

Introduction

I clearly remember the shock of seeing a wall-mounted rotary telephone with the handset set at the bottom part of the phone. I was used to a phone module with a metal cradle for the handset at the top and a rotary dial or push buttons on its face below. However, the handset was at the bottom of the phone in front of me, as was the metal pick-up/hang-up cradle, with the rotary dial above it.

That telephone turned my world upside down, shattering my worldview of what is “normal.” I was eighteen years old, attending a local high school while on a yearlong stay in Aotearoa/New Zealand as a Rotary Club International Youth Exchange student. By making me realize that things do not have to be one way, this deep shock captured the essence of my study abroad experience: what you take for granted as the only way—the way you are used to—is challenged by a totally different yet similarly effective way of doing the same thing. This is the power of study abroad: small, everyday items and activities can trigger a grave new understanding that stays with you the rest of your life.

Yet, on a detailed examination, a more complex picture emerges. This “life-changing” year triggered me to travel to Aotearoa/New Zealand many times afterward, doing ethnographic research and seeing other aspects of the country. As I got to know more about the country as an anthropologist, I started to reframe my year there as an exchange student. As I became familiar with the field of study abroad and its theories and practices, this reframing of my year in Aotearoa/New Zealand made me think that some key notions used in study abroad could be revisited.

This personal endeavor became a cautionary tale, which then pushed me to write this book. Study abroad can be a double-edged sword: it can be a life-changing experience that makes you rethink your worldview, but it can also lead you to interpret it in superficial or even inaccurate and dangerous ways. This book seeks to start up conversations for overcoming this risk and argues, with careful reframing of some key notions, that study abroad can become an occasion for learning how the world works: how sociocultural, economic, and political structures



Figure 0.1 An “upside-down” wall-mounted phone (© User: Diamondmagna via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0).

shape our daily lives and how we can become active agents in transforming them. Through transforming study abroad, we can transform ourselves as well as the world.

Eric Wolf (1994) once said that theories are just “takes” on phenomena. Some capture what is happening better than others do. My theoretical exploration of study abroad boils down to a search for “takes” that help us understand what happens in study abroad. This book is an attempt to ferret out takes that can explain it to us so that we can build on it.

Written for study abroad practitioners, as well as for those interested in the working of the field, this book introduces takes from various disciplines that may help to expand our understanding of study abroad experiences. However, there is no end to it: the diversity of ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding experiences means that we will always find more ways to view things and develop new ways to understand them. This book is part of that never-ending endeavor. And as I invite others into this endeavor, I hope that together we can find ways to grasp, explain, and understand the sensations that the students experience during study abroad—like my shock of seeing an upside-down phone—and capitalize on it as meaningful experience that can benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Three Study Abroad Experiences

I studied abroad three times. To be sure, not all of my study abroad experience induced world-shattering shock, nor did all of it inspire me to analyze world around me and what I had taken for granted. In hindsight, what made the difference was not the length of stay, or staying with a host family, or engaging the “locals,” or the amount of reflection, as often suggested in study abroad literature as important factors. Instead, it was my analytical lens developed during my third study abroad experience, when I stayed in the dorm and mixed less with the locals than I had on my second experience as a student abroad.

What made the difference—theoretical frameworks by which to understand my experience—were gained while I participated in a graduate program in cultural anthropology during the third study abroad experience. With rigorous and critical theoretical frameworks, I was able to think and make sense of my experience during and outside study abroad with greater clarity than at any other time or through any other reflection. This book seeks to share this experience and such frameworks by introducing what I started to learn in graduate school and continue to learn to this day, namely, theories in cultural anthropology, political science, linguistics, and other fields of social science and humanities.

What I learned in my third study abroad experience can actually occur anywhere, including at students’ home institutions (my fellow students were domestic students) and before (as well as during and after) studying abroad. However, I will argue throughout this book that study abroad has something specific to offer—attention to daily

activities—that is conducive to inspiring and applying such a rigorous analytical lens. This book aims to be of some use in that process.

In short, although study abroad experience can provide world-shattering moments, for it to become a meaningful learning experience about the world, we need rigorous analytical frameworks. I will illustrate this in a more concrete way by introducing my three study abroad experiences that would exemplify different types of study abroad: short-term study abroad with little preparation, long-term study abroad with much preparation though in terms of learning “culture,” and long-term study abroad with the subject content that provides analytical frameworks.

My First Time Studying Abroad: New Experiences without Interpretive Framework

I was born and raised in Japan. My first study abroad experience, which was also my first experience abroad, took place when I was eleven; I stayed with a host family for three weeks in a port town in the United Kingdom. My father’s work took him to Manchester, and my sister, brother, cousin, and I were put in a summer study abroad program in a nearby city and housed by different host families. We attended school in the morning and did extracurricular excursions at the YMCA in the afternoon. Most of the other students were from France; some were from Spain. The only British people I got to know were my host family and the teacher, and I spent most of my time attending school with my sister, cousin, and French students. I remember strange feelings of awkwardness attached to being in one group of loud “foreigner” adolescents on an extended, controlled vacation. Unburdened by regular serious life routines of study or work, we spent carefree days with some light experience of “studying language.”

I was entirely unprepared for this study abroad experience. I knew hardly any English (it was a compulsory school subject from seventh grade in Japan, but I was only in sixth grade at the time) and did not know what to expect. Despite seeing, experiencing, and interacting with people whom I would not have encountered had I stayed in Japan, I did not have tools to interpret or understand them.

