

RESOURCES AT RISK: THE COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING  
AND STUDY ABROAD

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## Abstract

Nicholas Patrick Noblet

### RESOURCES AT RISK: THE COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING AND STUDY ABROAD

This study seeks to elucidate the concept of resources at risk as detailed in the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theoretical framework. Risk is the possibility that a communicator's resources are in jeopardy of change, and this study seeks to explicate how a communicator places his or her resources at risk. An undergraduate spring break study abroad program was selected as the context for this examination, with six students participating in before and after interviews. Results showed that three types of resources at risk were identified, with a fourth type unable to be identified through transcript analysis. This study demonstrates theoretical and practical implications that further the understanding of CMM and its execution. In addition, limitations and areas for future research are discussed.

John Parrish-Sprowl, Ph.D., Chair

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## **1: Introduction**

The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory, developed by Pearce and Cronen (1976, 1989), is an "...invitation to use some concepts and tools to think about very familiar things and see them in a new way" (Pearce, 2007, p. ix). CMM offers a unique and productive way to view the condition of being human. From its inception, CMM has undergone clarification and development from many scholars. It is in this spirit of augmentation and experimentation which the present study seeks to fill a void. A brief understanding of CMM is requisite and will be provided to view the proposed theory elucidation in context. More depth will be covered in the literature review, but for introductory purposes, CMM can be thought of as a way of viewing the world. Our world is socially constructed, designed by persons in concert with each other. Communication is the central aspect of existence. According to Pearce (1989), communication is "...a recurring, reflexive process in which resources are expressed in practices and in which practices (re)construct resources" (p. 23). Practices are the acts by which communication occurs, and resources are the materials that inform practices. After that is known, coordination, coherence and mystery are the descriptors by which communication is articulated. There are forms of communication that rely on expressions of practices and resources, as well as other intricacies, but these basics make up the communication perspective. The suggested area for illumination is the concept of resources, to further clarify and specify how these are put into practice and risk. By better understanding this CMM can be more thoroughly translated to everyday experience and application by those who choose to use it.

Part of CMM is the concept of putting resources, as outlined above, at risk. Within CMM, risk is the possibility that a communicator's resources are in jeopardy of

change. Risk is done differently in each form of communication, but the theory only accounts for a binary choice; either resources are placed at risk, or they are not. In each form, risk is explicated. In monocultural and ethnocentric communication resources are not at risk. Modernistic communication continually places resources at risk, and cosmopolitan communication allows for the choice of placing resources at risk.

According to Parrish-Sprowl (in press), there are four ways in which resources are placed at risk: restorying, obsolescence, forgetting, and challenging. Restorying is the process of learning a different understanding on a given topic; an example would be a child's understanding of birth, from the stork to parental conception. Obsolescence is considered resources that are no longer put into active practice; an example would be the evolution of technology and understanding, such as skills associated with cassette tapes to CDs to mp3s. Forgetting is the process by which resources are no longer part of a person's collection, which is different from obsolescence; obsolescence can lead to forgetting, but they are two distinct ways of placing resources at risk. An example would be forgetting how to write certain letters of the cursive alphabet. Finally, challenging is the process by which resources are remade by conflict with a different set of resources outside of a given person; an example would be learning a proper method for advanced mathematical calculation differently from multiple instructors. This is different from restorying, as challenge comes from a conflict of two sets of resources, and ultimately results in reshaping resources based on that conflict. Restorying is the evolution of a set of resources within a given communicator by negotiating the differences; it can be seen as an augmentation of an existing set of resources, rather than a conflictual redefinition. These four ways define the process of putting resources at risk, and are a valuable

addition to the theory. However, these four categories have not been tested in any context to date. This creates the aforementioned void this study seeks to fill.

The context selected for testing of the above concepts is that of study abroad. There is an extensive collection of literature on the benefits, challenges and considerations concerning undergraduate study abroad, and those are addressed in the literature review. For the present study purposes, study abroad provided the best opportunity to examine students in a new situation that would enhance the opportunity for putting one's resources at risk. In specific program selection, a spring break study program was selected, lasting one week. It is also important to note that a program was selected in the same native language as the students; this enhanced the possibility for interactions outside of the student culture and hopefully fostered interactions that placed students' resources at risk. London, England provided the location for the study abroad, and six student participants volunteered to conduct qualitative interviews before and after. This allowed students to recall critical moments of interaction, and produced narrative transcripts of conversation for analysis. Given study abroad and CMM, the background is now set for an examination of putting one's resources at risk, and the ways in which that occurs. In summary, this study seeks to use undergraduate study abroad to examine the four types of resources at risk (Parrish-Sprowl, in press), and describe their existence within that context.



## 2: Literature Review

Following a general introduction, the literature applicable to this study will be divided into five sections: a) the theory itself, b) a general overview of study abroad, c) the international aspect of study, d) the need for study abroad and pre-departure considerations, and finally e) a focus on short-term study abroad. Beginning first with introductory works, the creation of this study stems from similar investigations; notably, those of Pearce's theory extension mentioned later and Miner's (2008) phenomenological study of study abroad. Miner studied the experience of becoming mindful of culture via study abroad, and this study will use a similar conversational experience to demonstrate theory elucidation. Whereas Miner's perspective was phenomenological, this study seeks to use a CMM perspective. However, many insights can be shared across both studies. For example, the value of identity and conversational experience comes through as "[i]dentity is negotiated throughout the experience and relational associations make the experience possible" (Miner, 2008, p. 173). She continues on, as "[r]elational associations are sources of contrast as well as sources of learning and deeper understanding" (Miner, 2008, p. 174). She concludes that "[t]he current study shows that the more open a person is in their relational associations, the richer the person's understanding and cultural learning" (Miner, 2008, p. 178). Ultimately, "[a] willingness to open oneself up to the idea of change and opening eyes to enlarged fields of vision also allows humans today to travel further – not necessarily in physical distance, but absolutely necessarily in depth and potential of personal experience and legitimacy in alternative experiences" (Miner, 2008, p. 176). This study seeks to further explain that notion of change in one's self, and the openness to allow it to happen through a

