay the same tuition as they would if they remained on campus. Furthermore, the structure limits additional costs to flights, visas, and insurance with the largest difference being cost of living abroad, which can frequently be cheaper than San Francisco. Wick (2011), whose dissertation also studied students participating in education abroad at SF State, found that the affordability of the programs and the students' ability to participate on long-term, level 5 programs offered equitable access for the diverse student population.

Education abroad is a field and industry (both for-profit and non-profit) that has rapidly grown in the last decade (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). With this increased awareness and pressure to grow numbers, programs across the nation have increasingly shortened students' time away, which from my perspective as a study

abroad advisor, is not a good trend. Longer programs, like those most strongly supported at SF State provide cultural immersion and academic depth that shorter programs just do not have the time for students to experience. As discussed previously, longer programs are also more cost effective, given the overwhelming cost of airfare, which students must pay whether they are abroad a week or a year. On the positive side, national discussions on study abroad access and recruitment have expanded to include more diverse participants. This can be seen throughout the CSU system. While a few of the administrators specifically noted that they believe first-generation students can participate in any program for any duration, the national trend to shorter programming, which is also reflected on many CSU campuses, does not consider the equity implications of supporting these students for longer periods abroad. These semester and yearlong program are also, arguably, the most powerful education abroad programs.

Along with types of programming and duration, institutional funding is another indication of institutional support. Institutional funding was raised as a concern by CSU D and CSU C and illustrates the need for resources to support students along with the literature on needing funding beyond financial aid. CSU D discussed specific colleges and departments that have allocated their own travel scholarships with disciplinary focuses, instead of allocating funding for a specific

program type or student. This highlights a department or college awareness and interest in supporting education abroad, but not an institutional examination of equity for participants. At CSU C, they also offered campus funding for education abroad that was focused on specific periods of participation, instead of discipline or students. CSU C focused scholarships on shorter programs (winter and summer). When asked about why the funding was directed at shorter programs, specifically summer and January term, Jesus pointed to the lack of financial aid during those sessions, since students have aid for the academic year. From the perspective of CSU C, offering aid during terms that do not have financial aid may be considered equitable. However, it also shows support for shorter programs. In considering support for first-generation students, this funding approach may not be sufficient, as first-generation students may need additional assistance beyond financial aid (Bui, 2002; Engle and Tinto, 2008). Thus, offering institutional aid during summer and January terms, may not be enough to cover those terms fully nor the fall and spring semesters.

Summary

All the education abroad professionals see strengths in first-generation college students and are devoted to working to better support them. The leaders see several possible new directions for improving access to education abroad and for

improving education abroad leadership and collaboration across each CSU campus. While I discuss policy implications from this chapter's data in Chapter 5, I note a few key areas here. First, education abroad leaders need to be more aware of first generation students' experiences and work to serve them in other capacities, such as through community building. For example, Robin (at CSU A) went beyond the established relationship with her campus' EOP Office. She integrated herself and her education abroad colleagues into the EOP Office to become part of their community so that they go beyond outreach and marketing to being contributing members of that community.

Second, education abroad leaders can implement new structures for cross-campus collaboration and dialogue among key stakeholders to improve information, access, and support for first-generation students to consider education abroad. For example, Mark (from CSU B) noted the importance of respecting other communities on campus that serve first-generation students. He highlighted the importance of being mindful of power dynamics. When collaborating, it is helpful to consider the space and who attends meetings in various offices. Like Robin, he goes to other offices and communities on campus.

Third, education abroad leaders should consider sources of funding for supporting first-generation students. There are a diversity of approaches. For

example, SF State focuses on the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship, an outside scholarship, and has been successful in assisting students in receiving it. CSU A offers an education abroad scholarship through the associated student government, which is funded through a student fee. This is a great institutional source of funding and is open to all students who participate in education abroad. Thus while it provides support to first-generation students, it is not aimed at them. CSU C also has institutional funding for education abroad for their shorter programs (winter and summer). Again, it is not specifically for any specific population, but for all students. CSU D has institutional funding through specific colleges and departments that have allocated their own travel scholarships with disciplinary focuses. Overall, all of the campuses included in this analysis highlight an interest in providing institutional support for education abroad, although the type and amount of support varies a great deal by campus, and equity is not, in fact, the lens for all leadership decisions.

Chapter Four:
The Dream of Education Abroad
While Discovering a Unique Space for Learning

Andromeda, before: For me, traveling was in general not something that was ever a part of like my thinking process as a child growing up. It was hard for me to even envision myself outside of the community I lived in, which was public housing in San Francisco. Slowly as I got older, I put myself in different situations, different opportunities, but it was such a long journey coming to a four-year university and getting here to State that when I got here I was like I am going to maximize the my rest of my time here. I wanted to do everything, have a traditional college experience, and not shorthand myself any longer.

Overview

This chapter examines the experiences of first-generation college students in education abroad based on interview and focus group data on Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs. As seen in the opening quote from Andromeda, she initially she did not think education abroad was possible, but once she realized it could be a reality, it became important for her to take advantage of the opportunity. The first-generation students in this study participating in education abroad demonstrated high motivation and determination to achieve their higher education goals, regardless of obstacles. This chapter also examines key education abroad elements connected with the dimensions of time, space, and place—professional connections to the future, desire to be a role model, gift of time, and increased value of education.

Four key concepts emerged from the data during each stage: barriers, resources, benefits, and identity (Table 2). The narratives of the students evolved within each theme through a time and space compression within and across the before, during, and after education abroad experiences.

Table 2: Key Findings Before, During, and After Education Abroad

	Time →		
	Before	During	After
Barriers	Financial, family	n/a	n/a
Resources	Financial, family, community, & mentors	Community abroad	Role models
Benefits	Looking towards the future, want to be role models	Gift of time, views on education	Future goals, mentoring
Identity	First-Generation identity; immigrants, personal attributes	Third-space, independence	Increased awareness, personal growth, family

Acknowledging and Overcoming Barriers

Education abroad is not always initially viewed as possible by first-generation college students and is instead fraught with (real and perceived) barriers, especially on longer, Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs. Among the students in this study, the level of worry and doubt varied based upon a number of factors.

Only the students that I spoke with prior to participation articulated concerns about challenges and concerns that might be barriers. Thus, students experience a conceptual shift as they progress through the process of education abroad as their space changed. The students during and after spoke confidently about the opportunity and had minimal concerns regarding barriers. Instead, they referenced them only in the context of wanting to be an example to others that education abroad is possible. When the students did reference challenges prior to participating on an education abroad program, three subthemes emerged: personal doubt and hesitation, financial concerns, and family reservations.

Barriers: Tackling Financial Concerns and Family Reservations

Students believe there may be barriers and sometimes let their fears guide them without learning the reality, even if they are open to education abroad. The initial barrier that they must overcome is their own self-doubt, which can overlap with financial concerns.

Gabriela, focus group before: For me, the flyers are everywhere for study abroad. I would see them and I would grab them, and I cannot remember how many times I would look through them and open them and they'd even have [my major] business [with] all the options I had. I don't think this is for me. I would just open them and put them back. And I would leave them there for other students. But one of my friends, Caroline, she went to study abroad last semester and when she came back, oh my god, when I saw all the pictures on Facebook, all the places she visited. Oh my god, that is awesome what she is doing right now and it seems like she's having an epic time...Still, I kind of doubted myself, not knowing if I [would] get in. Let's

just do it. When I did the application and then I got the notification I was nominated, oh my god, I was so happy. I am glad I made the decision to apply.

Despite realizing that she had choices for her major and being aware of the opportunity through flyers, Gabriela initially held herself back. She thought that education abroad was not possible for her (especially financially) until one of her friends went abroad. Her amicable jealousy of her friend helped her to reconsider her personal doubts. Gabriela realized that education abroad might be a possibility and motivated her to investigate it. She went on to study business in Spain on a Cross-Cultural Immersion Program (Engle & Engle, 2003) where she utilized both her Spanish and English.

Financial concerns also existed as a barrier for students in general for education abroad. The first-generation college students in the focus groups before education abroad expressed a mixture of excitement and nervousness about logistical concerns—primarily financial. They did not have all the answers to overcoming barriers, as they had not heard the results of scholarships (specifically Gilman) and various stages of sharing the news with family and friends (even though they had been selected to participate). Paige remarked that she believes that “there are a lot of friends who feel that they financially can’t.”

Karen, before: Every time I saw the study abroad sign I would stop and go look at it. I am like no you know it is too much money, it is too much, I

cannot do it. And then, I think at one point, I was like you know what I have my whole life to work and I am not getting any younger. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I should just do it. I should just stop feeling sorry for yourself for whatever it was and just take a leap. And I am doing it and not regretting it at all.

Similar to Paige and Karen, Sophia (who studied in Korea) also had concerns.

Sophia's largest concern was discussing education abroad with her parents.

Sophia, before: My family is not really on board with me going to study abroad. I told them about it when we were having dinner and I told them what I am planning. They are still not on board with it. I told them that I was nominated [selected] and their still kind of making up things, not making up things, just pointing out a lot of things saying we cannot afford it. "I don't want you to go and stuff." So, I am still trying to work on that. But, I realize that I am an adult and I can make my own decisions and I might need their support. I am going to have to sit down with them and talk a little more so they understand. But, again it is hard.

It took time to bring her parents along with her goal. Sophia was confident in her ability to succeed, but nervous (before going abroad) how she was going to succeed with her parents. She remained dedicated to education abroad while acknowledging her family's concerns, like funding.

Gabriela, at the time of the focus group, was nervous about broaching the topic with her family, which presented another potential obstacle. Speaking and educating family members was a delicate task for Gabriela and several other students, knowing that this would be such a new experience and one they would see as expensive. While Gabriela was at the beginning stages of speaking with her

family, the other recently selected students remained at different stages of bringing their family members into the conversation.

Gabriela, before: My mom is most of the time scared. [My family] are really overprotective. They, I guess, one of the main things they don't want to see me fail. But, once I explain how bad I want something [and] that this is my dream, I really want this, even though they are not happy about it, they support me in it. That is the good thing in my family, we are not happy that you are leaving us, but if that is what you want, something you really want, your dream, we will help you. I was kind of scared to tell them too—[my] mom and dad—I am going to study abroad. I was wondering how they were going to take it, but it wasn't bad. It wasn't that bad.

Gabriela stressed throughout her participation in education abroad (as I had the opportunity to speak with her before, during, and after) how important her family was to her and the value she placed on them. Often students reported bringing their parents along and educating them on the opportunity and how it was feasible for them to participate.