For example, one day during this study abroad stay, a cashier at a store gave my sister and me the wrong change. We noticed it and told her. I thought the discrepancy reflected anti-Asian racism. My sister, however, told me she had overheard the cashier telling another store person that the cash register was not working properly. I had grown up as a mainstream Japanese, and had a very naïve interpretation

of inter-racial relations. For the first time in my life, I realized what it is like to anticipate victimization and also erroneously read things into others' actions. However, beyond that, that experience did not lead to anything meaningful.

I was surprised to see that many of my fellow students were dark-skinned people from France, as this defied my then stereotype of French as "white." Only later did I realize that France has many immigrants, that this has to do with France's former colonies in Africa, and that people in former colonies tend to migrate to former colonizers' countries mainly because they have some familiarity with the languages and various social systems imposed on them by the colonizers. At that time, though, nobody explained this to me, and there was no occasion to discuss it. Regardless of the novelty of this initial experience outside Japan, it was not as impactful as my second trip.

My Second Time Studying Abroad: Knowledgeable about Home and Host Countries without Critical Interpretive Frameworks

I studied abroad for the second time as a Rotary Club International Youth Exchange student seven years later, as mentioned. It was a year-long experience with much preparation and follow-up. After passing a written test and then an interview, I was one of the thirteen high school students chosen from one Rotary Club district of Tokyo to study abroad. Everything but the airfare was paid for; I even received a weekly stipend. The selection took place a year before our departure, and we (the program's outgoing students) met for workshops and retreats (pre-trip meetings) every month before the trip. We learned Japanese things, such as how to put a kimono on, so that we could "introduce Japan" while abroad. We also learned things like "Western table manners" to enable us to adjust better while abroad (destination countries for the students in our group were the United States, Canada, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Brazil). Several sleepover retreats were organized for socializing with program alumni and students who had come to Japan from abroad on the same program. Of all these activities, it was our trip to Hiroshima, where we visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, that made the deepest impression. They tried to train us to be Japanese ambassadors, as it were.

When I was in Aotearoa/New Zealand, I had one "counselor family" and lived with four host families, three months each (to reduce the burden on each host family, who host without compensation), which allowed me to see how different each family is. Once a month there was a retreat and/or get-together with other Rotary exchange students from

around the world. I attended a local high school with my host siblings, as all host families had children who attended the same high school. I observed different lifestyles (e.g., one host family had a swimming pool, which is unthinkable in Japan), different ways of thinking (e.g., people cared about social life as much as about school achievement, in stark contrast to what I knew in Japan, where schoolwork was prioritized over everything), and different sensibilities (e.g., walking in pouring rain without an umbrella or walking down on the street barefooted). But what shocked me the most was the realization that, above and beyond what we would usually think of as “cultural difference,” there are different ways of doing things, symbolized by that upside-down phone mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Upon returning to Japan, I attended several post-trip meetings (though not as many as some of my fellow students in the cohort), offering guidance to prospective students and socializing with my cohort as well as alumni and students currently studying abroad in Japan. Comparisons of experience abounded between students who had gone to different places—Australia, the United States, Canada, Brazil. The friends I made then—both in my cohort and in classrooms and host families in Aotearoa/New Zealand—have become lifelong friends with whom I have kept in touch, at first through yearly Christmas cards and occasional visits and now also via social media.

In my second study abroad experience, I was in a program that study abroad literature would praise as preparing us students well. Besides the workshops and retreats mentioned earlier, the program promoted learning about Japan: we were given a book about “Japanese culture” and encouraged to learn things like Japanese “traditional dance” (*nihon buyou*), flower arrangement, and tea ceremony, which most of us did. I took flower arrangement classes and did use that skill a couple of times while in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By regularly interacting with study abroad alumni and students from abroad studying in Japan, we learned what to expect, what to watch out for, and how to prepare ourselves for the experience.

Nonetheless, we were not provided with rigorous theoretical frameworks to understand the interactions that occur during study abroad. We viewed “Japanese culture” in terms of the safe diversity of tea ceremony, Japanese dance, and food. We had an essentialistic view of Japan that was promoted at the time by quasi-scholarly genre of *Nihonjinron*, or Japanology, which presents a static, homogenized image of Japan based on the viewpoint of Tokyo’s privileged middle class. We did not realize the cultural politics informed by relations of power—for example, that what is considered “Japanese culture” is really Tokyo-centered

middle-class practices derived from practices of the Samurai caste and imposed everywhere as the norm, marginalizing other practices within Japan.

My view of the destination, Aotearoa/New Zealand, was similar. Staying with four host families and having another family as a counselor allowed me to see diversity among Aotearoa/New Zealand households, but all their members were Pākehā (white) New Zealanders from affluent backgrounds. Though I did talk with some students from Māori, Samoan, and Fijian backgrounds, most of my school friends were Pākehā New Zealanders, and I was not exposed to other viewpoints—especially those of indigenous Māori, who together with Pākehā constitute the “bicultural” nation of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

As the arrangement of this year was what would be considered a model case according to study abroad discourses—detailed preparation, full “immersion” in local life, and follow-ups—this brief examination challenges “common sense” of study abroad. Calling my year a “cross-cultural” experience would have ignored the complexity of each society by rendering it internally homogeneous. I learned to speak English during this year, yet learning to speak with “native speakers” actually meant getting used to each person’s way of speaking—I often had to start over when I met a new person—until I gained enough repertoires of decoding skills. Describing my experience an “immersion” created an illusion that I lived like most New Zealanders, which was hardly true (I lived like a daughter/guest in affluent Pākehā households). Calling my stay there crossing the “border” is to ignore other borders within Japan or Aotearoa/New Zealand—ethnic, class, regional, generational, and even between those who love rugby (Aotearoa/New Zealand’s national sport) and those who do not. And, though it did transform me, it was one of many transformations I experienced throughout my life, including when I first found out at a young age my family rules (e.g., no “bad” words can be used) that I thought were universally applied to all children were not, or when I found out that, for doing the same work, I was paid double the wage of old women from northern Japan working with me at a ski hotel because the employer thought Tokyo college students would not work for a lower wage, which shattered my belief in the existence of egalitarianism and fair labor relations in Japan.