communication perspective. In this discussion, it is important to note the population being studied is that of undergraduates in the United States. Shrestha (2009), using Michigan State University as a background, provides a comprehensive look at undergraduate life. The study gives a portrait of experience and an economy of time that provides depth of understanding for the undergraduate subjects presented. Students spent more time working, relaxing and socializing than preparing for class (Shrestha, 2009, p. 72), which is significant given that the focus of this study is founded in the conversations that students have abroad, not necessarily in class or other designated spaces. While introductory, these works illustrate a general view on the phenomenon under investigation. Now an understanding of CMM can further complement the study.

### **The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)**

The focus of this research, as previously mentioned, is that of theory elucidation regarding CMM. A thick description of CMM, works calling for use and application, and the necessary framework and environment constitute the pertinent CMM literature. CMM was created by Pearce and Cronen in the late twentieth century. The first work published by Pearce came out in 1976, followed by *Communication and the Human Condition* (1989) and *Making Social Worlds: A Communication Perspective* (2007). For this exploration, more of the 1989 work will be detailed. Overall, this is an encompassing framework, with many key terms that are used frequently; they will be outlined below as part of the background.

Beginning with the communication perspective, it is born out of a social construction point of view; meaning that the act of communication constitutes the reality we collaboratively engage in. Our communication creates, shapes, and changes our

shared realities with each word, gesture, or meaning; in this act, the discussion shifts from objectivity to subjectivity. A thing is no longer objectively able to be described from a bystander's point of view, but rather the communication in which it is created is discussed and framed. Importantly, the act of communication can be thought of as a reflexive cycle involving practices and resources. Practices are the acts by which communication occurs, such as speaking to a class or signing a petition. Resources are the materials that inform practices; for example, the knowledge of a social issue or the experience of being in a given situation. According to Pearce (1989), "[i]n this sense, 'practices' consist in actions such as building a bridge, playing bridge, and seeking to bridge misunderstandings; 'resources' comprise the stories, images, symbols, and institutions that persons use to make their world meaningful" (p. 23). Focusing then on resources, "[l]ike other terms, 'resources' is deliberately ambiguous. It includes all those stories, concepts, perceptions, memories, and so forth, by which persons make their world coherent. Today's conversation is guided by resources, and the memory of that conversation becomes part of the resources that guide our conversations tonight" (Pearce, 1989, p. 39). The reflexivity occurs between the two; every new practice changes the resource which originally informed the practice, and so forth. "The communication perspective sees all forms of human activity as a recurring, reflexive process in which resources are expressed in practices and in which practices (re)construct resources" (Pearce, 1989, p. 23). Pearce (1989) elaborates with "[t]he communication perspective directs attention to the resources that shape and guide practices, often in subtle ways. Resources and practices are coevolutionary; each is the 'cause' and each the 'effect' of the other. I sometimes indicate this ongoing reciprocal process by using a parenthesis:

practices (re)construct resources” (p. 24). Further clarifying, Pearce (1989) states that in terms of interaction, practices express resources in a number of ways: they express resources not all at once (p. 40), not necessarily accurately (p. 41), in a nonsummative fashion (p. 43), and asymmetrically (p. 43).

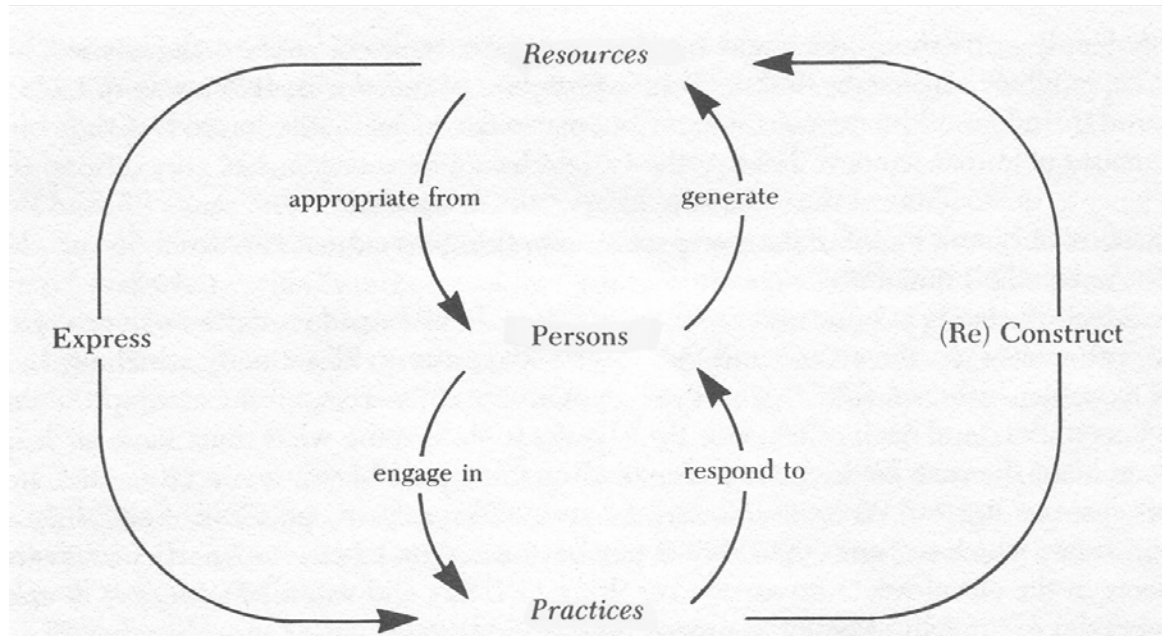


Figure 1. The “communication perspective”. This figure illustrates the reflexive nature of communication (Pearce, 1989, p. 24).