The students in the focus groups before going overseas saw finances as a challenge, but a manageable one because of the structure of the programs, access to financial aid, and scholarships. Minh (before) noted that “I want to say that financial aid...[goes abroad] with you, [the cheaper] rent [abroad], and the amount of scholarships for study abroad really push me to do it because I don't [foresee] having financial issues abroad.” He also saw the program model as a reason that education abroad was feasible for him.

Hai, speaking as a returnee, echoed Minh's thoughts. Utilizing his financial aid, scholarships (including Gilman), and cheap on-campus housing abroad, Hai studied his major in Hong Kong for an academic year, on Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Program. He selected a program that was cheaper than studying at San Francisco State University (while he paid the same tuition and no education abroad fees, the cost of living on campus abroad was considerably cheaper) and utilized financial aid and more scholarships than if he had remained on campus.

Hai, after: I think, at the end of the day, we all share a story [of being first-generation]. As first generation college students who studied abroad, we paved ways to a lot of future students who will be coming in, who would be experiencing the same troubles, right? Like a lot of students, they didn't know the reason why. I didn't make the initial step to actually even put this in their thoughts that they might have the opportunity because they were fearful—fearful of parents not allowing them, fearful that they would not be financially capable to actually go there and survive.

He was a frequent volunteer for my office whenever we asked for volunteers to share their experiences. Every time, including in this study, he highlighted the financial feasibility of education abroad. Hai, with the benefit of time after participating in education abroad, highly valued the new educational and social space of studying in Hong Kong, and plans to move to Hong Kong after graduation.

Resources: Mentors, Communities, and Being Role Models

As these students had all made the decision to participate in education abroad, they spoke more about the helpful resources than the barriers to participation. All the students relied on mentors and role models, as well as building communities at home and abroad. They recognized those who helped them, and so they wanted to return the favor and give access to the space of education abroad to other students.

First, but not Alone: Mentors

Mentors proved to be instrumental for many of the first-generation students, especially in assisting them to attend San Francisco State University. Some of the students continued to receive support from mentors while at college and, then, education abroad. Gabriela frequently consulted her academic advisor in the College of Business to discuss college and opportunities, having cultivated this practice in high school.

Gabriela, before: I am really close to one of the advisors in the College of Business, sometimes I go to see her just to chat, not even to ask questions related to my classes or anything like that. One day I went in and asked, "What are the chances of study abroad?" And she told me, "Oh, you should do it." I was like, "Oh, I don't know if I can, I am a resident, not even a citizen." She told me "You should ask, how are you going to know if you don't ask. I think you can do it, I don't see a reason why you can't." So then, I started asking people...I started asking my friend [who studied abroad] about her experience and she doesn't say any negative about it. Everything is just positive. Then, I went into the informational meeting

where I got more excited so I decided to give it a try. Still, I kind of doubted myself, not knowing if I [would] get in. Let's just do it. When I did the application and then I got the notification I was nominated, oh my god, I was so happy. I am glad I made the decision to apply.

Gabriela's academic advisor helped give her the confidence to look further into the possibility of education abroad.

Gabriela was not the only student to speak about interactions with mentors in higher education and high school that helped them to reach their goals. Paige highlighted one special high school teacher mentoring her towards higher education as well as boosting her confidence.

Paige, before: She had been teaching at my school since 2001 and she was part of the education academy, which she started that. She became this role model for all these students... [She was the first one to say] "You should really see SF State." She was the one that got me into education and she was like, "Paige, I want you to take my job one day." I don't know what the future holds for me, but she was just that person that clicked right away...[When she left for another position] I cried. I was in tears the whole day, not seeing her every day and have her tell me "Hey Paige, you're doing a great job. Hey Paige, you're doing this, hey Paige you're doing that, I'm so proud of you." I feel everyone needs that person that clicks no matter what, like your economic status or you just always need that one person that's going to always tell you that you can do better.

She spoke passionately about being guided to apply to San Francisco State and the continued reassuring motivation to succeed.

Manuel also spoke extensively about the power and role of mentors in his life and higher education. He felt that mentorship was needed to access resources and open options since he was the first in his family to attend college.

Manuel, before: I had to find all the resources on my own, our parents didn't tell us what to do or how to navigate. I feel blessed and lucky to have two other figures that were able to help me and say this is what you do, this is what college is about, and this is what it means. I had to figure out the meaning by myself of going to university and going to college.

Manuel spoke extensively about mentors and how they helped him navigate college and find resources on his own.

Manuel, before: I met them [mentors] through my high school. And I was about to drop out of high school. I was doing so badly. And they came like at a perfect time. I was just skipping class for fun and going to these career counselors meetings. But one day he just turned a light bulb on for me and he's like, "You know you have a life after high school right? You know you got to do something with your life and if you want to climb the ladder to success..." that's when it just hit me, I have a life to take care of after high school. I never ever thought about that. Ever." It was just a new idea for me. And so after that ever since he inspired me. He helped me. I don't know how I would have gotten through without him, especially when you're a first timer [first-generation]. He helped me and told me the community college route to transfer to a four year. He really just gave me the meaning of higher education. He opened the doors to a more successful life for me, which I had no idea or concept of. I didn't think past high school.

Without the intervention of Manuel's high school counselor, he would not have graduated from high school, considered higher education, and developed a path towards a "more successful life." Manuel said, "I mean those people I just love

them so much, one of them was just overall a person that inspired me to become a better person. [They] made me feel like I am unique and special.”

Finding a Place and Community in Higher Education

Equally important to the support of mentors is having a community—both domestically and abroad. The students looked for a place to belong. Andromeda began looking for resources after transferring to San Francisco State University. More than the other students in this study, she referenced campus resources like the Women’s Center and tutoring, as well as student organizations. SF State’s education abroad student club, the International Education Exchange Council (IEEC), frequently emerged among the students when discussing support.

Sophia, before: I was kind of on my own. I kind of felt like an outsider. I didn’t know anyone. I didn’t feel like I belonged. So, it was really hard for me to adjust. I didn’t find my [current student] organizations until my sophomore year. My freshmen year I was trying to join every organization that was seemed like they were accepting of people and it didn’t. The entire time I was focused on the social aspect and trying to find my in-crowd instead of focusing that much on school. I just like really wanted to find a reason to belong here. So, it was kind of hard for me to adjust. At some points, I wanted to just drop out of SF State and maybe go to City College and transfer to a different school, like a UC or something. That way I can meet people that don’t all have their established crowds because here, at SF State, I notice that a lot of people either went to the same high school or in the same Greek organization or something like that.

Sophia struggled to find her place and community at San Francisco State, and when she did in, her second year, it had a holistic impact on her personally and

academically—“after I joined a community service organization on campus called Circle K International, I met all my best friends and it changed my opinion that I can go here for the rest of my four-years.” Additionally, she joined IEEC and engaged with the IEEC Korean language group that gave her “confidence and the people in that class started hanging out” (Sophia, focus group before).

Sophia was not alone in feeling that IEEC provided a beneficial community that met her needs for a connection with peers and support for education abroad.

Karen, before: I felt like I was on my own here so I had to go find my own group of friends...it was only until this semester that [I] sought out IEEC and JSA (Japanese Student Associated) and I am starting to make a group of Japanese friends. They are pretty awesome people and I think they are going to be the first people that I meet from SFSU that are going to be my lifelong friends. Because the first three semesters I was here, I was mainly just doing things on my own. I didn't really make a group of friends from SFSU, mainly I work and I have my other friends. I am happy to finally have people to be at school with.

Sophia, who studied in Korea, sought out the Koreans in IEEC and began learning the language from other students. Karen, who studied in Japan on Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Program, also wanted to find Japanese students to improve further develop her Japanese language skills.

Creating New Networks and Space for Education Abroad Returnees

The students who returned from abroad described how they had created networks and family overseas that served as spaces of comfort and support. While

several students spoke of friends who became their extended family abroad, Jocelyn in particular had a deep connection to her new family in Turkey.

Jocelyn, after: I pushed myself to make friends with Turkish people and maybe I was lucky. I was invited to this infinite family meeting. Family is a big thing in Turkey. It is their circle. The kids go home every weekend to see their mom and dad in college. I'm just like you guys are going home for the weekend and they're just like, "Yeah, got to do laundry." I said, "What do you mean? We got free laundry here in college." Like it's unheard of, free laundry. And they're like "No, we got to go see our mom and dad, Sunday is family day." And so that was really strange for me.

Jocelyn felt very privileged not only to attend a university in Turkey, but to be invited into intimate family gatherings. She was invited to several private family events, including birthdays and treated to lavish a Turkish breakfast when she stayed over. She became part of the family.

Jocelyn, after: You don't realize [that your] nearest friends or family is like 8 thousand kilometers away. But, then when you're finally there and you settle in it is a privilege and honor to be on that side of the world and have a roof over your head... [Having a "family" of friends abroad means that at] moments they're willing to just pick you up. I had a family [who told me I could] call if I get stuck in Spain or Germany whatsoever. Peter and I will come pick you up. We'll buy your tickets, no problem. Don't worry about it. I'm just like, why are you so kind? They're just like because if this happened to our daughter, we want you to do the same. So, don't worry about it, I got you on this side of the world. You almost feel so small and insignificant in that point. Feel you have nothing to offer. But, they just want you to experience the world that none of our kids are brave enough to do is what they keep saying.

Her family abroad welcomed her and treated her like their daughter. Jocelyn was very touched by their kindness towards her and how they embraced her as part of the family.

Going First: An Ambassador, Role Model, and Helping Others

Manuel (before) noted, “We didn’t have that guidance [navigating higher education] and it feels really good to be that guidance [and] be that inspiration for somebody else because they are probably not going to hear from anybody else.” Sharing his insights before studying in Denmark, Manuel expressed a desire to be a role model for peers and family members. Students expressed this sentiment throughout the process, including before they went abroad. While Manuel and others worked hard to get to college and pursue an education abroad program, they also felt a responsibility to show other students the path.

Manuel, before: I feel like it made me a professional in higher education because I had to go through everything and learn everything by myself and I was able to. That’s how I became passionate about inspiring other people in my social circle to go to university. Because all my friends, I’m sure yours too [referring to the other students in the focus group], don’t really care about a higher education.

Manuel acknowledges that getting to this point was not easy and required extensive work. He refers to this as becoming a “professional in higher education.” Manuel says that his friends did not have the same focus on higher education and need someone like him to show them the way.

The students at all stages, but especially before participating in education abroad, spoke passionately about how they would help other first-generation college students. Lydia, before studying in France, highlighted a few of the new areas she learned to navigate.