The difference is, I was asked about self-transformative experiences during studying abroad much more than about self-transformative experiences in other contexts. Study abroad then does not specifically offer transformative experiences in itself, as is often believed (see chapter 7 for the review of this discourse); rather, we make it seem that way

by constantly asking students for examples of such experiences. In short, though I was well trained in a setup that study abroad discourses would highly recommend for my second round of study abroad, the framework I used was not rigorous enough to understand the relations of power involved in social configurations in either Japan or Aotearoa/New Zealand.

My Third Time Studying Abroad: Critical Interpretative Frameworks of Cultural Politics

My third study abroad experience was all about academics. I came to the United States to attend graduate school and gain a PhD in cultural anthropology at Cornell University—in other words, as a degree-seeking study abroad student. I lived on campus in Ithaca, New York, taking classes for three years, during which I married an American and decided to stay in the United States. After finishing my course work, I went to Aotearoa/New Zealand for nine months for fieldwork and, one and a half years after my return to the United States, received the doctoral degree with a dissertation based on that fieldwork.

There was no talk of “immersion” or “learning culture.” I studied and worked side by side with other American students, and although I did make friends with other international students from around the world—Thailand, Japan, Korea, China—it did not seem to matter as much as it does in study abroad discourses, which often concern whom students should spend time with while studying abroad. At a college that attracted not just students but also professors from all over the world, being an international student was not a remarkable fact but just another anecdotal item about oneself. It was very common for any students to share in class their viewpoints shaped by their different backgrounds and upbringing.

This study abroad experience—my third—focused on academics, as mentioned. I learned theoretical viewpoints—not because my program was study abroad but because they were the subject content of the program. I learned to revisit and question taken-for-granted notions around us as something constructed in relations of power at particular historical moments. I learned about objectification of “culture” and its political uses. I also learned about diversity and power relations within Japan and about negative parts of Japanese history—for instance, a student from Korea told me in class discussions about the many Korean people living in Japan who were scapegoated and killed in the chaos of a big earthquake in Tokyo region in the 1920s, and a student from Malaysia spoke of atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers that tended

not to be discussed explicitly in Japan. It was, however, framed not as “cultural difference” in viewpoints but rather as historical documentation, as well as what public schools in Japan do not teach their students.

Armed with these theoretical understandings, I started to make sense of my first and second study abroad experiences. It was no longer about “the encounter between two different cultures”—how I, a Japanese, went to the UK and Aotearoa/New Zealand and learned about these “cultures”—but about understanding encounters with various people with multiple subject positions and diverse perspectives informed by broader sociocultural, economic, and political forces in Japan, the UK, and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

What These Three Study Abroad Experiences Tell Us

Every study abroad experience is different, even for the same person. One’s stage in life, destination, the goal of the stay, the context of the stay, the group one goes with—all these affect the experience. In trying to make sense of these diverse experiences, however, I found I was pulled by existing discourses. Ken Plummer (1995) argues that existing narratives provide not only the grammar, vocabularies, and sequences of our own stories but also recipes for structuring our experience and directing our lives. Finding that someone else’s narrative describes our own experience also comforts us, assuring us that our experience is not anomalous but has a name, turning fragmented parts into a coherent story, and providing a community to belong to.

Such narratives are like theoretical frameworks or “takes” on the experience. And when compared, my three study abroad experiences show that these narratives are the most important piece of the puzzle of making study abroad experience meaningful. Study abroad provides narratives to examine our daily experiences and mundane encounters, like trying new foods and meeting new people, and allows us to analyze and express what they mean. Such narratives can be based on concepts that may need revisiting, as this book seeks to do, or on theoretically rigorous, well-thought-through notions.

Take the upside-down phone, for example: it was not merely a “cultural difference” of Aotearoa/New Zealand as I first thought and as conventional study abroad discourses would have it. The particular model of phone comes from the UK, the former mother country of Aotearoa/New Zealand, as do much of the infrastructure and institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Having gained independence in 1947, Aotearoa/New Zealand is now a former British settler colony, but the UK’s influence on Aotearoa/New Zealand remained strong, at

least until the 1970s, when the country's character started to change from "England of the South Seas" to a bicultural "Pacific country" (of descendants of British settlers, called Pākehā, and indigenous Māori) seeking ties with other Pacific nations. This shift emerged out of Māoris' intensifying protests against their marginalization and from changes in alliances as the UK transferred its focus from its former colonies (in the British Commonwealth) to Europe by joining the then European Economic Community (Belich 2001; Walker 1990). Against this backdrop, the existence of this upside-down phone in Aotearoa/New Zealand can be understood as the legacy of British colonialism and by extension a sign of Pākehā New Zealanders' continued dominance over indigenous Māoris in the 1980s.