In an examination of the above model, Pearce (1989) provides insight: “[t]he model of the communication perspective...shows a circular relationship between practices and resources. In any given practice, resources are drawn upon as a guide for interpretation and action. However, the outer brackets...show a process by which communicators monitor the unfolding pattern of action in which they participate, and make judgments about what is happening. These perceptions of today’s practices

become part of tomorrow's resources" (p. 45). In the expression of practices and resources, Pearce (1989) also notes that resources are seldom fully consistent in their expression (p. 46). In that same expression, he notes that "[r]esources are expressed in practices, because resources comprise a 'logic' of meaning and action that defines what is obligatory, legitimate, dubious, or prohibited" (Pearce, 1989, p. 39). Thus the idea of force is born, including the four identified types: prefigurative, practical, contextual and implicative (Pearce, 1989, p. 40). While not as useful to the present focus, the work cited in the references section provides a more complete look at the types of force and their relation to the above model. Finally, perhaps the most accurate summation of resources comes as follows: "[t]he event/objects of social reality are not performed as a single act; they are the product of an unfolding sequence of messages performed serially (and sometimes simultaneously) by multiple persons, who may well be trying to express different resources" (Pearce, 1989, p. 40). Taken together, these concepts make up the basics of the communication perspective.

After those assumptions are made, the perspective takes on three elements, central to communication: coordination, coherence, and mystery. Coordination is the act of managing meaning between persons; it is the attempt to convey something through communication to another. Coherence is the understanding inherent in each person; it is the stories we share with ourselves and others to make sense of our environment. Mystery is the knowledge of limitations, that no matter how many stories we accrue, there are more to be understood and available in our larger world. These three terms make up the communication perspective and give framing to intercultural communication as noted below.

Beyond the framework's intricacies there are four different types of communication and labels used to describe each: monocultural, ethnocentric, modernity, cosmopolitan. Each of these possesses unique characteristics and views of communication. To clarify, Pearce (1989) poses that "[t]o get at these characteristics is to focus on the extent to which the participants treat each other 'like a native' and whether they put their resources 'at risk'" (p. 92). In each form of communication, there is a different combination and focus of treating others like a 'native' and placing one's resources at risk of change. He continues further by stating that "[p]rotecting your resources from risk refers to the suspension of disbelief that comes from deep enmeshment in your own stories. To put your resources at risk means reading your stories with a willing suspension of belief, comparing them with the emerging pattern of communication, intending to change them if it seems appropriate. The tensions among these ways of treating other persons and your own resources comprise the various aspects of giving stories 'a good reading'" (Pearce, 1989, p. 92). He states that we usually try to identify what resources the other is expressing, although we truly cannot know (Pearce, 1989, p. 92). He makes this point by stating that "[u]sually we assume that others are pretty much like us, and that we 'know' their resources because they are the same ones that we have appropriated from our culture" (Pearce, 1989, p. 93). The nature of communication, however, requires potential risk, as "[t]he imperfectness of coordination means that resources are always potentially at risk" (Pearce, 1989, p. 93). To tie this conversation back to the notion of force, Pearce (1989) posits that "...persons are not uniformly sensitive to the potential 'risks' to their resources of engaging in practices. In general, when contextual and prefigurative force predominate, persons are not sensitive

to the risks to their resources; when practical and implicative forces predominate, resources are very much at risk of change” (p. 93).

It is important to note that this discussion occurs on the meta level, in that the discussion centers around the communication, not the actors or the events in which communication is created. A person is not ethnocentric, but may engage in ethnocentric communication, for example. Monocultural communication is a type of communication which does not acknowledge the presence of outside persons or modes of communication, and thus does not challenge any resources of those participating in this form. Everyone is treated as a native, and no resources are at risk. Ethnocentric acknowledges the presence of outside ways, but does not risk resources by building up the divide between the groups. There is a clear distinction between natives and non-natives in this form. Modernity acknowledges the differences inherent in society but does not attach value, thereby lending itself to escalating relativism. Resources are constantly at risk due to the positive value placed on change. Finally, cosmopolitan communication acknowledges the differences, seeks to understand the difference and engage in a different pattern with unfamiliar or changed resources, and then return to familiar territory with a more informed set of resources. These are the primary forms of communication as cited in the 1989 work. Pearce’s 2007 work is cited as a reference point to aid in understanding and clarity of the concepts. These forms of communication are extensions of the basic concepts of resources and practices, and demonstrate their utility as useful and productive items.