Lydia, before: I see it more as jumping off the cliff into the unknown and hoping that you are going to survive and make it back. If you can study abroad in a completely different country that speaks a completely different language from what you are used to speaking, then you can conquer the world, you can do anything. I can see myself coming back and being very proactive with IEEC and probably helping students go through application process, things like that. I am really into writing so I have already started documenting my whole journey so far from applying to how I got my passport. The next one will be about how I got my visa, but that is still out there. Then, how to apply for scholarships. So, I see myself blogging on that and the finance aspect, like what bank do I open when I get there. How do I get money, U.S. dollars to euros. I see myself contributing a lot to other students who want to participate in study abroad.

Lydia applied for an education abroad program, obtained a passport and visa, and researched funding and scholarships and feels it would be beneficial for her peers to learn from her experiences through blogs so that she can “contribute a lot to other students” (Lydia, focus group before). Lydia and Manuel highlight the value they place on education abroad and higher education as well as being a role model. In addition to inspiring peers, being a role model for their family members was frequently mentioned at all stages of the process of participating in education abroad. Before studying in the Netherlands, Sienna spoke passionately about

showing her little brother that it is possible to attend college and participate in education abroad because she is doing both. "I feel like a role model, and I can't mess it up because I'm the role model" (Sienna, focus group before).

Sienna, before: It gets exciting because my little brother. I'm giving him the example of, "You can not only go to a four-year, but you can also study abroad. Set your goal super high. The sky's the limit. You can do whatever you want." I feel like is what I'm showing to my little brother.

Julia (before studying in Wales) saw her actions as important for her younger brother, as well.

Julia, before: I have a little brother, too. He didn't do so good in school, but me going to college... [and] study abroad knowing that I'm taking [advantage] my opportunities. I feel like it will inspire him to do good so and go for it.

Gabriela, while in Spain, already inspired her nieces and nephews to follow her footsteps.

Gabriela, while abroad: I am opening a new path for my nieces and nephews. I talked to one of them, and I was telling her how exciting it is visiting new places and the way that you do this is by doing good. And I feel so good, because I was able to, I guess, transmit how great this is. And, she was telling me, "Tia, I am going to do it too. When I go to college I'm going to do it, maybe I'm not going to go to the same country you went, but I'm going to study abroad." I am doing something good, and I'm showing them that maybe this is an option. And, we should not follow the typical [stereotype]. Especially for my niece, that we should not follow the typical stereotype that Latinas were born just to either you find a job or you get married and that's your life.

Gabriela is delighted that she is showing her younger family members that there is more for them, not just higher education but education abroad as well. She spoke before going abroad about being their role model. However, she was surprised after she returned that she was also an inspiration and point of pride for her older family members, especially her brothers as she is the youngest.

Gabriela, after: I met people that have talked to them [her brothers] about me, and they're like "Oh yeah, you're the little sister... the one who studied abroad. You're so smart that gets good grades!" And I'm like, "Wait, what? Why do you know me?" They'll say, "Your brother!" I'm like, "Really? I don't even know you! You're telling me that my brother knows you?" I never realized that they respect me so much and they support me in every decision I make. And, I feel like I have gained that. I don't know, like they believed in me, they respect the decision I make and it feels good.

Similarly, Olivia was moved when her older brother also was proud of her studying in Wales (UK) and that she was so independent in doing so. "My brother...he's almost 30, and he still tells me that I inspire him in just being able to go do that on my own and pay for everything myself and literally depend on nobody" (Olivia, focus group after).

Grace, Jocelyn, and Isabella, who saw their parents as role models in their lives, found themselves inspiring their role models and opening their minds about the world through their experiences overseas. "I feel my Mom is my role model, but in a weird way I feel like I inspired her [to be] open, empowering fearlessness in her that she didn't know she had" (Grace, focus group after). Grace also opened her

mom to a new part of the world, South Africa. Jocelyn had a similar experience with her parents after she studied in Turkey. Not only did she expose them to a new area of the world, she challenged their stereotypes about the country. "I wouldn't say I inspired them to study," but experience more of the world beyond the United States (Jocelyn, focus group after). At first, her mom was worried about her safety abroad, even when she was backpacking through Europe and now her family is considering following her and traveling in the same areas.

In addition to impacting family members immediately, Isabella and Juan looked towards the future that will have a lasting impact on how their families think about education and the world. Isabella, like other students after studying overseas, now has the travel bug and wants to keep exploring and learning about the world.

Isabella, after: I'm just looking for my next big trip. Trying to take them. Trying to persuade them to see the world. I mean, they're immigrants. Their whole life has been around here and going back to their native country is their only enjoyment. There's so much more out there and that's what I want them to hinder. I mean they gave me so much. They gave me this amazing opportunity to go abroad and it's like let's go. There's so much more to see, you know. Hopefully, one day they decide to follow my lead.

Isabella wants to give back. She does not yet think that her time in Spain has inspired her parents, but she wants it to have that impact so that they can benefit too. Juan also had future aspirations from his time abroad in France.

Juan, while abroad: My parents never had the chance and education was never valued, and never an example in the family. I want to change that. Definitely, for the next generations, who come after myself, I want always to have education be the first priority. And encourage my children, my grandchildren, [and] if I have great grandchildren in the future that education will be the key to make you a success. And be a better person.

He felt that what he is doing now will have a lasting impact, seeing himself as changing his family's course towards valuing education and future success. He advocates for education abroad and the need to expand their understanding beyond the "box that they live in," their community here and even higher education in the United States.

Along with inspiring family members, the students sought to be a role model for their peers. Before Paige went to Spain she noted that her goal was to "help other students because I think it's such a beautiful thing once you give those kids hope. I really want to help because actually that's what education is...I would like promote study abroad to everyone" (Paige, focus group before). Paige argued that it was important for her and other students, who looked like her, to be role models and share their experiences about education abroad. "I'm not trying to be rude towards our people, but sometimes those same people and sometimes they have blonde hair and blue eyes, they go study abroad" (Paige, focus group before). Paige wants to see more students who look like her promoting the experience, which she says she is willing to do.

Hannah wants to take her education abroad experience back to her hometown. She wants to inspire students at her high school to go to college and participate in education abroad, as these are possibilities for them. She is still connected and engaged with her previous teachers and already goes back to speak with students.

Hannah, before: I go [home to my middle school] every year, and I now consider my middle school civics teacher—we're friends now so I go to her class and talk to the class about college. Those kids, they need to hear because their parents didn't really go to school. That's going to be so cool to be able to tell them. No matter where you go to school, there are a lot of opportunities there especially with the technology we have today. It's not hard to go onto the study abroad website and start looking at that, even in high school and middle school. Set your goals. Know what you want for yourself. That's something that's so huge for me being from such a small town, most of those people know me and so I want them to see that it's not impossible. I really want those kids to see it like it's not impossible.

Hannah wants to include the possibility of education abroad for middle school students and inspire them to start researching and considering it now. She is looking forward to returning from England and being able to share her insights. Whether inspiring younger generations, family members, or peers, there was a strong interest at all stages for all education abroad students participating in education abroad that the experience held deep value and it was important that others should also be inspired.

Education Abroad Benefits: A Unique Space

For these first-generation students, education abroad is an enriching opportunity and space to cross new geographic, cultural, pedagogical, and social boundaries by expanding their potential as individuals, students, and family members. Education abroad enables growth in a compressed time and space that fosters a new narrative and sense of social and academic inclusion both at SF State and also globally. Karen, studying in Japan on an intensive Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs during this study, noted, "I'm constantly learning." She experienced learning both inside and outside classes, as the country and daily activities became her classroom to practice her language skills. The students abroad and alumni found education more engaging as well as a unique space for learning during their time abroad. Karen was not alone in her insights.

Adding onto Karen's remark, Emily also felt that she had an educationally rich experience that extended beyond the classroom during her year abroad in Italy focusing on her art history major.

Emily, while abroad: It's been a lot of fun. It's been really different over here because it's much more hands-on than [what] I would get or I have gotten being in SF. I have studied art history [in Italy] so... in Florence. It's amazing being able to be in classes and get to go and stand in the museum in front of the work instead of just seeing it projected on a screen in front of me. It's been a much better learning experience for me because I learn better that way.

Emily remarked that studying art history in Italy was imperative for her SF State degree as the program focused on Renaissance and Baroque, which is her favorite period, although she found only a few relevant courses at SF State. Additionally, she noted her interest in moving into museum studies after graduation, so the opportunity to see art in-person compared to projected on a screen was important to her.

Speaking with Juan while he was studying business in France, he found that he became a better and more engaged student in classroom discussions and interactions with his professors.

Juan, while abroad: I always sit in the front and my participation is always on point. Participating with them [primarily professor and classmates] and right after class is over, I'm able to ask any questions. At first, I introduced myself [to the professor]. If I had personal problems within the class, I tell them. "I don't like the way you teaching this, can you explain this better to me, can you give me a little bit time right now and get to know me and can you explain various things about the course which I have done." A lot of the professors actually told me you, "Use me as much as you can because you're paying a lot of money. This is a private school." So, get the information out of me [the professors], which I have taken advantage of.

Juan valued the experience of studying at a private school abroad. Because he participated on an exchange program, he only paid SF State tuition and not the fees of the private school, which provided him with an affordable experience. While he could talk to his professors at San Francisco State after class or during office hours, Juan found having the experience in another country changed his level of

engagement. Having the opportunity to experience education in the new context of France at a private institution that gave students the message that they were entitled to all the interaction they needed inspired Juan to interact with his professors in ways he had not at SF State.

Juan, while abroad: I'm away from less distraction. I was fully active at San Francisco State with organization, activities, sometimes going back home seeing personal problems [...] and everything. I think being abroad [is] a little bit isolated. And that helps me concentrate better.

Juan utilized his time immersing himself into French culture and education to focus on his education in a way that he had not previously done at SF State. Thus, he took advantage of rethinking his education while in a new space.

Educational Challenges and Growth Abroad

Participating in education abroad offers a compressed time for growth through challenges in a new place, especially in Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs. In France, Juan found his interactions with his business professors had an impact on him and the way he viewed interactions with professors and how he learns. Juan adapted very well; he was open and desired the experience of living abroad, which likely helped facilitate his learning overseas.

Juan, after: I like the way they test [in France]. Everything is multiple choice in the US. I don't like multiple choice. It confuses me, I second guess myself. Everything was green books, [where] they give you the opportunities to express yourself even better. And there's a lot of more flexibility on how you learn...It was challenging, but actually I had to learn

more. I was taking financing and marketing. The professors explained more, [but] classes were shorter... [The professors in France] call you out to participate and they really interact with you.