In short, what we consider "culture" is not ways of doing things specific to a group of people that happen to be shaped that way or that have been passed down from ancestors (let alone transmitted by genes or blood). "Culture" relies not on mere static "difference" but on results of historical and current social, economic, and political institutions, arrangements, and interactions, which are connected throughout the world in uneven, constantly shifting ways. Through the upside-down phone, my second study abroad experience allowed me to relativize the "normal," but it was the theoretical frameworks I discovered during my third study abroad experience that allowed me to understand the phone's meaning as a legacy of British colonialism. Thus, my second study abroad experience gave me a shock, whereas my third provided explanation and understanding. The former left me an observer of the world, but the latter allowed me to be inside the world, because understanding how the world works made me part of its construction and transformation.

To clarify, I am using my personal trajectory as a way to explain how learning critical theories helped me understand my prior study abroad experiences. That they were both study abroad was only a coincidence: as mentioned, learning theoretical frameworks during my third experience of studying abroad did not have to happen "abroad": I could have learned it in my home country, as was the case for many of my fellow students in the program who were domestic students. Also coincidental was the fact that I learned critical theories in my third round of study abroad; they just happened to be in my subject area. Not all graduate-level study abroad involves learning critical theory—it may be absent from engineering work, for instance. I take advantage of this coincidence, however, and suggest how such theoretical frameworks not only help us analyze study abroad experiences but also transform them.

What this book suggests, then, is to make such critical theoretical frameworks available to all study abroad students via study abroad practitioners. These theories are useful in analyzing any occurrences and events. What I ultimately suggest in this book is to then turn study abroad experience as a meaningful intellectual training of analyzing daily life that can become useful even after these students return home (as the notion of “global” came to be increasingly questioned, as will be discussed in chapter 1). Because of its focus on daily life through the notion of “immersion,” study abroad is best suited for such a job, and such training can be study abroad’s major contribution to the field of education. The next section elaborates on this point.

Regimes of Experience and Nurturing Analytical Eyes for Daily Practices during Study Abroad and Beyond

Critical theoretical frameworks enable students to interpret and understand why “difference” exists, how the difference emerged and is sustained, and how they come to notice that difference but not others so that they can take part in those processes as active agents. If we incorporate such theoretical frameworks, study abroad as an educational endeavor can become a good site to engage students in thinking about how and why difference occurs and is noticed in daily life because study abroad pushes students to pay close attention to their daily activities through the “immersion” concept.

Framing and attention matter in what we notice and highlight (McDermott and Varenne 1995). For example, as mentioned, although we have transformative experiences in various contexts, we tend to highlight those during studying abroad because self-transformation is expected to happen there, and thus many occasions to talk about it are offered (see chapter 7). I call this gap “regimes of experience” — where we only notice certain experience and ignore other similar experience not because of their degrees of importance but because of the ways in which we privilege certain context as the space of that particular experience: because we privilege study abroad as the occasion for self-transformation and thus inquire often whether it happened, we ignore self-transformation occurred in other contexts.

Regimes of experience do have effects on students. I have argued elsewhere (Doerr 2017c) that the concept of “global learner” can include not only study abroad students but also English as a Second Language (ESL) students who learn about their host society’s lifestyles and students in bilingual Māori-English classes in Aotearoa/New Zealand

who learn about issues facing indigenous peoples around the world (see also chapter 1). One of my students who had read the article told me that, growing up in a white, middle-class suburb, he thought he never had any “global learning” experience. However, after reading the article, he realized that he has had “global learning” experience all along: his family had always hosted relatives from Venezuela for three months every year while they worked and sent remittance home, which involved him adjusting to their lifestyles and speaking Spanish with them. Without a suggestion that global learning can happen outside study abroad, he would not have even thought to look into his daily life, he said (Jon Hernandez, personal communication). In this way, new ways of framing can change students’ perceptions.

From this understanding, as mentioned, I suggest focusing on our daily acts and experiences with the same rigor as we do during study abroad—asking questions about them, reflecting on them, and so on—and connect such mundane experiences in our daily life to wider structural and institutional arrangements, viewing the former as effects of the latter and vice versa. For example, the price of a T-shirt is related to the labor conditions and wage structure of the country where the T-shirt was made, as well as the trade regulations and national and local legislations that allow such items to be circulated and sold in our country. As consumers, we can affect that practice by buying T-shirts of the brand that has good labor relations or boycott ones that do not, voting with our money. We can do so by being aware of how our daily life is shaped by global structural arrangements and how we are complicit in that global structural arrangement as voters, consumers, and marchers and social media participants who voice opinions and spread awareness.

A Handbook for Transforming Study Abroad

The aim of this book is to take the first step toward incorporating critical theoretical frameworks into discussions of study abroad. Written for study abroad practitioners, the book is meant to help them guide study abroad students toward various theoretically informed critical perspectives from which to interpret their study abroad and post-study abroad experience and make the most of it. It can also benefit students who are interested in deepening their study abroad and other experience on their own.

To structure the book’s relevance to study abroad practitioners and students, I will revisit nine key terms in study abroad—the global (chapter 1), the national (chapter 1), culture (chapter 2), native speaker

(chapter 3), immersion (chapter 4), host society (chapter 5), host family (chapter 5), border crossing (chapter 6), and self-transformation (chapter 7)—and frame them in terms of current theoretical discussions. In each chapter, I suggest sample activities and questions for implementing such frameworks; asked before, during, and after their study abroad stay, these questions can engage students in such discussions.