However, Pearce’s work does not end with his original contributions. In 2000, he and Kimberly Pearce extended the theory of CMM through a community dialogue

process. In his own words, “this essay continues the third trajectory: a shift from interpretive to practical theory, in which CMM functions as a guide for practitioners and compromises a grammar that makes coherent a tradition of practice” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 406). In this work, he clarifies many angles of CMM that garnered significant discussion. In his own words, “[h]ow communication works: questions – What do we make together by what is said or done? What contexts are created for the other? What is prefigured by the language used? What form of speech is elicited? What tones of voice are elicited? Who is included and who is not? Who is addressed and who is not” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 413). Contrast that to “[t]he work communication does: What gets made? What speech acts (insults, complements)? What relationships (trust, respect)? What episodes (collaboration, conflict)? What identities (shrill voices, reasonable persons, caring persons)? What cultures / worldviews (strong, weak, or no democracy)” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 413). The role of the facilitator or practitioner then becomes “[t]o shape the emerging patterns of communication so that multiple voices and perspectives are honored and tensions among them are maintained” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 413). Further specifying, “[i]n CMM, ‘episodes’ are thought of as bounded sequences of acts, with a beginning, middle, and end. They have a coherent narrative structure; communicators usually can name the episodes that compromise their lives and ensconce them in stories” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 414). As an interviewer and as a work that utilizes the qualitative interview, this is the direct connection to CMM that is afforded by the selected method of inquiry. Another direct connection is the notion of elucidation from Pearce’s own work, “[s]ince practical theory develops in a coevolution between traditions of practice and a grammar for discourse and practice, it is ‘extended’



by adding useful concepts and models, developing more precise or descriptive vocabulary, learning new ways of working in difficult or new contexts, and exchanging outworn or limiting metaphors with fresh ones” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000, p. 420).

Pearce’s own work and subsequent revisions provides the aim of this examination.

Beyond Pearce, the environment and framework for expansion has become apparent, including the same time period as the generation of CMM. Works that have called for the use and application of CMM are clear in their discussion of terminology related to the theory and their unique applications. Beginning with Broome (1991), a view of empathy is discussed as centered in intercultural communication. Quoting Broome (1991), “[t]heir view of what this paper refers to as relational empathy emphasizes a productive rather than a reproductive approach to understanding” (p. 240). As will be demonstrated, this perspective – that a phenomenon exists as a production of interaction rather than a reproduction of some skill, in this case – is something that is a cornerstone of the CMM social world approach. Broome (1991) continues on, as “[w]e come to understand our world through an infinite series of successful approximations. We formulate a construct, test it for usefulness, and either maintain or reformulate it. It is, of course, then retested time and again” (p. 240). This could be called a CMM approach as the social construction of our world is revisited time and time again. This is demonstrated as “[h]uman understanding is always provisional, open to present and future change” and “[b]ecause meanings are constantly sifted and determined by the context, all interpretation must be sensitive to context” (Broome, 1991, p. 241). This then shifts the communicative interaction, such “...that the primary task is not simply to reproduce the other’s meaning but to be open to the meanings that are being developed

between oneself and one's partner" (Broome, 1991, p. 242). Finally, the logical notion of meaning becomes "...not simply brought to the conversation; rather, they are a product of the meeting between individuals" (Broome, 1991, p. 243). Dimaggio (1997) agrees that interaction does generate products, notably culture: "[c]ulture inheres not in the information, nor in the schemata, nor in the symbolic universe, but in the interactions among them" (p. 274). Li (1999) also shares the view that communication can produce favorable outcomes, relating specifically to intercultural encounters, as "...effective communication among human beings, including those who do not share the same language and cultural backgrounds, may be attainable through extra effort – "establishing a mutual understanding of what is being said moment by moment" (p. 210). These authors describe some concepts and practices that directly or indirectly lend themselves to CMM. Also, a comparison of traditions yielded the environment and the exigence for CMM. Cronen et al. (1989) responded to criticisms of CMM and attempted to clarify many concepts. On the notion of force, the authors state that "[l]ogical force describes kinds of relationships between action and the hierarchical structures persons hold" (Cronen et al., 1989, p. 29). The aim of CMM becomes to identify and provide meaningful discussion. Therefore, "CMM does not provide 'certainty' about the meaning of an utterance by placing it in a fixed system of categories. We do not think that any set of a priori categories can substitute for the detailed study of real conditions. What CMM can do is offer a way to study and understand discourse in the world" (Cronen et al., 1989, p. 36). And finally, "CMM is not meant merely to be a theory about the world, it is for use in the world" (Cronen et al., 1989, p. 36). Years later, Parekh (2003) speaks to the notion of cosmopolitanism, although not specifically in CMM

terminology. Focused in communal responsibility, similar to Pearce's public dialogue expansion, Parekh (2003) notes that "[a]s the world becomes interdependent, we constantly encounter unexpected forms of otherness, unfamiliar ways of life, apparently strange bodies of beliefs and practices" (p. 16). Rogers (1999) agrees, using the concept of the 'stranger' along with intercultural communication to frame our unique communicative ways of being. He discusses the notion of "cosmopolitanism" in reference to exchange, as "[c]osmopolitanism provides a system with openness, the degree to which a system exchanges information with its environment" (Rogers, 1999, p. 66). All of these are uses of CMM concepts, explicitly or otherwise, that demonstrate the prevalence of a theory developed years ago with possible uses and applications still being explored today. With that conceptual knowledge, a contextual overview is now complementary.

### **Study Abroad Overview**

While theory elucidation is the focus of this study, study abroad is the avenue by which that is possible, hence the importance of explicating this occurrence in detail. To do so, the literature delineates as follows: a) information previous to the study abroad, b) design and resource considerations, c) the impact during a study abroad, and d) the results of the study abroad experience. Prior to the study abroad experience, both Hopkins (1999) and Weiss (1998) discuss preconceptions and the experiential nature of the programs. Hopkins (1999) begins by stating that "[s]tudy-abroad programs take many forms, but all share the characteristic that, by their very nature, they provide students with a healthy dose of experiential learning. Immersing oneself in another culture provides new opportunities for learning-by-doing, virtually twenty-four hours a day. The meaning

of experiential education in the context of study abroad is in order” (p. 1). Weiss (1998) agrees that “[e]ach student will adjust or gain a sense of competency differently” (p. 142). Weiss (1998) found that initial conceptions did influence the entire trip, as well as student outcomes upon returning home (p. 132).