However, not all adjusted as quickly as Juan. A few students found it challenging to shift away from a familiar system.

Andromeda, while abroad: Academically, there's a lot I've discovered. I've realized that the education system that I was brought up in works with me, so how I was taught and how I was essentially molded to fit the education system that I grew up in and how it can kind of be an issue a little bit when it doesn't transfer so well for me here, and so it's been a bit of a difference adjusting to that and realizing that those differences...

Speaking with Andromeda during her semester in Scotland, she was still adjusting and learning how to write her essays in the British format as well as their approach to lectures and discussion sections. She found it frustrating that their courses build upon each other so that her literature classes would reference materials they had studied in other classes that she not had at SF State.

Similarly, Isabella found that "Madrid was tough. The school was tough. I think it's because they have different expectations for us to learn and the tasks" (Isabella, focus group after). Isabella studied (primarily) her business major and general education courses needed for her degree on an exchange program at a Spanish university. "I took a general law class and it was amazing. The teacher was super experienced and then I took a radio class for GE [general education] and that

was fun. Marketing and financing courses, they were tough” (Isabella, focus group after).

Isabella, after: They were tough because of the expectations. I even spoke to one of the [international] students that came [to SF State from Spain] two days ago. He’s like “Yeah, school here is way easier...” Tough to adjust that [in Spain] 100% was your final grade and I think I maybe could have reached out to my school advising or stuff like that, but I didn’t. So I just had the pressure of study on my own. I passed all my classes, but it was just tough to adjust.

Reflecting back on her time abroad, Isabella made degree progress while participating on a challenging program abroad. She had to adjust her approach to education with so much of her grade depending upon one final exam. Several students expressed the stress of a semester grade coming primarily from one exam. In Italy, “It’s not a crazy strict, but granted you won’t know where you’re standing for the entire semester, [whether] you’re passing or anything” (Anna, focus group after).

An Expanded View of Social and Historical Contexts

Learning abroad, students uncovered a new social and historical context for their studies that provided a new understanding. Grace was impressed by the diversity of her South African classmates, their passion for change, and their ability to learn for the first time studying completely in English. In South Africa, a multitude of languages are spoken. Children learn English as a foreign language

prior to university; however, in college, lectures are in English. SF State students, like Grace, take their classes in English, but we require them to study one of the local languages.

Grace, after: The students are really active in knowing the history and a lot of students I feel are political majors [who] really [want to] be able to make a change because they want to do something about it, as they're being affected by it. For me, I felt like a stronger passion about politics, like the students over there... the students over there I felt are very passionate, passionate about what's going on in the government. It's really awesome to be surrounded by something so powerful. You feel like you could make a difference and have that adrenaline. I really noticed that some people don't have resources. You could see that. They came from so different backgrounds and social classes—some rural areas and the other cities, [for] some this is their first time in an English [speaking] university.

Studying political science in South Africa on an intensive Cross-Cultural

Immersion Program (Engle & Engle, 2003), Grace saw firsthand her classmates not only engaging in classroom discussions, but in local politics within the community. Since returning, she has become more active, especially on campus and became president of the largest student organization and education abroad club, IEEC.

Jocelyn, studying political science in a Turkey, felt energized and inspired by her peers. She felt that her peers abroad were more actively engaged with the political scenes unfolding around them. While she feels that politicians are not hearing students in Turkey or the United States, she grew in her political engagement abroad.

Jocelyn, after: You reach a level beyond textbooks, this is beyond anything that your teachers could teach you here domestically and [for] you [to] see [as] students... It's a lot of kids our age, maybe even demographic, who came out to try to be anti-government. So, this is the generation that's coming to the universities now...but nobody's listening to them the way people aren't listening to us.

The students all noted how education opened their eyes to alternative views and spaces for education. Emily appreciated the space to study. Immersion in the museums of Italy were providing a new academic experience that she enjoyed and a course of study she needed for her future career. Juan enjoyed the opportunity to study at a private school in France, where he was experiencing a different approach to learning. Andromeda was still adjusting and felt challenged by the need to adopt a new approach to learning and to writing up her assignments., yet she still described a positive experience in Scotland.

New Personal Narrative: Confronting and Breaking Down Stereotypes

Living in a new space abroad and experiencing rapid personal and educational changes in a compressed period, students developed a new personal narrative for themselves that they brought home with them to their family and communities. In particular, a few students noted a new narrative of awareness and their role in breaking stereotypes for other students.

Grace, after: I really miss...[being] emerge[d] [in South Africa] and the opportunity to learn a different language [Xhosa] and to make it your new home. And for me it was like wow, people were really surprised because I'm this Asian girl who speaks their language. They're like what, why are you doing this, why are you speaking this and then, oh yeah, I did [it] in class. And, it's like wow you're good. That made me really proud and you know people always say you should really try and say "hi" in the [local] language, they thank you and that does help and it really does make a difference.

Grace challenged the stereotype of Americans only speaking English abroad. She studied Xhosa in South Africa and impressed her classmates when she used it in class. Additionally, she did it as an Asian American, further challenging what an American looked like to her South African classmates.

Stepping out of her community in California, Isabella saw people in a new light that changed her perspective through learning in a new space and place.

Isabella, after: I realized that there are people around you with all different sorts of backgrounds. At the end of the day, they're just human. I mean, abroad, I met so many different people, so many different cultures. [Here, in the United States,] coming from this community where you know these people, it's like your town, you've known them since you were in kindergarten. They're usually the same type of races and we're all American in the end of the day. Then, I go abroad and there are people from different states of America and different countries. Somehow you just come together. You find similar aspects that you see the same way. Stuff like that and you become friends, you know. So, I think it's realizing that they're so many different people but at the end of the day you can come together and be friends.

Isabella took a step out of her normal space and had the time abroad to recognize not only the differences, but also similarities of people, and she now wants to

always be current on the news in Turkey, as it is her “home-away-from-home” now (Isabella, after).

The American Dream: From Immigration to the College Experience

The students drew upon their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to follow their dreams that included a desire to access the full potential of opportunities in higher education. Juan, while speaking with me during his semester abroad in France, shared that he had been a DACA student in high school. As a result, he faced additional challenges and was discouraged by a few individuals to pursue higher education. Yet, Juan was determined, and he did find a few trusted mentors who encouraged him to apply to college and then later found professors who supported him to study in France. Juan sees education as the key for future success so that one does not have to “kill” themselves working to get by. He does not feel like his parents set an academic example, but his siblings have for him. He is the youngest of seven children. His older sister, who died at 17 years, was his greatest inspiration. Once at university, he waited to pursue education abroad, as he did not realize it was possible as a DACA student under President Obama. He waited and became a resident before pursuing the opportunity.

Furthermore, Juan remarked in his interview while abroad, “It’s really interesting to know how different things work in another countries...[when] I came

[to the United States] from Mexico when I was nine, I adapted to American culture, which is really different.” Immigrating to the United States, even at a young age, was not always the easiest transition, but the majority of students saw it as an advantage for them as they considered how they would or did adapt while studying overseas. In the focus group from before her trip, Minh said “For me, when I migrated to America, I didn’t know English at all. So, I felt uncomfortable. I was able to learn English faster [living here]. So, [going to] Korea and not speak the language, I would have to force myself to learn a language.” All the students saw education abroad as a continuation of their dream and education. “We recognize [it is a] privilege” (Lydia, focus group before).

The students spoke very positively about how being immigrants or children of immigrants was an asset, except in convincing their parents that the American dream extended to education abroad. “Trying to pursue the dream so you know when you got to United States you want to pursue that American dream. And somehow I want to pursue, to get in touch with the French culture” (Juan, interview while abroad).

Lydia, before: My mother came from Vietnam as a refugee. She had an African American dad, a soldier, [and Vietnamese mother]. Because during that time period there was war, so she is what you would call a war baby. She left Vietnam at a time when racism was really big. Because it was one of those things that you’re Vietnamese, but you had the face of the enemy. She was treated very poorly over there. She would tell me things like they

made her sit in the back because she was black. She also mentioned when she thought she was on her way to U.S., she actually ended up in the Philippines. It was horrible living there. Then, she finally made it here, and she had me and then my three brothers. So I'm the oldest, the only girl and the first to graduate high school and the first to go to college. So it's like you it's just this huge, it's like this you're carrying this huge boulder on your shoulders. And you're trying to do your best to be stronger in order to lift [it]. I feel like immigrants parents look at you and they see you [as] their window to a better life.

Emigrating from another country and being first in their family to attend higher education is a privilege and opportunity not to be wasted.

For some education abroad students, their parents questioned leaving the United States to study as they valued their effort to get here and society's opportunities. Thus, their parents saw this as the ideal place and questioned the need for learning in a new space. Jocelyn, reflecting back before she studied in Turkey, had a challenge convincing her parents to support her education abroad participation.

Jocelyn, after: My mom was so shocked that I was traveling abroad considering that she basically like gave up like her whole life to get into America. As immigrants, I think they think we're here in America for a reason and you're leaving to go to a 'third world country?' It's like basically spitting on everything that we've done to get you here thus far, only for you to leave, it's unthinkable. We have busted ourselves trying to get to America to settle, to live here, and to study here, and you want to go to Turkey. Like thousands of people want to go to America to study but you take that opportunity out of yourself to go somewhere else. Why? ...It's very hard for them because they're so stuck on this idea of hey we've gone this far from our native country, why do we have to go anywhere else? And I think as first generation citizens, like we are fortunate enough to be in that boundary.

Ultimately, she succeeded in participating with their support, but it was not easy nor is she alone in her experience. While some of the students noted challenges convincing their parents, Jocelyn saw her parents' story of immigration as the path for exploring the world. "I think being first-generation and seeing my mom do it [(immigrating to the U.S.) as a] kind of have blueprint to go further myself" to Turkey, a non-traditional destination (Jocelyn, focus group after).

Expanding and Deepening Personal Interests and Knowledge

The students' learning space expanded with the opportunity to experience education in another place on Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs. They mentioned three personal benefits: openness and interest in other cultures, awareness and independence (both to participate and then being abroad), and breaking down stereotypes.

Openness and interest in other cultures.

Regardless of whether students believed initially that education abroad was a realistic possibility, many expressed either a personal interest or awareness (generally from immigration) in other cultures.

Paige, before: I love geography. I'm a nerd when it comes to geography. I love [other] cultures. So, for me, I love how people interact. I think that's one of the reasons why I want to study abroad. Because I want to see how people from other places live their lives and how I can improve mine and learn things from them. I want to travel as well not for my benefit but for

the benefit of others. So, I've always wanted to, if I have the chance, go over to the refugee in Eastern Europe to help refugees from Syria. I would love that. I just want to travel not just for me, but to help others and educate others that don't have the opportunities even though I'm first generation. I feel sometimes when your first generation your like, "Oh, I don't have the opportunities," but being in this country, there's so much that you can do that just that we don't see because we don't really get introduced to them. So, I want to help others and introduce another's more than just believing in yourself.