I need to note here that, although this book deals with many concepts that are relevant to diverse types of study abroad programs (as my three study abroad experiences show: they were a three-week summer intensive language program for secondary school students, a one-year exchange student program for high school students with no subject content focus, and a study abroad stay through direct enrollment at a graduate school), some of its discussions are more geared toward credit-seeking (rather than degree-seeking) study abroad programs for American students. This is partly because credit-seeking programs are increasing, especially in the United States (Chieffo and Griffith 2004) and partly because my research is based on such programs. Credit-seeking programs often take the form of a semester-long program, an intensive summer program that lasts four to six weeks, or an “island-type” program with a group of students led by professors from the student’s home institution that lasts one to two weeks and stays together as a group throughout their sojourn as in a field trip. These programs, though they often have subject-content focus, tend to include “learning the culture of the destination” as an important part of the program. In contrast, degree-seeking programs tend to last more than a year and focus more on learning the subject area than “the culture of the destination.”

Implementing Theoretical Viewpoints: Encouraging Students to Ask Questions

This book is designed to introduce current theoretical discussions to study abroad practitioners so that they can pass these latest understandings of key terms on to study abroad students, as mentioned. I have sometimes wondered if these theories that challenge current study abroad discourses may put off students and discourage them to study abroad. However, when I cover these issues in my college classes with theoretical readings I introduce in this book, students usually respond to this question with a “no,” further saying that they would rather know about these issues before they study abroad so that they know what to avoid and thus have peace of mind that they are well informed about current discussions. Though it does make sense in this

light to focus on pre-trip orientations to inform students about these theoretical issues, I do believe in reminding them during and after their stay as they have their own concrete experiences to further apply and digest these theoretical arguments.

Students' involvement in this critical revisiting of key terms is also an important part of their study abroad experience. To recapture, it helps them develop critical, deep understanding of their own study abroad experiences and cultivates a habit of seeing the complexity of social practices and questioning the dominant ideologies behind activities. Students learn to question taken-for-granted ideas, to look deeper into how relations of power structure our daily lives, how our subject positions influence our perceptions and experience of the world, and how we can change the world for the better.

Though my task is to introduce existing theories that show how various key terms in study abroad are constructed, I will still have to retain some of these terms because there are no good alternatives and because offering alternative terms for concepts such as "culture," "nation," and "language" reproduces the very effect I am critiquing: that they imply internally homogeneous, bounded unit. Nonetheless, awareness of the power politics and ideological natures behind these terms is important. Stuart Hall discusses something similar regarding notions like "identity": after deconstructing such notions, Hall argues, we still must think with them because there are no good concepts to replace them with; we just have to use them differently, "now in their detotalized or deconstructed forms, and no longer operating within the paradigm in which they were originally generated" (1996: 1). That is, we can continue to use the notions we critique but with clear awareness of their biases, their ideological underpinnings, and the effects of their uncritical use.

I encourage study abroad practitioners not to lecture the students about these latest understandings of key terms but instead to ask students questions that push them to consider their own concrete experiences in light of these understandings. The sample activities and questions suggested for each chapter model such practices, which can be modified to fit the particular contexts of study abroad under question. Also, some questions are left vague on purpose. It is not to keep discussions abstract but to avoid restricting kinds of answer students come up with. If students have difficulty understanding the intent of the question, the study abroad practitioners can supplement with further explanations and concrete examples to facilitate the discussion and connect the questions ultimately to concrete experiences of the student.

There are three rationales for this approach that focuses on students' concrete experiences. First, this focus helps students reflect on how

their own specific subject positions have influenced their experience. Second, thinking about and through one's own concrete experiences is usually conducive to grasping difficult theoretical ideas. This is the basis of Freirean pedagogies, including critical pedagogy, as will be discussed further in chapter 4. The third rationale concerns the need to lessen the impact of the "symbolic violence" of education that imposes a "correct" viewpoint onto others, backed up by the teacher's position as the "expert" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Open-ended self-reflection guided by questions allows educators to avoid imposing their viewpoints to some degree, despite a lingering risk that students will be led toward certain worldviews.

Sections at the end of each chapter suggest topic-focused examples of questions that can get students thinking about the issues raised in each chapter. However, some questions—especially those about the heterogeneity of society and its continuing portrayal as homogeneous—can be asked under many headings. To avoid repetition, the questions are numbered throughout, and I will refer to these numbers when the same questions can be asked in different contexts. Besides questions about the focus of each chapter, four kinds of questions should be asked no matter what the topic is. The first kind of questions (marked with "W") concerns how students' own subject positions shape their perceptions and experiences. We can foster awareness of this by asking them how their perceptions and experiences compare with other students' and how their subject positions affect differences.

The second point that students should always be encouraged to examine is the relations of power involved in what they experience and observe (question series marked with "X"). We can develop the above questions (W) about how people's diverse viewpoints follow from their subject positions by further asking which of these diverse viewpoints tend to be privileged as "regular" viewpoints and which ones are marginalized and erased, for example, in study abroad promotional materials. In this way, students can not only recognize where their views are located and become self-aware of their positions but also (if their viewpoints are privileged and normalized) start applying cultural relativism—a belief that no "cultural" beliefs and practices is better than others and that we should understand others' practices in their own context instead of from our own viewpoint—in their interpretations of things and events they encounter.

The third question (question series marked "Y") we can always ask students relates to the issue of change. We can always caution students not to "freeze" what they see during their study abroad stay by perceiving it as something that has been happening for many centuries. We

can prompt them to imagine what it was like, for example, a hundred years ago, as well as fifty, twenty, ten, and five years ago, so that they can relativize what they saw as a snapshot of that society in a particular time period. We can then suggest that they think about what caused the changes and how we could be part of further changes to improve the conditions of people.