After those issues are addressed, resource and design factors also influence study abroad. McCabe (1994) noted elements that contributed to a ‘global’ perspective are an internationalized curriculum, experiential learning, and interaction among students (p. 12). Bennett and Salonen (2007) similarly discuss intercultural perspective development, and provide an overview of resources associated with that perspective. Tuleja (2008) addresses this perspective and the amorphous nature of the definition, as “[f]iguring out how to do that – developing the competencies – would be the challenge. It is easy to say that one wants to ‘gain a global perspective’, but what does that really mean” (p. 322)? Talburt and Stewart (1999) also question the subject of study abroad and the associated curriculum, concluding that “[t]he different linguistic and cultural lessons and coping strategies that students learn from how members of the host culture perceive and treat them – the lessons of raced and gendered nature of study abroad – should form an integral part of the formal in-site curriculum” (p. 173). Deardorff (2006) focused on intercultural competence, but chose to consider how to assess it, as “...it is important to note that an inventory alone is not a sufficient measurement of intercultural competence according to the results of this study” (p. 257). Qualitative measurements were found to be most useful in this area (Deardorff, 2006, p. 258), and due to the nature of this study, that fact is relied upon as evidence of the merit of qualitative investigation. Michael (2007) focuses on that same design aspect of the study abroad, noting that

“...full immersion into another academic culture is not the only (or even the best) mechanism through which the benefits of education abroad may be maximized” (p. 497). Short-term study abroad is also mentioned, as “[f]ocused short-term programmes may effectively and purposefully address specific issues. However, the primary response within our field should be one of skepticism. It behooves us to ask awkward questions about content and purpose” (Michael, 2007, p. 503). While critical, this lens is nonetheless valuable as it reflects the academic environment’s attention to the design and shaping of an international program. Ogden (2010) explored this attention more deeply, through brief travel experiences within undergraduate courses (p. 7). “Specifically, the study demonstrates the extent to which embedded education abroad experiences truly enhance academic development and lead to measureable gains in global citizenship” (Ogden, 2010, p. 7). He found that the international experience ultimately impacts student frames of reference and leads to increased understanding (Ogden, 2010, p. 157), providing the bridge to the impact of study abroad.

The impact during a study abroad trip has been discussed by many authors, and explored from many different angles. Williams (2006) looked at the social construction of race, perceptions of self and other, and the dissonance between assumptions and new experiences. A significant finding is that the “...dissonance between their previous assumptions and the current reality facing them that students were able to re-think and re-frame their perspectives” (Williams, 2006, p. 224). Dolby (2004) discusses the notion of encountering one’s national identity abroad, and found that “[d]espite the rhetoric of study abroad, which foregrounds the importance of the “cross-cultural” experience, for most of the students participating in this study, the critical encounter of study abroad was

with the “American” self” (p. 171). Douglas and Jones-Rikkens (2001) used the American identity as well, seeing that “...American students generally have much more to gain from their study abroad experience than students from other cultures” (p. 60). From this encounter with an American self, Dolby (2004) posits that “...the perspectives that students bring back with them are part of public discourse in the United States and have implications for the future of American democracy, the public good, and the constant recognition of the material and imaginative space that is America” (p. 173). Three years later in 2007, Dolby revisits this concept, largely finding the same results but yet stressing that “[s]uch an approach may be a first step toward preparing students for the conflicted terrain that will provide the framework for their lives as national, international, and global citizens” (p. 153). Shifting to length, Bond et al. (2005) focused on a program in Cuba and culture, and found that “...the power of even relatively brief study abroad experiences to shift participants’ values and beliefs in constructive directions” (p. 118) can be significant. Tuleja (2008) agrees, and uses China and an MBA program (p. 316) to examine the experience generally. Focusing on short-term nature, she states that “[w]hile there is no substitute for an extended period of work or study in a culture foreign to one’s own, even short-term experiences abroad can help foster a new awareness and the beginning of a deeper understanding of the complex issues of culture – both ‘other’ culture and one’s own culture” (Tuleja, 2008, p. 317). After the impact of the experience is demonstrated, results of the study abroad can be examined. The environment is one that historically lacked dearth. Hadis (2005) examined academic gains after a study abroad experience, but importantly stated that “[w]hen researchers find no evidence of gains on the part of study abroad students, they

acknowledge that their samples are too small to detect statistical significance” (p. 57). Ingraham and Peterson (2004) also discussed the lack of assessment concerning study abroad, as “...there is a relative scarcity of systematically gathered qualitative and quantitative information that assesses the impact of study abroad” (p. 83). Lindsey (2005) focused outcomes in social work students, finding largely similar results, but calling for future research “...to further explore the relationship between study abroad and values development... (p. 247). Since then, more research has sought to address this void. Braskamp et al. (2009) discussed assessment measures and what was found, noting that “[e]ducation abroad has become an increasingly important education program (experience) in global learning and development, intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students” (p. 101). Included in this section due to the findings, Braskamp et al. (2009) state that “[i]n general, an education abroad experience seems to have a general positive psychological impact on students. Students express a greater self-confidence in their ability to meet new situations, communicate with others not like them, and have a lesser need to be continuously supported by others” (p. 112). However, “[s]tudents acquired more knowledge, more relationships and more self-confidence, but they did not progress as much in their development in learning how to think using multiple perspectives, integrate their cultural experiences into a more refined sense of self, and become more committed to an interdependent life style” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 113). The authors then suggest that “[w]hat may be missing, however, is the necessary integration of experience and reflection” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 113). Looking more at the aforementioned reflection, Rodriguez (2006) chose to study student reflections in the form of texts after the experience to demonstrate the