While some of the students expressed a desire to travel and interest in other cultures, Paige—an international relations major, who studied in Spanish—had a strong global awareness and interest to see first-hand the experiences of Syrian refugees in Eastern Europe.

However, this appreciation extended beyond a surface level understanding of diversity and other cultures. Manuel studied communication studies in Denmark and wanted to be challenged personally and academically and study overseas to reach his potential.

Manuel, before: I want to learn something new. I don't want to be in this town forever and stay here with these people that I don't feel comfortable with. And I don't feel like I'm meeting my full potential here. I wanted something better, something that challenged me. Somewhere I could use my full potential. And so I'm here and then I feel like going abroad is going to challenge me more that's going to help me achieve my bigger potential.

Among the first-generation college students in this study, Manuel was not alone in his openness and desire to expand beyond the United States higher education.

A number of students reported experiencing the unknown and taking on new challenges. "I think [having been] thrown into new environments and having to adjust and acclimate so much that I think that it will help me in this new place [Scotland] and settle in and just be there and be in the moment [and] just go with it" (Andromeda, focus group before). Andromeda studied at three community colleges before transferring to San Francisco State University. She adjusted each time to new environments. Andromeda did extensive research on Scotland from speaking with students currently studying literature at the same institution to reading everything she could find online.

All 27 of the students also acknowledged that they did not want to have regrets and miss the opportunity to study overseas.

Julia, before: I wanted to always study somewhere else like a foreign country. I wanted to do it as a junior, but it was too late so I didn't want to regret it, "I want to do it." Also, because I feel I deserve it in a way because I never had anything like staying away from home and experience like that. I want to learn different culture.

Julia felt that traveling and spending an extended time abroad was not previously possible and did not want to miss out. Although Julia went abroad for the fall semester of her senior year to Wales, she realized that it was something that was important to her undergraduate experience. Similarly, Sophia (who studied in Korea

for a semester) also felt that education abroad was an important experience that she valued as part of her undergraduate degree.

Sophia, before: [Speaking on education abroad noted that] it's a once in a lifetime opportunity and you don't want to regret it. So, you want to just do it, challenge yourself. So, I am learning to, what is the word for it, push myself and go after what I want to do. Because it is my dream, I really, really want to go. I am looking forward to it.

They also expressed an awareness of others who had not studied overseas.

Paige's cousin did not participate in an education abroad program and she "tells me it's one of the things she regrets the most [when] she went to Sac State"

[Sacramento State University] (Paige, focus group before). Julia, Sophia, and Paige all passionately spoke about not wanting to regret missing the experience of studying in another country.

Lydia, before: I feel like the good outweighs the bad. At least, I have never met anyone who said I hated the host country I went to, but I have heard of regretting not studying abroad. I have met a lot of people who have graduated college and say man that the only thing I would do-over again is going study abroad. Every person I have met, they never regret study abroad and they always say they wished they studied abroad.

Lydia articulated the decision with the balancing of challenges and benefits. Julia noted that travel, especially for an extended time, was not a possibility growing up. Lydia acknowledged that studying overseas (beyond travel) is a unique opportunity and experience in higher education.

Hai's path to higher education began after he dropped out of high school and then getting his GED, attending community college, and then transferring to San Francisco State University. After studying in Hong Kong for a year, Hai experienced the greatest confidence in higher education and the largest network of friends. He also felt that this was something only possible on education abroad.

Hai, after: I think I've grown a lot as a transfer student. I remember my first semester fall 2013 and I didn't know anyone and I was quite timid. I didn't know how to interact with others coming as someone who was a high school drop out. I was lacking a little bit of self-confidence, but you know after studying abroad, after meeting a lot of peers, who are not just in Hong Kong—when you actually go study abroad you meet people from all over the world from all walks of life with different socio-economic backgrounds and you sustain this long term relationship with them and you built this massive global network. So, now, I can confidently say I have friends all over the world...it's this network of everlasting friends that you wouldn't really be able to make that amount of friends without really going out there, and I think study abroad definitely helped with my interpersonal skills, you know how to interact with others with different cultural backgrounds.

Olivia, who studied in Wales (UK), echoed this sentiment of drawing upon her own navigational capital and finding the space for growth on her own without relying upon her family (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

Olivia, after: I'm thankful for having studied abroad because I mean without it, I probably wouldn't know. I wouldn't really know all the things that I could do and that is possible even though I'm not from a wealthy family. You know, my family wasn't able to send me off or send me away to wherever I want.

Like her peers, Olivia felt that she grew abroad and that the new space and time experiencing education in another country was a privilege that would not be otherwise available to her.

Independence: Before, During, and After Education Abroad

The students discovered a new independence living overseas through having a new cultural, social, and educational space to grow without the support of their family and friends around them. Although compressed, their growth occurred throughout the process of education abroad: before, during, and after.

Sienna, before: I definitely had to navigate coming to the school (SF State): I feel like I'm a freshman a lot of the times at first [after transferring in as a junior] because I had to ask a lot of questions like, "What is this building? What time does the library close?" Even though I was new, I still felt like, I'm a junior, I need to know this already. I don't mind asking, but I feel like I should've known that. Also, you have to learn how to navigate the city as well since we're not from here. It's like the bus schedule—I had never read a bus schedule like that as frequently as I do now...but once you get the hang of it, it's easy. But at first, I was so confused.

Sienna transferred to San Francisco State University as a junior and spent one year on campus before studying her Communication Studies major in the Netherlands on Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs. Although she had previously attended a community college in California, she had to learn again when she came to San Francisco State University, especially campus navigation. At each stage, she developed more navigational capital that eventually

prepared her to participate in education abroad (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

Leaving home and family behind, Paige found a new space to grow and develop independently.

Paige, before: There could be conflicts. The other day my mom was like, "You have turned into someone so different." They think that it's the school and the people that I hang around with that influence what I say. I don't think that...I just see things more of a liberal—I like Bernie Sanders, but my mom doesn't. I feel [that] I need this space away from them. I just need it to grow as a person more.

Livia had a similar experience with her family.

Livia, before: Yes, my parents are the same. Well, they don't say it, but they definitely see the difference and a lot of my friends and family back home say, "So, why do you say that?" And, I'm like, "Well, that's who I am." There response is "Oh, you've changed." "In a good way I hope." For them, I'm being too radical I guess, but for me I'm like, "No, we're supposed to learn about other stuff." They're closed minded, and it's annoying.

Livia also did not transfer, but attended SF State for three years before spending her senior year in Korea. She, too, recognized that she has changed and become more independent from her family and friends who have not attended college. Livia struggles with it, though, feeling disconnected.

Being away from family was a theme for half of the students. Education abroad and living independently overseas offered the students a new freedom that they did not have at home, especially for those who lived at home while attending

SF State. Isabella said, “my parents have always been supportive but I think being away, it allowed myself to be fully me—in charge of myself” (Isabella, after).

Willow, after: One of the things that I like about being abroad is the independence where I have my own schedule... Sometimes you feel like you want to have the opportunity just to be in a place where you can focus on your own goals and not what we [the family] needs to do.

During her semester abroad in Japan, Karen reminisced that she “enjoyed being more independent over there” (Karen, focus group after). Despite being an older, returning college student, it was an accomplishment for Karen to live away from home and rely completely on herself, using her Japanese skills. Students experienced greater temporal and physical distance that required independence in studying in another country. This distance meant learning to live independently from family.

Karen, after: I don’t want to say it, but I kind of like being away from my family...when I came to live in my parent’s house [after living abroad in Japan], I want to be able to do this on my own. I want to think of my own house and do my own stuff. Basically, being abroad, [it] made me realize that I can do all these other things by myself that I don’t know I can do when I...[am living at home].

Karen spoke very affectionately about her family and their support. She was uncomfortable, but honest about how education abroad provided a space to experience independence that she had not had living at home while attending

community college and then San Francisco State. Karen was not alone. Isabella also felt a loss of freedom returning home.

Isabella, after: In coming back, when I go home, it's hard to adjust to being that daughter that was dependent. It's the fact that I'm an only child that they still want to care for me. I can't really do that anymore. I'm an adult. I've been away for too long now and caring for myself, it's hard for me. As selfish as it sounds, I'm too mature. Too responsible to be cared for. It sounds selfish, but that's how it feels. It's that liberty you had before instead of chained, it's difficult to come back to that.

Isabella found her time abroad a rare opportunity to just be a student and not have as many demands upon her time, like work and school.

Halfway through her semester in Spain, Gabriela recognized her growth in independence, even as she was still transitioning.

Gabriela, interview while abroad: I'm becoming a little bit more independent. And I feel like I gain a little bit more confidence about myself. I've decided to run for president for my organization, when I return to SF State, where I met Isabella and Jesús [who also studied abroad with her]. And before, I was -- when everyone asked me, "Are you planning to run for president?" I would tell them, "No, no, there's no way I'm running." Now, I have decided I'm going to run [when I return]. We'll see if I get elected.

Gabriela was excited, but nervous about venturing out on her own, not just to study, but also to travel alone. At the time of the interview, she had only traveled or explored her university abroad in groups and knew a few of the students beforehand. However, her belief in what she could do was already expanding as she began making plans after her return for increasing engagement at SF State in the

Latino/a, business student organization. Indeed, upon returning, Gabriela became more active on campus. Her friends have remarked to her that “The way you came to us is so secure and confident and nothing’s going to stop you” (Gabriela, focus group after). Reflecting, Gabriela “wished [she] could have done that before because when you want to do something you just go and do it like don’t let anything or anyone stop you” (Gabriela, focus group after).

Along with exploring their identity, students expressed greater self-awareness and confidence. Jocelyn (focus group after) noted, “My study abroad experience was cliché because you learn about yourself.” By calling it cliché, Jocelyn acknowledged that she had anticipated personal growth and self-awareness. After studying in Turkey, Jocelyn (after) also said, “I became so much more confident in my actions.” Isabella, speaking upon her return, felt that her time in Spain made it “easier to start a conversation [and] approach people.”

Isabella, after: I’ve always been a very shy person and I think it allowed me to break down those barriers that perhaps I had. I think just fully opening myself to new experiences and being first in places to going away from home, even in the same state, is just rare. It was difficult. This sense of accomplishment and increased confidence fosters growth of their voices.