This question leads to the fourth question (marked with “Z”) we can encourage students to always consider: how their home society and the host society are connected. That is, instead of viewing the home and host societies as two separate, distinct “cultures” that happen to have many differences, and the student as jumping into “another culture” by studying abroad, I encourage students to understand how what they see in the host society may to various degrees be an effect of what is happening directly and indirectly in their home society. For example, the behavior of consumers in a student’s home society could be affecting the industry of the host society (including students visiting the host society as study abroad students), or political relationships and various trading regulations between the students’ home and host countries could shape both societies. For example, American students studying abroad in Guatemala need to understand that the United States intervened in Guatemala in the 1950s with a CIA-sponsored military coup that toppled its democratically elected president and established an authoritarian government, which led in turn to a long civil war that devastated the country; otherwise, they would understand what they see in Guatemala as a distinct “culture” that happens to be very different from that of the United States. This understanding of home-host society relationships also helps students understand what they see in their home society—for instance, that immigrants from Guatemala had to seek a “better life” outside their homeland—and why. As such relations can be ongoing, participating in changing the host society’s situations can take the form of acting to pressure one’s own government, which can lead to discussions with students about intervention and issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.

Though the example questions will not be repeated in each chapter, I encourage they be asked for various items in combination with the specific questions being asked no matter what topic we are focusing on. For example, when the study abroad practitioner is asking the student about the media representation of people in the host society, they can add questions regarding whose viewpoint gets privileged and how the students’ subject position is affecting their view. And study abroad practitioners can use or modify these example questions to fit each situation. These questions can be asked on various occasions as seen in the examples below.

Before the Students Study Abroad

- (1) in orientation sessions
 - (a) with questions posted on screen so that students can think of answers themselves or have discussions in a large group or small groups
 - (b) in survey forms in which students write down answers that they then keep or give to practitioners who hold them until the students return from the study abroad trip
- (2) in small group discussions with practitioners or study abroad alumni when they are getting ready to study abroad
- (3) in a one-on-one conference with a practitioner
- (4) on a handout listing questions, on which students can write answers in their own time; they can then keep it themselves or hand it in to practitioners
- (5) online, where they can be posted as one of the mandatory/optional assignments students complete before studying abroad

During Students' Study Abroad Stay

- (1) in classes or general meetings
 - (a) with questions displayed on screen so that students can think of answers themselves or have discussions in a big group or small groups
 - (b) in survey forms in which students write down answers that they then keep or give to practitioners to make the survey more official
- (2) in small group discussions or one-on-one conferences with practitioners
- (3) in an office or study room where the list of questions is displayed on the wall, allowing students to answer in their own time; they then keep the answers or hand them in to practitioners
- (4) online, where answers can be posted as one of the mandatory/optional assignments students complete before going home

After Students Return from Their Study Abroad Stay

- (1) in reentry sessions
 - (a) with questions displayed on screen to let students think of answers themselves or have discussions in a big group or small groups

- (b) in survey forms where students write down answers that they can keep, or else give to practitioners to make the survey more official
- (2) in small group discussions with practitioners
- (3) in a one-on-one conference with a practitioner
- (4) on a handout listing questions that students can answer in their own time; they can then keep it to themselves or hand it in to the practitioners
- (5) online, posted as one of the mandatory/optional assignments students complete for a grade or credit.

Some of the activities suggested can be done as appropriate for these activities as specified, including with students who are not planning to study abroad. Some of the activities can be done for general student body regardless of their plan to study abroad as well.

Structure of the Book

Each chapter in this book discusses one key term or set of terms from the field of study abroad as mentioned. After reviewing how it is usually used in study abroad literature, each chapter introduces current discussions of the term(s) in various disciplines—cultural anthropology, political science, educational studies, linguistics, critical literacy, and so on—and makes suggestions about how these understandings can be incorporated into study abroad practices by asking questions to students. Each chapter ends with an annotated list of recommended readings.

In chapter 1, I discuss the notions of the “national” and “global” together, because the term global relies on the notion of the national as the unit of difference, which it claims to overcome and connect. One stated goal of study abroad—the nurturing of students’ “global competence” and their transformation into “global citizens”—relies on the existence of cultural difference, which overlaps with national difference, as implied in the understanding that students need to go “abroad” to experience cultural difference. Yet students do not need to go abroad to learn about cultural difference firsthand: they can do so from the diversity that already exists within the nation. Though the emerging notion of “study away” is starting to correct the neglect of intranational diversity, study abroad discourses still tend to rely on and perpetuate the ideology of nation-state. Based on this understanding, this chapter examines nation-state ideology and criticism of it so as to incorporate that

understanding into study abroad practices and avoid perpetuating the ideology of the nation-state as consisting of a homogeneous “culture.”

The notion of the global, built on the notion of the national (also explained in chapter 1), is a key concept in study abroad. After showing how it is used in study abroad discourses—from “global competence” to “global citizenship”—this first chapter also introduces discussions of globalization in cultural anthropology, geography, and political science. The latest argument on the topic is that such discussions tend to be ideologically “globalist” in their valorization of global flows and connections. The chapter then discusses three problems of this globalism—(1) it masks the unevenness of inclusion in the category of the global because of regimes of mobility that mark some mobility “global” and desirable while other mobility is seen as criminal and suspicious; (2) it renders those who do not move deficient; and (3) it revives the ideology of nation-states as bounded unit that is internally homogeneous by focusing only on the crossing of national borders—and suggests ways of engaging students in understanding these aspects of the term global. Because the notion of the global is commonplace in study abroad, it makes for many promising opportunities for educators to engage students in thinking about the notion critically.