constructions of self and other. Most noteworthy is the connection between student text and experience, mentioned as "...student writing, and by extension, student experience" (Rodriguez, 2006, p. 59). While examining the interplay as cultural spaces, this link is central to the present study, as voice (either in text or recorded) is the marker of student experience. Kitsantas (2004) compared cross-cultural skills and global understanding with study abroad programs and goals, and found "[t]he results of this study provide support for the hypothesis that study abroad programs enhance students' cross-cultural skills and global understanding. Specifically, the findings demonstrated that study abroad programs significantly contribute to the preparation of students to function in a multicultural world and promote international understanding" (p. 447). Expanding on the aforementioned skillset, Rundstrom (2005) specifically looked at communication skills as a result of study abroad, at Texas Christian University. Significant is the finding that "[i]nterestingly, at any moment in time, exposure to various cultures is the best predictor of intercultural communication skills" (Rundstrom, 2005, p. 369). Also important to the present study is the fact that "...students must interact in the culture to receive the gain of increased intercultural communication skills" (Rundstrom, 2005, p. 370). The present study seeks to identify this interaction in more detail, and describe the nature of that critical interaction. Stephenson (1999) looked at both students and those they interacted with, noting effects and outcomes; "[t]he premise of this study is that not only US students but also members of the host society are affected by the study abroad experience" (p. 34). While echoing previously mentioned results, a cultural perspective is taken, as "...cultural patterns are firmly rooted within most individuals, and not as open to modification as many people assume. This is not to say that culture is not



flexible and open to change. Rather, it is to present the caveat that one should not assume that cultural change will necessarily occur as a result of study abroad experience” (Stephenson, 1999, p. 36). Finally, Armstrong (1984) looked at students who studied abroad and their choices after graduation. According to Armstrong (1984), “[s]tudents frequently noted their perception that they had made great strides in personal development during their summer in Mexico” (p. 3). This is a short overview of findings relating to study abroad, but attempts to demonstrate the significance of the phenomenon as a good area for intercultural and CMM research, and can now benefit from an examination of the international contextual aspect.

### **International Aspect**

Given that students will be travelling to a different continent, it is important to note works that speak to the international travel experience. Braskamp (2008) wonders “[h]ow can we foster good global citizens? What is the best way to teach young pupils to be good global citizens” (p. 6), especially in relation to our internalized world. By looking at lessons learned in this international context, perhaps the student can glean more from travel itself. Barbour (2005) used an Asian pilgrimage to highlight some of this focus. The nature of the travel itself can be complex, as reflection on travel as it happens can contain “...the uncertainties, confusion, and contrasting impressions of a journey, because it is composed before one knows how it ended or what turned out to be significant in the long run” (Barbour, 2005, p. 20). Another lesson is that of paying attention to seemingly mundane events, as “...chance encounters or sights – the eyes of a beggar, music overheard, a cup of tea – may be the most memorable...parts of a journey” (Barbour, 2005, p. 22).

Shifting from purely an international focus to one more of culture, Crotts (2004) used cultural distance to examine international behavior, and Geisler (2006) used culture as a vehicle for positive change in the world, as “[s]tudying other peoples’ languages and cultures will be a positive force in history, no matter what the intentions of those who support the program” (p. 1). He elaborated as “[w]e are proud of that tradition because we believe that teaching foreign languages and cultures, and other subjects in area studies, will inevitably lead to long-term improvements in communication among countries” (Geisler, 2006, p. 2). Wilkinson (1998) used participant perspectives on culture as a way to assess immersion, noting that “[g]iven the sheer number of possible combinations of program, host-culture, and participant factors, any attempt to establish a singular, generalized understanding of the overseas context seems hardly advisable” (p. 123). The aim of this study agrees, as qualitative understanding of conversation seems more advisable than generalized understanding of the phenomenon itself. Wilkinson (1998) continues: “...the nature of the immersion context is, in actual experience, highly personal. Why one student dives into the host community head-first and another retreats to the shore after testing the waters hinges on the logical influences of a myriad of factors and circumstances, some of which may not be readily apparent” (p. 135). Finally, “...it is at the individual level that the impact of the experience is most intense, and its ramifications most influential and long-lasting” (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 136). All of this lends itself to the understanding that each individual student is important, and his or her reactions to the international culture and environment merit study.

To focus this experience in the communication perspective, Belamy and Weinberg (2006) note the need for mindfulness, as it “...encompasses empathy,

compassion, understanding, self-awareness and tolerance that enables people to listen, engage, and learn – allowing for better partnerships” (p. 20). Pan (2004) uses communication terminology in discussion of Herder, as “...a single narrative will always be monocultural at any one moment. That is, it will always function in terms of a single cultural context within which it gains meaning, making a transcultural narrative impossible. However, this monocultural narrative can indeed become multicultural to the extent that it can travel, moving to another context, thereby becoming a new narrative that functions in a different way. Instead of a transcultural narrative that bridges between multiple cultures, we would do better to speak of multicultural narratives that speak to many contexts” (p. 19). The forms and ways of communication, especially in a multicultural context, provide the basis for understanding generated later in this work. However, the need and considerations of study abroad augment the present international inquiry.