She also noted, “You’re not afraid of taking risks, so just go for it” (Isabella, after). A number of students also reported a sense of openness after spending a semester or year abroad on Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs.

Discussion

The data highlight several key areas for understanding and supporting first-students' experiences in education abroad programs at SFSU, which have implications for other CSU campuses that I address more fully in Chapter 5. In this section, I highlight a new narrative for understanding first-generation students' participation in education abroad, especially in considering the importance of funding their participation and the importance of belonging and inclusion.

New Narrative Through Space and Time Abroad

Before participating in education abroad, the students brought with them their identities as first-generation students that they broadened and deepened through the compressed time and space of education abroad participation. For instance, this growth affected their familial bonds. As first-generation students, the students experience a weight and special status in their family (Jehangir, Williams, & Jeske, 2012). Alex described it as continuously defending a trophy until he graduates. Their families varied in the level of support, but always wanted the best for them, even when this created personal and family tensions. This is comparable to coming to higher education; first-generation students also have mixed support from family and may depend upon mentors for support (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014). Therefore, their pursuit of college and education abroad pushed them to carve a

new path, and the data suggests that education abroad might provide access to new personal and academic growth and learning not provided to other students. The education abroad experience helped the students form a new narrative for themselves both at home and overseas founded in part on the transfer of aspirational and navigational capital (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Yosso, 2005). The first-generation students personally grew and gained confidence in their abilities, including the skills they first developed in coming to SF State and later applied to education abroad. Through this, their perspectives on the world and themselves evolved into a new narrative of social and academic confidence and strength.

The students also recognized a few challenges along the way. However, they had already adapted to higher education in the United States and for immigrants, like Juan, who came to the United States as a child and had to adapt, they had navigational, resiliency, and identity skills to draw upon for the new challenge of education abroad. This is not to say that Juan experienced nothing new in France. He enjoyed the differences and thrived in the new learning environment and interactions with professors abroad. Thus, this data runs counter to a deficit model of first-generation students' experiences, skills, and motivation. Instead, the students drew upon their prior experiences immigrating to the United States and

navigating college mostly on their own to adapt to a new environment abroad.

Furthermore, these students were motivated to succeed not just for themselves, but for their friends, family, and community.

Space and time: transferable skills.

The literature has noted that first-generation students may struggle in the unfamiliar world of higher education (DeRosa & Dolby, 2014); yet, these students thrived abroad as they embraced their status as an outsider and enjoyed the freedom the space provided. For most students, their resiliency skills and support of mentors helped them become insiders and benefit in positive ways from the education abroad experience. A number of students used their skills in adapting and research, which they applied to education abroad as forms of transferable aspirational and navigational capital (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Yosso, 2005). Grace and Jocelyn also thrived as foreigners abroad by tackling stereotypes, while being challenged in their studies and seeing real world implications. I argue that their appreciation for personally overcoming challenges as first-generation students added to their education abroad experience; increasing the value of their studies and travels and broadening their academic careers, identities, and futures.

Funding education abroad.

Part of their new narrative included confidence that education abroad was realistic financially, in terms of the opportunity to participate and survive in a new space. Before participating, all of the students recommended additional funding for education abroad. The students' perception that funding will be a barrier is primarily an initial concern prior to their participation. Once students arrived abroad and after their return, they did not mention it as a concern (Table 2). The literature shows this same trend with a number of studies highlighting that funding is an important area of concern, especially for first-generation students (Bui, 2002; Ishitani, 2016; Schnusenberg, de Jong, & Goel, 2012). Yet, the SF State students reinforced the university's education abroad model as financially viable for all students. For Hai, who received the Gilman and other scholarships to study in Hong Kong, it was even more affordable for him to study overseas than to remain in San Francisco. He gained support from his family once he conveyed that message, and now as an ambassador for study abroad, he is conveying the same message to his peers. Sharing with peers and being a resource was important as these students felt the burden of being first; three students directly stated the impact of being first in their family, although all of the students referenced it indirectly. The education abroad experience, then, provided a new platform for a number of these students to

share their enriched social, cultural, and educational capital with classmates and others. Not only did this further heighten the value of education abroad, but also is a public testament to the social and moral value that the first generation students place on giving back and contributing to the educational achievement of others.

Need for a place to belong.

The majority of students referenced the role and space for mentors and communities, who helped them either coming to college or participating in education abroad. They recognized the importance of having people to support them (Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013), as they had to learn or depend upon mentors outside their family to navigate higher education. Through these experiences, the students created a new path of not only being first-generation, but also expanding that narrative to a global scale. However, their transformation was not limited to themselves. Instead, they took on new and greater personal responsibility. Students before and after participating in education abroad wanted to be role models for family, friends, and peers, creating new spaces for supportive peers. This was not confined to the United States. Jocelyn and Grace spoke about the families that they created abroad; Gabriela had connections with friends and maintaining contact at home, even while abroad; and Andromeda sought, but did not find a community abroad.

Personal development in a new place.

Grace, like the students in Wick's (2011) study, remarked on the unique opportunity as an Asian-American woman growing up in San Francisco. It was a complete change for her to study in South Africa and to be questioned about things she took for granted as part of her identity, but that South Africans did not perceive as "American." Abroad, others viewed them as different from the self-assumed identity they had at home. A semester or year abroad is a compressed period of learning that enables them to make new comparisons between their first-hand insights abroad and their background at home. As students re-conceptualized their identities, they became more aware of themselves as global citizens, who have the capital and knowledge to cross educational, cultural, and political borders. Expanding their perspectives globally, they work to break down stereotypes others have about America, and any they had about other countries. Through this growing self-awareness about their identity and place in the world, the students began to see themselves as global citizens (Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). Thus, education abroad offers students a unique space to confront and break down stereotypes, such as Jocelyn helping her parents understand Turkey on a personal level. Although their newfound independence was accompanied by guilt because they enjoyed being on their own, they valued this space and time to personally grow.

Summary

The findings from the students centered around four large categories—barriers, resources, benefits, and identity—with multiple themes and sub-elements. Among these themes, there are a few key equity concerns. The first concerns the need for additional funding beyond financial aid. The students highlighted the concern of funding and specifically requested this as an area for additional support. There are two takeaways here from the students. One, the first-generation students acknowledged the program model of Engle and Engle's (2003) level 5 of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs was accessible after they looked into the programs. They thrived on this challenging program model and recognized its value. Therefore, it is important to support them financially on all program types. Two, first-generation students need more than program structure and financial aid to feel like education abroad is a realistic possibility for them. In this study, all the students eligible for the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship applied, but had not yet heard back so scholarship funding was unknown. However, they all wished that there were more funding specifically for first-generation students.

A second important finding from the students was recognizing their ability to be successful on intensive programs and bringing their strengths with them to navigate higher education abroad on their own. Additionally, half of the students

also brought with them transferable life skills that they had developed in adapting to the United States as immigrants. Many of the others were second-generation immigrant students who heard the stories and experiences of their parents coming to the United States and demonstrated awareness of that struggle and determination. Education abroad leaders need to recognize the students' transfer skills and to utilize these in their programs to support all students.

Third, in supporting first-generation students and recognizing their abilities, it is important that we provide them with intensive education abroad programs that academically enhance their degree and support them in becoming global citizens. While they wanted to travel and experience the world, they recognized and valued the academic benefits and personal growth. Furthermore, the students saw education abroad as opening new professional opportunities in the future. Additionally, students grew in ways they did not anticipate. While abroad, the students gained independence and developed a new narrative of what it means to be an American abroad and the first in their family to participate in such a program. With this new personal narrative, they became global citizens more active and involved in their families, communities, campuses, and politics. The data on increased campus participation and activism upon their return indicates that

education abroad can lead to increased political awareness along with the students' deep belief in giving back and improving education and society.

Fourth, for first-generation students, it is important to recognize the role of mentors and the cultural capital they bring with them to education abroad programs. The students understood that while they may be first in their family, they did not get there without help of mentors. This was such an important experience for them that they want to do the same for other first-generation students. Another important takeaway from the students for administrators is to consider the students' desire to belong and the role of communities both on and off campus. More specifically, administrators need to recognize and support students' transferable skills of aspirational and navigational capital and funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Yosso, 2005). The students see education abroad as part of their higher education dreams and want to inspire others, as their personal identities grow and they become global citizens. As social justice leaders, we need to consider equity and access of participation to leverage their skills and create new narratives based on their social and academic talents and skills.

Chapter Five:
Critical Intersections Between
Leadership and Student Experience in Education Abroad

Hai, after: We all share a story of being first-generation students who studied abroad, we paved the way for future students...who would be experiencing the same troubles...they might be fearful—fearful of parents not allowing them, fearful that they would not be financially capable to actually go there and survive.

Isabella, after: I think that first-generation students, you need an extra push the whole time. If it was your friend who has a similar family dynamic and it's like 'Ok, you did it that means its ok for me to do it' you know? So I think it's important for first generations to be reached out for. There are other students who come into college already knowing they're going abroad. I had no idea. I would have never thought. I mean, yeah I saw tabling and orientation as a freshman but I can't do that. I can't go away for six months or so.

Overview

This study focused on education abroad participation, which has been shown to strengthen student engagement in their academic development (Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). In particular, this study examined space and time dimensions in which students' education abroad experiences are linked with issues of equity and social justice in higher education and beyond. Learning from the students directly was pivotal for the study; however, to offer a complete picture and recommendations, this study also included the insights from education abroad professionals.

This chapter draws upon the findings in Chapter 3 from administrators and Chapter 4 from first-generation students to offer policy recommendations for supporting first-generation students in education abroad. The recommendations focus on improving the equitable access of first-generation students, specifically in regards to awareness among administrators, funding structures and access, academic integrity, and community building across campus.

Time, Space, and Place

New dimensions emerged for the first-generation students in regards to the guilt of being first and the pressure that they experience along with the liberation of being abroad and enjoying the separation. For the first-generation students in this study, education abroad was a dynamic space of political, cultural, and familial growth that fostered self-development and realization of their dreams. As a result of this unique space, students experienced meaningful success in participation in Cross-cultural Immersion Programs (Engle & Engle, 2003) utilizing their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005). As education abroad leaders explore how to improve their programs, it is important to build in knowledge of student successes and needs in their education abroad experiences.

Recommendations for Action

Four main areas for recommendations emerged from the students and administrators: addressing awareness, need for financial support for first-generation students, academic focus of education abroad, and engagement with the larger campus community.