Chapter 2 covers the notion of “culture,” which study abroad literature tends to see as a homogeneous and bounded unit of difference. This literature focuses on two types of “culture”—“high culture” and “exotic culture,” depending on the destination—and in both cases, it depicts “culture” as a fully knowable pool to immerse oneself in. Drawing on theories from cultural anthropology and educational studies, I first introduce five frameworks of “culture” to further situate the notion of “culture” in study abroad. The first is the culture-as-problem (normal-versus-deficient) framework, which situates difference in terms of hierarchy: what dominant group members do is considered “normal,” and what marginalized group members do is considered “deficient” rather than viewed as “cultural difference.” The second is the culture-as-division-to-be-ignored (color blindness) framework that avoids seeing “cultural difference” because it views it as divisive and thus upholds the dominant practices as the default “norm.” These two approaches can be seen in the study abroad context when students carry out community service, especially done in developing countries, where what is considered desirable in the students’ home country (thus, the “norm”) gets imposed on the community under question in the name of “development.” The third, the culture-as-safe-difference framework, decontextualizes, depoliticizes, and domesticates difference into “safe” differences in realms like cuisine, art, and fashion. Study abroad

promotional materials tend to use this framework. Fourth, the culture-as-political-resource framework focuses on objectified “culture” as serving political purposes, based on a preconceived notion of a link between “a culture” and a group. Study abroad discourses often use this “culture”-group linkage for commercial purposes but overlook its political aspect as a strategy for mobilization.

The fifth framework, the culture-as-constructed-difference framework, views “culture” as constructed as the unit of difference in relations of power and reveals how particular sociocultural environments make us notice certain differences and not others as meaningful. By viewing “culture” as a folk term, not an analytical term, this framework adopts what is currently the most accepted standpoint in anthropology. Study abroad, on the other hand, typically views “cultural difference” as preexisting rather than constructed in relations of power. I suggest four ways of engaging students in thinking about their study abroad experience in this framework: challenging the view that “culture” is a homogeneous bounded unit; gaining an idea of the complexity inherent in any society, the students’ home and host societies included; viewing “culture” as merely a way to divide people into groups; and analyzing how “culture” is mutually constructed in relation to other “cultures” positioned in relations of power.

Chapter 3 unpacks the term “native speaker” as it is used when study abroad students are learning the language of the destination, and the common assumption that students automatically gain proficiency by being immersed among “native speakers” of the language. By examining three assumptions behind the notion of the “native speaker” — its link to the ideology of the nation-state, the notion of language as an internally homogeneous unit, and belief in the innate competence of “native speakers” — and exploring how the term has been treated in linguistics, especially in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, this chapter suggests ways to involve study abroad students in critical understanding of the notion of the “native speaker,” language, and linguistic competence. The suggestions target the diversity of language and the political nature of the assumption that it is homogeneous (which simultaneously marginalizes those who do not speak the “standard” variety and forces them to assimilate), as well as the notion of linguistic competence, which creates a hierarchy of “native” and “non-native” speakers. They are meant to engage students in thinking about the political implications of judgments we make about “learning the language of the study abroad destination,” whereby they can come to a deeper understanding of the notion of the “native speaker,” “language,” “correctness,” and “competence.”

Chapter 4 revisits the notion of immersion, one of the most consequential terms in study abroad. I first review several critiques of the idea, noting especially its effects: it constructs the view that the host society and students' home society are fundamentally different and internally homogeneous, and from this assumption, it places at the top of a hierarchy of experience the direct enrollment in long-term study abroad combined with a focus on out-of-classroom experience, maximal interaction with locals, and staying with a host family. I call for avoiding such constructions based on the view that study abroad is an encounter of two distinct, homogeneous "cultures"; instead, I call for viewing study abroad experience as something constantly co-constructed by both study abroad students and people in the host society along with other diverse peoples who exist in the space of the host society.

I then show how labeling certain acts as immersion is a commentary on the social positions of those involved. Calling an act "immersion" constructs study abroad students as seeking luxurious enrichment practices and intending to go home eventually (as opposed to immigrants), the people they interact with as legitimate members of the society, and these groups as separated by great social distance. I call for urging students to be aware of these effects of the notion of immersion, but I also seek ways to capitalize on the attention to daily life that the notion of immersion encourages, as I have suggested in this introduction, and ways to get students to analyze the processes of othering that occur during and outside of study abroad and connect their daily experiences to the wider sociocultural, economic, and political structures so as to understand how these structures shape their lives and how to act on them to create social change. I also suggest a workshop to apply this idea.

Chapter 5 examines the notion of host society and host family. As discussed in chapters 2 and 4, a host society is often viewed as homogeneous, and staying with a host family is usually portrayed as the best way to immerse oneself in the host society because it means "living like a local." I first point out the contradiction of two coexisting views of the host society's space-time here: (a) homogeneous insider space-time where host society is seen to be occupied only by "local" people; and (b) heterogeneous space-time where insider space-time as described above and outsider space-time filled with study abroad students and tourists (i.e., "outsiders") coexist. Whereas homogeneous insider space-time (a) is talked about when students were describing their immersion experience, heterogeneous insider/outsider space-times (b) are mentioned when claiming one's "good study abroad student" status as someone who avoids outsider space-time.