### **Study Abroad Need and Considerations**

Once the international environment is discussed, why a student should go abroad at all presents itself. The need for study abroad has been addressed by Brustein (2007). In an article addressing the University of Pittsburgh specifically, he states that “...there is no single path or recipe for instilling a global competence in our students. Many institutions do not have the resources of the large private and public research universities, and will not be able to implement dramatic changes in the short run. Nonetheless, if we are to achieve global competence at our institutions – and there is no excuse for not striving to attain this overall goal – it will require international educators in consultation with administrators, faculty, staff and students to design and implement a curriculum that

is comprehensive; coherent; accessible to all students; and has as its principal goal the ability to know, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information in the context of an increasingly globalized world” (Brustein, 2007, p. 390). Echoed by many administrators and university personnel, our increasingly globalized world is one that deserves study and competency. Martin (1989) discussed the same need for intercultural interaction, choosing to focus on the university predeparture course. In preparing students, he suggested that “...they may receive contradictory information about the norms / values of the culture depending on the source of their information” (Martin, 1989, p. 253). He also discussed the methodology one would employ abroad to learn about another culture, such as participant observation and ethnography (Martin, 1989, p. 254). The importance here is that the course “course presents a variety of theoretical and practical ideas to prepare students for cross cultural interactions” (Martin, 1989, p. 257). Given the facets of study abroad that have been discussed, a focus on short-term study abroad is the remaining facet yet to be addressed.

### **Short-Term Study Abroad**

This study’s focus is on short-term study abroad. The benefits of short-term study abroad were detailed by Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005). Referencing student goals to go abroad, the researchers suggest that “[i]f a semester long or yearlong experience seems too daunting, our research suggests that a shorter, well-planned program can help students to achieve those goals” (Lewis and Niesenbaum, 2005, p. 20). Beyond logistical considerations such as money, length, and other factors, almost half of students who participated in short-term study abroad traveled or studied abroad again (Lewis and

Niesenbaum, 2005, p. 20), and most of the students demonstrated interest in interdisciplinary studies (Lewis and Niesenbaum, 2005, p. 20).

Design considerations of the program also play an important role, as Donnelly-Smith (2009) shows. Unfortunately, "...there is little formal research describing either the best practices for short-term study abroad or the learning outcomes that can accompany it" (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 12). However, short-term programs (defined as those lasting fewer than eight weeks) are the most common programs (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 12). Best practices were identified (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 13), and in the author's research she found "...at least one study has found evidence that duration of stay is insignificant in terms of the degree to which students who study abroad are globally engaged" (Donnelly-Smith, 2009, p. 12).

The comparison between short and longer-term study abroad programs also provides a good way to illustrate the complexity of these programs. Medina-Lopez (2004) sought to examine the link between program duration and intercultural skills. The author found that "[t]he data collected in this study does provide support for a hypothesis that duration of study abroad programs plays a key role in the development of intercultural sensitivity of U.S. university students abroad" (Medina-Lopez, 2004, p. 191). Given that, regardless of length, Medina-Lopez (2004) states that "[s]tudy abroad, when carefully planned and prepared for, can change students' lives" (p. 197). Dwyer (2004) suggests that longer programs actually are more beneficial for students. "Conventional wisdom in the study abroad field has held that more is better; that is, the longer students study abroad the more significant the academic, cultural development and personal growth benefits that accrue" (Dwyer, 2004, p. 151). However, even in a study

demonstrating longer benefits, the author still struggles with the impact of study abroad, as “[i]n some categories of factors, summer students were as likely or more likely to achieve sustainable benefit from studying abroad in comparison with semester students. This seems counter-intuitive since one would expect that with declining duration of study abroad a corresponding lessening pattern of impact would result” (Dwyer, 2004, p. 161). More noteworthy is the future direction suggested by Dwyer (2004), as “[w]hether these results would hold for the increasingly popular 1-5 week programs is unknown” (p. 161). Also, “[a] qualitative study could be conducted to probe for greater detail within these original findings” (Dwyer, 2004, p. 161). The proposed study seeks to acquire that greater detail, of qualitative findings in a short-term program.

Finally, after students return home from a short-term study abroad experience, it is important to assess what happened and what students came away with, experiential or otherwise. Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) sought to do just that, and found some interesting results. The authors began by noting the lack of research in this area, as “[a] good portion of the studies published to date have focused on small numbers of students (usually fewer than 100, sometimes fewer than ten) spending at least one semester abroad, with much less attention given to short-term programs” (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004, p. 166). They found that “[i]f nothing else, the students who went abroad had more to say about their learning experiences over the past month than those who stayed at home” (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004, p. 173). Students also overwhelmingly commented on the ability to learn outside the classroom, and the effects on their ideologies and personal lives (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004, p. 173). Most important is their result that “[b]ased on the data yielded by this first study, it was concluded that short-term

programs, even as short as one month, are worthwhile educational endeavors that have significant self-perceived impacts on students' intellectual and personal lives" (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004, p. 174). Lenz and Wister (2008) noted similar findings from reflections, as three dominant patterns emerged in student reflection: self-knowledge change, interpersonal relational affect, and the burden of processing a large amount of cultural information (Lenz and Wister, 2008, p. 85). These demonstrate the impact that study abroad, regardless of length, can have on an individual student and provide the basis for using this event as a meaningful object of study.

This literature overview is meant not as an exhaustive collection of perspective, but rather as an argument designed to illicit the exigence for this study. By explicating previous works, CMM, and the phenomenon in more detail, it is the hope that this collection provides a sound background from which to inquire further. Given the binary choice for resources at risk, the applicability of undergraduate study abroad, and the aim of this study, the following research question is posed:

*RQ: How do undergraduate students studying abroad place their resources at risk?*

### **3: Methods**

This study analyzed qualitative interviews, which Baxter and Babbie (2004) described as follows: "...an interaction between an interviewer and a participant in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked using particular words and in a particular order. It is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent." (p. 325). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) agree that "[i]nterviews are particularly well suited to understand the social actor's experience and perspective" (p. 173), which is the focus of this study. Baxter and Babbie (2004) continue, as "[p]articularly of note in this study is the usage mentioned by the authors, as "...qualitative interviewing is a very useful method when the researcher wants to study informants' language use – their vocabularies and idioms" (p. 327). Also important is the use of the semi-structured interview. "A semi-structured protocol generally consists of a list of questions that the interviewer wants answered by the informant. With the exception of an occasional close-ended question, these questions are open-ended in nature" (Baxter and Babbie, 2004, p. 329). Descriptive questions were used to solicit participant meanings in conversation (Baxter and Babbie, 2004, p. 332). Rapport was created through focusing on content and process, generating genuine dialogue rather than pure interview, and creating trust and respect (Baxter and Babbie, 2004, p. 337). Lastly, narrative form was taken in the interview; the focus on the story was central to getting useful information (Baxter and Babbie, 2004, p. 343). The interview guide is provided in Appendix A.