Expanding Awareness in the Field of Education Abroad

The administrators in the study had varying levels of awareness and, therefore, understanding of the students' experiences and transferable skills that they bring to education abroad. Only Jesus had first-hand experience as a first-generation student. Therefore, education abroad administrators may need additional tools. First, leaders should offer professional trainings for administrators, especially new hires, on understanding the needs of the campus' population. To improve access to education abroad participation, it is important that campuses have dialogues and increase awareness of the students' stories before, during, and after education abroad. All five campuses included in this dissertation expressed an awareness of equity in education abroad participation, although to varying levels. The first-generation college students from San Francisco State University participated in education abroad and saw this as an important opportunity that is not always, they feel, available. These students demonstrated a strong sense of agency

to make it happen. Administrators have an obligation to not only serve those who seek them out, but all students.

Second, in education abroad, it is important to include the voices of the students in their outreach. For campuses that do not have a lot of returnees, they should consider making videos like SF State's "Breaking Barriers." Additionally, offices should explore digital testimonies like blogs. Access needs to be framed around supporting students and integrated across campuses to include high impact practices. Thus, conversations on campuses need to debunk myths surrounding barriers for education abroad, especially in regards to academics and funding, and to refocus programs to minimize such barriers. SF State students wanted greater awareness of the possibility once they realized that academically education abroad programs at SF State are resident credit that keeps them on track for graduation and financially feasible. Student voices in blogs and videos can be more powerful than administrators encouraging first-generation students.

Equity of Funding

Both the students and administrators highlighted funding for education abroad as a concern, which is reinforced in the literature (Bui, 2002; Engle and Tinto, 2008; Ishitani, 2016). For the students in this study, they had access to all their financial aid and the majority in the study applied for the Benjamin A. Gilman

International Scholarship. While SF State has enjoyed success with this scholarship, several students mentioned (before going abroad) that additional financial support from the institution would help first-generation students. The administrators echoed this, but institutional aid remains limited. Two of the other campuses have institutional funding for scholarships, not solely depending upon outside scholarship sources. However, the funding from those campuses was either earmarked for specific disciplines or shorter terms, which do not address the concerns that the students raised and the literature stating that financial aid is not sufficient to support first-generation students in higher education (Bui, 2002; Engle and Tinto, 2008).

To ensure equity of participation in high impact practices, financial investment and commitment are needed, ideally both from the institution along with supporting students to access outside resources. More specifically, we need to fully fund the semester and yearlong education abroad programs. At SF State, a campus that prides itself on serving its diverse campus, should invest in institutional aid for first-generation students to participate in high impact practices, specifically education abroad.

Maintain Academic Focus

The SF State students saw education abroad as a dream while recognizing its multifaceted space for learning. Although they did not realize all the areas in which they would grow prior to participation, they recognized the academic endeavor and importance academically and professionally for their future. As leaders, we need to focus on promoting and supporting the educational learning and development of our students in intensive education abroad programs for at least a semester. As academics are the cornerstone of education abroad at SF State, we need to integrate access and participation in education abroad within the general academic expectations and opportunities for students across the campus.

The majority of the students discussed selecting a program based upon their degree at San Francisco State University. Several students focused heavily on academics for program selection and personal value of the experience abroad. It is clear that they were motivated to participate, but understood that it needed to be part of their degree completion and, therefore, based on academics. While the study abroad office does emphasize selecting program by academic fit to keep students on track, their comments reflect a need to remain true to the academic core values and not be travel agents or sales representatives. This is an important focus for a campus' international office with a clear message throughout the institution to

faculty, staff, and students. “There is still a need to examine institutional strategies for communicating messages regarding study abroad and the influence this has on individuals to participate in study abroad programs” (Nguyen, 2015, pp. 61). With a strong academic focus, institutions can more fully integrate education abroad opportunities into educational majors and courses. This will involve a more concerted effort by faculty, staff, and leadership to broaden the appeal and access for education abroad within and across campus major and minor degrees and programs.

Engagement with the Campus Community

To best support first-generation students, leaders need to consider the outreach structure to engage students as well as support alumni for intercampus collaboration. Leaders need to focus on campus community building beyond outreach that includes other offices as well as student organizations. This includes offering advising ongoing in other parts of the campus.

The students and administrators both discussed the importance of communities, but from varied perspectives. The students highlighted the importance for them to belong and sought out networks and communities on campus, including student organizations. The students valued networks and communities. They also illuminated the importance of individuals, including those

on campuses, who served as role models or mentors. Mentors played an important role in helping them get to SF State as well as persisting through their education abroad experience. Joining student organizations and finding a community in which they could belong helped students find a sense of direction and confidence once they arrived at SF State. This practice continued when they went abroad.

Furthermore, they wanted to be a role model for after they studied overseas.

Education abroad programs need to highlight the value giving back by students who participate in education abroad, and the students can serve as spokespeople for education abroad programs.

The administrators highlighted other offices on their campuses that served diverse students and highlighted insights for interacting with them. The findings illuminate the importance of partnership-building while being respectful of power dynamics. Additionally, all campuses mentioned Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), which serves first-generation college students, as a key partnership.

However, Robin (at CSU A) took it to a new level of integrating herself and her colleagues into the EOP office as a fixed presence. CSU A's partnership with EOP illustrates a potential approach to collaborating with other offices around campus, such as student disability services and veterans, according to John. John said, "We have regular study abroad advising physically in the EOP office and that's been

great success in increasing study abroad participation amongst EOP students of which great proportions are first-generation college students.”

It is recommended that leaders involved in education abroad look at the communities that do exist on campus, whether it is EOP or a student organization, and consider how education abroad offices have a true collaboration with a shared mission that extends beyond outreach. Bell (2013) noted that inter-campus collaboration is critical for internationalization efforts and equity through consensus building. Thus, leaders need to unite behind shared values and missions. In supporting students, my colleagues in the field noted the need to actively work collaboratively with offices and communities across the campus. At SF State, we need to examine our existing partnerships and outreach efforts to work on community building integration, including the possibility of education abroad advising outside the international office.

We may not all be experts at all aspects of education abroad or first-generation individuals, but we have colleagues in other parts of the campus with whom we can collaborate and pool our talents and resources. We can also improve our cross-campus dialogue and collaboration to share information and data on a regular basis. Two campuses (CSU A and D) offered unique approaches highlighting the value of engaging each other and integrating into the community

through recognizing power dynamics and the limits of our expertise. In the CSU system, the EOP model, in particular, serves first-generation students. Other CSU campuses should explore whether they can have a similar integration of offices with the focus on building a bridged community with the students.

My colleagues also highlighted the important role of having alumnae/i share their experiences abroad to inspire their peers facilitating being an ambassador for the programs and a role model. However, the students see themselves as not only role models for their peers, but family members and friends. Therefore, alumni programming needs to be aware of addressing both the desires of the students and needs of the education abroad offices. Again, not just using them as an outreach tool on the campus, but to help them develop their own stories and facilitate conversations with their family and peers.

Additionally, the students raised the challenge of communicating to their family the value of education abroad and the financial feasibility. Therefore, as leaders, we should work with our alumni who wish to be role models to help them offer guidance to their peers about having those difficult conversations. Thus, we can improve how we might empower the alumni further and prepare first-generation students prior to participation. The education abroad offices in this study mentioned utilizing program alumni in their offices and campus. Therefore, existing

programing can be expanded to train students to assist their peers with these challenging conversations with their families. Campuses should also consider creating more enduring resources, such as a short documentary video, to utilize while building up their first-generation, education abroad alumnae/i.

Conclusion

Educational leaders have a moral obligation to consider all high impact practices for students in higher education and to ensure equitable access. Through speaking with my colleagues in the field, access and resources emerged as key concepts for expanding and improving education abroad for first-generation students. They recognize that education abroad is a high impact practice for students in a unique learning space for students to make rapid personal and academic growth in a compressed period of a semester or year. While all expressed interest in diversifying participation of education abroad, awareness of first-generation students varied, as did institutional financial resources and community interactions on campus. However, the administrators are only half of the story. The first-generation students comprise the other half.

The first-generation students offered a rich narrative of their experiences at SF State and participating in semester and yearlong Cross-Cultural Immersive Programs. Their voices echoed the need for additional financial resources and

illustrated the importance of community space for them. Furthermore, their experiences highlighted the need for administrators to understand their social, cultural, immigration, academic, and familial journeys. Additionally, leaders need to recognize the funds of knowledge and transferable strengths they bring to higher education and to education abroad. However, they recognized more could be done for them, such as helping them articulate the value and feasibility of education abroad to their families. The students humbled me when they said that they hoped that sharing their stories with me would help other first-generation students. The students' journey to higher education both in the United States and then abroad should not only be considered by international offices, but educators within and across institutions of higher education.

As a White, third-generation college student on my father's side, I had read about the experiences of first-generation college students and worked with them, but nothing compares to hearing and reading their stories in this study. Now, I feel closer to my students. I feel like it's important that we be reminded of their personal narratives and to make them public; too often as administrators we get distracted by what needs to be done. While I balance my administrative work with being an advisor speaking with students, this opportunity to have deeper conversations has opened my eyes further to the power of experiences, dreams, challenges, and

talents. There were many surprises, like how many of them had stories of immigration and their connections with education abroad. Additionally, I am more conscious of power dynamics of space with other communities on campus and inspired by the work of other campuses to improve collaborations with other offices and communities, such as my EOP office.

Through speaking with the students in this study, I was deeply humbled by their stories and desire to share with me not only to contribute to my dissertation, but also their hope that this study would help other first-generation college students participate in education abroad. As educational leaders, the first-generation college students have highlighted areas that we can foster and support in their journeys through higher education and education abroad. Specifically, we need to foster the personal attributes and backgrounds that lead the students to higher education and through education abroad. For the students, we should foster their growth in independence and the gift of time and space abroad. To achieve this goal, the students overcame barriers (primarily funding) and educational growth overseas. Through examining these students, we need to consider the support that worked for them, like Gilman, and what more campuses can do to improve access and resources. Last, the students want not just to be first, but to open the door for

others—specifically family members who look up to them and peers (both friends and people they do not yet know).

Additionally, I recognize the cultural, psychological, political, and educational space that students can build on and deepen through education abroad, and how they have the skills and desire to give back to their campus and personal communities. To support first-generation students achieve all their higher education goals, especially education abroad, I am now more informed and aware of the need to actively engage in conversations and campus dialogues around high impact practices. It is also important to support their independence and agency that they bring to help them achieve their dreams. As my colleague Renee noted, we want to support student “not just [for] college, but the world.”