I then introduce critical discussions about this notion by examining four problematic assumptions (researchers' arguments against them are in parentheses): (1) staying with a host family is the best way to learn about the host society (no, it depends on the amount of engagement with the host family and the attitudes of those involved); (2) the host family represents the entire host society (no, host families are specific types of people in that they have spare time and money and are willing to live with a stranger); (3) the host family provides "authentic" experience of the host society (no, their daily routines are modified to accommodate the students' needs); and (4) the host family and the study abroad students are very different (no, difference and similarity are negotiated and sanctioned variously, depending on whether the difference is viewed as culturally inspired). From these understandings, I go on to challenge the view behind the notion of "living *like* a local," which is that two distinct and internally homogeneous "cultures" encounter each other as the student joins a static host society life represented by the host family. Instead, I suggest viewing life in the host society as constantly constructed by the diverse people who reside there, including study abroad students who also influence it, albeit only a little (as the host family modifies its lifestyle for the students), and are influenced by it as students adjust to the life there. Staying with a host family is thus about "living *with* locals," I suggest.

Chapter 6 discusses the notions of border crossing in study abroad, and volunteer/service work and its increasing incorporation in study abroad. In study abroad, border crossing is celebrated and relies on the existence of difference, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2. It is highlighted by a view of study abroad as (1) "adventure" that relies on the existence of something new and unknown; (2) a disorienting experience, which by creating cognitive dissonance supposedly produces a particular sensibility toward difference; and, (3) an immersion experience, in which noticing difference is inherent in learning. As for volunteer/service work, its merit for students is increasingly held to lie in their crossing a border into a community of lower socioeconomic status (often implying difference in race) and learning to empathize with those who are "different" from you.

This chapter argues that the difference that is recognized is constructed through our own actions: framing study abroad as adventure, expecting cognitive dissonance while in the study abroad destination, recognizing the moment of learning when encountering difference, and calling our act of helping volunteer/service work for "others." I encourage making students aware of this constructive process while also discouraging study abroad and volunteer/service work to be framed as

border crossing so that we can frame these experiences differently—as enjoying life in the host society without framing it as disorienting or different, and working with people, not as an outsider “helping” them but as a collaborator working for the same goal.

Chapter 7 investigates the ways in which study abroad discourses expect study abroad to result in particular types of student self-transformation. This chapter traces two ways of talking about such self-transformation: outcome assessment and students’ self-narratives, which respectively derive their desirable learning outcomes and desirable transformations from the views of the dominant group. While the former sets a goal against which students’ aptitude and attitudes are measured, the latter provides narrative structures that shape not only students’ ways of narrating but also their experiences. And both ways assume that study abroad students are monocultural, monolingual, white, middle-class youth, limiting ways to express or even erasing minority students’ learned outcome and that experiences can be measured and narrated. For these reasons, I argue that these desired learning outcomes and desired kinds of self-transformation should be more inclusive so as to reflect the diversity of the student body and the things they would learn, based on their specific backgrounds. I also suggest highlighting self-transformation in daily life as well.

The conclusion reviews and summarizes the discussions in the book and suggests ways to incorporate the theoretical insights introduced in this volume into actions. It also suggests new frameworks for understanding study abroad.

Study Abroad for Action

Study abroad is uniquely valuable in that it pushes us to recognize areas of experience—daily life—that, though usually overlooked, remain significant. John Dewey called for “education of, by, and for experience” (1938: 29), encouraging it as an alternative to more “oppressive” styles of teaching associated with lecture-based formats in which students passively memorize what the teacher tells them. Later, David Kolb (1984) theorized experiential learning by combining the theories of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget to link experience to abstract conceptualization. Scott Wurdinger and Julie Carlson (2010) identify five types of experiential learning: project-based, problem-based, service, place-based (i.e., focused on the local community and environment), and active (i.e., interacting with peers and materials in the classroom).

Whereas these approaches are categorized as experiential learning and tend to focus on the process of learning by a hands-on, learning-by-doing method, critical pedagogy focuses on students' lived experience as resource to understand social theories and put them in action. Lived experience is significant as a site where sociocultural, economic, and political structures intertwine and manifest themselves, shaping our lives. It is at this "innocent level" of daily life that the most harmful work of domination is done (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997), which makes it all the more important for everyone to examine them critically. To do so, we need theoretical frameworks and informed discussions.

In this spirit, this book introduces some key concepts and discusses the ways in which they relate to wider social structures so that study abroad practitioners can ask students critical questions and lead them to think and act critically from their own experience. The habit of questioning "common sense" in this way can then become a good starting point for thinking about various other phenomena in the world beyond study abroad.

Sample Questions

W: How Students' Own Subject Positions Shape Their Perceptions and Experiences

W1: How do you think your own racial, socioeconomic, regional, and other backgrounds influenced the way in which you experienced and interpreted your life in the host society?

W2: How do you think someone with racial, socioeconomic, regional, and other backgrounds different from yours experienced and interpreted life in the host society?

X: The Relations of Power

X1: Whose view is privileged, and whose view is marginalized?

X2: Who benefits and who gets marginalized by this?

Y: The Issue of Change

Y1: Do you think this has changed? If so, what caused the change?

Y2: What do you think the host society was like ten years ago, twenty years ago, fifty years ago?

Y3: How can we change it?

Y4: How else can we imagine the culture to be?

Z: Connections between the Students' Home Society and the Host Society

Z1: How do you think the policies, regulations, and practices in your home society have influenced what you are seeing in the host society now?

Z2: How do you think the policies, regulations, and practices in the host society have influenced what is happening in your home society?