

SLC COLLOQUIUM

TUESDAY 10 APRIL 2018

3:00-4:00 PM

SC239



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SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD: CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC OUTCOMES

Study abroad is continuing to become more popular among American university student. During the 2015-2016 year, 325,339 American students studied abroad, a number that has been constantly increasing (Figure 1). Of these students, 63% participated in short-term study abroad programs, defined as being a program of 8-weeks or less (Institute of International Education). With this rising number of students participating in study abroad, and with the majority participating in short-term programs, we have the obligation to examine the outcomes associated with these programs.

Positive outcomes of study abroad have been identified, such as improvements in one's linguistic and communicative resources (Dings 2007, Kinginger 2008, Lafford 1995, Segalowitz & Freed 2004), personal growth (Black & Duhon 2006), and intercultural communicative competence (Dwyer 2004, Elola & Oskoz 2008, Engle & Engle 2004, Jackson 2011, Martinsen 2010), but study abroad is not a homogeneous experience (Freed, 1995; Wang, 2010). Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to the most frequent type of program—the short-term program.

Therefore, my recent research has focused on the outcomes of short-term, Spanish language immersion study abroad programs. I have examined two types of outcomes, and I will present an overview of my research that addresses students' development of intercultural knowledge and linguistic resources. The intercultural knowledge project has focused on students' change and growth in knowledge, and also examined the differentiated impact of study abroad settings comparing programs in Madrid, Spain to a program in the minority context of the Basque region of Spain. The linguistic projects have identified development in socially appropriate linguistic uses (i.e. speech acts, requests) and also development in interactional resources (i.e. intensifiers). Besides making contributions to the theoretical discussions about intercultural and interactional competencies, the findings provide insight into the study abroad experience.