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Appendix A: Interview Question Bank for Administrators

- 1) Describe your career path to your current role?
- 2) Please describe the students you serve in your current role.
- 3) Please describe your experience working with diverse and non-traditional students? Do you know if any of your students identify as being a first-generation college student? Specifically to education abroad?
- 4) How do you support diverse students?
- 5) What does your institution do to support them? To support education abroad? What resources are available?
- 6) Are there any policies?
- 7) Process designed to support them?
- 8) What are your thoughts on what is currently being done? Is this sufficient? Why or why not?
- 9) Are non-traditional/first-generation college students successful in participating in education abroad? Why do you believe this? What makes them successful?
- 10) Would you be willing to share demographic data from your campus on education abroad participants?
- 11) Is there anything you would like to add about what we have discussed or I did not ask?
- 12) What questions do you have for me?

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions for Students Before Participation

- 1) Please introduce yourself and share your major and education abroad location, year, and duration.
- 2) What are you most looking forward to seeing or doing abroad?
- 3) How do you define first-generation? What does it mean for your to be first in your family to attend college?
- 4) How did you come to SF State? Describe the experience coming to SF State (transfer or come straight from high school). What were your first days like here? How did you learn to navigate SF State?
- 5) What first motivated or inspired you to participate in education abroad? How do you see education abroad fitting with you academic and professional goals?
- 6) What personally has helped you in studying at SF State?
- 7) What do you think will be your biggest asset for education abroad?
- 8) What has your experience been applying for education abroad?
- 9) What should SF State do to support you and other first-generation college students?
- 10) What are your expectations regarding education abroad?
- 11) How would you compare the process of studying abroad with coming to SF State?
- 12) What was frustrating?
- 13) What challenges did you face as you considered studying abroad? (Financial, family, academic, social, process). What helped you overcome these challenges?
- 14) Before you went abroad, what were/are some of your personal strengths? What was difficult?
- 15) Would you recommend education abroad? Why or why not?
- 16) Is there anything you would like to add about anything we have discussed or I did not ask?
- 17) What questions do you have for me?

Appendix C: Interview Question Bank for Students While Abroad

- 1) Please introduce yourself and share your major and education abroad location, year, and duration.
- 2) What food do you miss the most from education abroad?
- 3) What first motivated or inspired you to education abroad?
- 4) What personally has helped you in studying at SF State?
- 5) What do you think was your biggest asset for education abroad?
- 6) How do you define first-generation? What does it mean for your to be first in your family?
- 7) Where do you see yourself going in the future?
- 8) Have you approached your classes differently since studying abroad? How has education abroad affected you academically?
- 9) How has education abroad affected how you see yourself?
- 10) What was most successful for you abroad?
- 11) What were a few of your greatest successes?
- 12) What made it easy? Can you give an example?
- 13) What challenges did you face while studying abroad?
- 14) How were you able to overcome them?
- 15) Before you went abroad, what were/are some of your personal strengths? What was difficult?
- 16) How do you feel you have changed since you returned to the US?
- 17) What are your personal strengths now (having studied abroad)? What is still difficult?
- 18) What did you discover about yourself?
- 19) What were your expectations regarding education abroad?
- 20) What should SF State do to support you and other first-generation college students?
- 21) How would you compare the process of studying abroad with coming to SF State?
- 22) What was frustrating? How did you overcome this? Can you give an example?
- 23) Would you recommend education abroad? Why or why not?
- 24) Is there anything you would like to add about anything we have discussed or I did not ask?
- 25) What questions do you have for me?

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions for Students After Participation

- 1) Please introduce yourself and share your major and education abroad location, year, and duration.
- 2) How do you define first-generation? What does it mean for your to be first in your family?
- 3) How did you come to SF State? Describe the experience coming to SF State (transfer or come straight from high school).
- 4) What were your first days like here? How did you learn to navigate SF State?
- 5) What was frustrating? How did you overcome this? Can you give an example?
- 6) What concerns did you have about attending SF State/education abroad?
- 7) What are you not concerned about for attending SF State/education abroad?
- 8) What first motivated or inspired you to education abroad? Why/how did you select your program?
- 9) What role (if any) does your family play in you studying abroad?
- 10) What has your experience been applying for education abroad?
- 11) What was most unexpected?
- 12) What was most successful for you abroad? What enables you to be successful?
- 13) What have you discovered about yourself from studying abroad?
- 14) What do you think has been your biggest asset for education abroad?
- 15) What challenges do you face while studying abroad?
- 16) How have you able to overcome them?
- 17) What has been most successful for you abroad?
- 18) Where do you see yourself going in the future?
- 19) What from studying abroad applied to your personal relationships?
- 20) What should SF State do to support you and other first-generation college students?
- 21) What were your expectations regarding education abroad?
- 22) What personally has helped you in studying at SF State?
- 23) How would you compare the process of studying abroad with coming to SF State?
- 24) What made it easy? Before you went abroad, what were/are some of your personal strengths? What challenges did you face? What was difficult?
- 25) Is there anything you would like to add about anything we have discussed or I did not ask? What questions do you have for me?

Appendix E: Student Profiles

Stage	Pseudonym	Country	Duration	Year Abroad	Major	Minor	Academic Goal Abroad	Ethnicity	Age Abroad	Transfer	Financial Aid	Grants	Gilman
Before	Gabriela	Spain	semester	Junior	Accounting	N/A	Major	Latina (permanent resident)	22	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Ineligible
Before	Sophia	Korea	semester	Senior	Accounting	N/A	Major	Asian	23	No	Yes	Pell, State, work study	Yes, received
Before	Karen	Japan	semester	Senior	Psychology	N/A	Major	Asian	29	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Yes, received
Before	Andromeda	UK (Scotland)	semester	Junior	Literature	N/A	Major	Black	22	Yes (3)	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants, Chafee, outside scholarships	Yes, received
Before	Livia	Korea	year	Sophomore	International Relations	N/A	Major, Language, & General Education	Mexican/Latina, US citizen	19	No	Yes	Pell, SEDOG, EOP, State Uni, Work Study & 3 scholarships	Yes, received
Before	Manuel	Denmark	semester	Senior	Communication	N/A	Major	Mexican/Latino	22	yes	Yes	Pell, EOP, State Uni	Yes, received
Before	Paige	Spain	year	Junior	International Relations	N/A	Language & Major	Mexican/Latina, US citizen	19	No	Yes	Pell, SEDOG, EOP, Cal Grants	Yes, but did not receive
Before	Lydia	France	semester	Senior	Business	N/A	Major	Black/Vietnamese American	23	Yes	Yes	Pell, EOP, State Uni Grants	Yes, received
Before	Joanna	Japan	year	Senior	Psychology	N/A	General Education & Language	Philippines American	23	Yes	Yes	Pell, State Uni Grants & Work Study	Yes, received
Before	Minh	Korea	year	Sophomore	Business (Management)	N/A	Major Prerequisites & General Education	Black/Vietnamese American	19	No	Yes	Pell, Cal, Grants & Work Study	Yes, but did not receive
Before	Fiona	Germany	year	Sophomore	International Relations	N/A	Language	Mexican/Latina, US citizen	18	No	Yes	Pell, SEDOG, EOP, & Cal Grants	Yes, but did not receive
Before	Julia	UK (Wales)	semester	Senior	Criminal Justice	N/A	Major	Latina	21	No	Yes	Pell, EOP, State Univ, Work Study	Yes, received
Before	Sienna	Netherlands	semester	Senior	Communication	N/A	Major	Latina	20	Yes	Yes	Pell, State Uni Grants & Work Study	Yes, received
Before	Alexandro	France	year	Senior	International Business	N/A	Major	Latino	21	No	Yes	Pell, State Uni, Cal Grants	Yes, but did not receive
Before	Hannah	UK (England)	year	Junior	Political Science	N/A	Major	White	20	Yes	Yes	Pell, SEDOG, Cal Grants	Yes, but did not receive

Stage	Pseudonym	Country	Duration	Year Abroad	Major	Minor	Academic Goal Abroad	Ethnicity	Age Abroad	Transfer	Financial Aid	Grants	Gilman
During	Gabriela	Spain	semester	Junior	Accounting	N/A	Major	Salvadorian (permanent resident)	22	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Ineligible
During	Karen	Japan	semester	Senior	Psychology	N/A	Major	Asian	29	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Yes, received
During	Andromeda	UK (Scotland)	semester	Junior	Literature	N/A	Major	Black	22	Yes (3)	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants, Chafee, outside scholarships	Yes, received
During	Juan	France	semester	Senior	International Business	N/A	Major	Mexican (permanent resident)	23	No	Yes	Pell, Cal, SEOG, outside scholarships	Yes, but did not receive
During	Emily	Italy	year	Junior	Studio Art	N/A	Major	White	21	No	Yes	Pell, Cal Grants	Yes, received
After	Grace	South Africa	year	Junior	Communication & International Relations	N/A	Major	Asian	21	No	Yes	Pell, EOP, Cal Grants	Yes, received
After	Jocelyn	Turkey	semester	Junior	Political Science	N/A	Major	Philippines American	21	No	Yes	Pell, Cal, Work Study	Ineligible
After	Juan	France	semester	Senior	International Business	N/A	Major	Mexican (permanent resident)	23	No	Yes	Pell, Cal, SEOG, outside scholarships	Yes, but did not receive
After	Isabella	Spain	semester	Junior	Accounting	N/A	Major	Latina	20	No	Yes	Pell and Cal Grants	Yes, but did not receive
After	Chloe	Ghana	year	Senior	Psychology	Human Sexuality	Minor	Black	24	No	Yes	EOP, State Uni, Cal, & 4 scholarships	Yes, received
After	Olivia	UK (Wales)	year	Sophomore/Junior	Criminal Justice	N/A	Major	Latina	20	No	Yes	Pell, SEDOG, Cal, Work Study	Yes, but did not receive
After	Gabriela	Spain	semester	Junior	Accounting	N/A	Major	Latina (permanent resident)	22	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Ineligible
After	Anna	Italy	year	Senior	Communication Disorders	European Studies	Minor	White	21	No	Yes	Pell, Cal, Work Study	Yes, received
After	Willow	Taiwan/China	summer/year	Senior	Chinese	English (Linguistics) & Pacific Asian Studies	Major	Cuban/Black	24 & 27	Yes	Yes	Pell, State Uni Grant	Yes, received for Taiwan
After	Hai	Hong Kong	year	Senior	Business (Marketing)	Industrial Design	Major	Asian	23	Yes	Yes	Pell, EOP, Cal & 2 scholarships	Yes, received
After	Karen	Japan	semester	Senior	Psychology	N/A	Major	Asian	29	No	Yes	Pell & Cal Grants	Yes, received

Appendix E: Student Profiles (page 2)