As previously stated, qualitative interviews were used to collect the data. A total of six interviews (N=6) were conducted before and after the study abroad experience. Each participant was chosen by solicitation based on program length and timing, and goals of study, thereby identifying methodologically as purposeful sampling (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 122). The interviews were conducted over a period of one month, with the study abroad event happening between the pre and post interviews. The original request for research volunteers came approximately one week before the first interview at a pre-departure meeting. Research participants were asked about the following topics during the interviews: any experience studying abroad, challenges during study abroad, the people and culture abroad, communication difficulties, a potential scenario and reactions, the potential effect of this study abroad, and communication changes as a result of the study abroad. The questions were speculative in the pre-departure interview and reflective in the returned interview. Interview transcripts are provided in Appendix B.

Informed consent for each participant was obtained, allowing the researcher to audio tape and transcribe each interview. Each participant was informed that no names or other similar information would be included in the final report. Participants were uniformly female, college-age undergraduates who were participating in a spring break study abroad program. The program itself was in English, as was the destination country's primary language. Participants were not asked to provide detailed demographic information, as the primary unit of analysis was the conversation.

Participants were interviewed individually on campus in an open area. Each pre-departure interview began with informed consent, followed by the taping of the interview. Each post interview began with audio taping. Pre-departure interviews

averaged seven minutes long, with post interviews averaging eight minutes, twenty seconds. Open-ended questions were used to garner rich and detailed descriptions and narratives of the study abroad experience through conversation. Probing, elaboration, and returning to previous points were all used to glean more depth from each participant. After transcription, audio records were deleted.

After collection and transcription, the data was analyzed using a deductive framing based on CMM (Pearce, 1989). Deductive analysis was practiced to elucidate the theory concerning the ‘resources at risk’ aspect. Specifically, four types of the ‘resources at risk’ phenomenon were identified by Parrish-Sprowl (in press): re-storying, obsolescence, forgetting, and challenging. Each interview was examined to identify as one of the types, and implications resulting from that grouping are discussed. Also, dominant forms of communication according to CMM are identified in each interview as attempts in monoculturalism, ethnocentrism, modernity, and cosmopolitanism. Pearce (2007) asserts that “...we look at what they are doing and saying, not through it to what it is supposedly about” (p. 53), detailing how communication and conversation are the units of analysis. The data collected is ultimately used to detail the conversational reality created by each participant.

#### **4: Analysis & Discussion**

The results revealed that restorying, challenging and forgetting presented themselves in the given environment, while obsolescence was not identifiable. This could be largely due to the constraints of the study, and will be discussed at length. Given that, these two types of putting resources at risk do clarify that aspect of CMM. With any use of CMM however, there is a level of caution to be practiced, quoting Pearce (2007): “[w]ith such entities in such a world, any ‘one size fits all’ description of how to use CMM inevitably distorts and disarms the user” (p. 224). With this caution in mind, Pearce (2007) presents a four-step model of how to ‘use’ CMM, suggesting that description, interpretation, critique, and putting it into practice are the four steps involved in such a use of CMM (p. 230). In this investigation of the theory, CMM will be used as the frame of understanding flowing from a deductive perspective; that is, the situations will be described and interpreted conversationally, and from those actions the resultant types of resources at risk will be identified.

#### **Overall Student Responses**

The pre-departure interviews provided interesting trends throughout student answers. The first question served as a marker for previous international experience, and if students had participated in a university study abroad, they would be asked not to participate in this study. In response to the first question, five out of six students responded that they traveled abroad previously. This was either for vacation or for secondary education, and all students affirmed that this was their first formal study abroad trip at the undergraduate level. While an ideal population would have only included students who never traveled abroad before and were participating in their first

study abroad, previous international experience outside of an academic context was deemed acceptable.

The second question requested the students to imagine what challenges they might face on their study abroad. This was asked to forecast potential ways in which students would place resources at risk, by identifying those challenges prior to departure. The question could have been more focused by asking challenges in relation to the people they might interact with at their destination, rather than the general nature presented to each student. However, a similar question focused on communication is placed later in the interview to address this deficiency. Given that, the students identified many areas of potential challenges, and by extension, possible interactions with others. Getting oriented, transportation, the lack of cellular phone use, academic time management, culture shock, and jet lag.

The third question solicited student descriptions of persons they might encounter on their trip, in a general fashion. This was asked to obtain the student perspective on the 'other', and also demarcate the forms of communication as mentioned previously. If the students choose to operate in an 'us vs. them' paradigm, they would be considered engaging in an ethnocentric pattern, and that knowledge is important in relation to the resources at risk concept. Most students struggled with this question, choosing primarily cosmopolitan patterns; ethnocentric and monocultural patterns also presented in the interviews.

The fourth question in the pre-departure interview asked participants to describe communication difficulties they might encounter abroad, attempting to engage the subjects in types of resources at risk. Student one described a conversational reality in

which understanding passed the barriers of common language, and chose to illustrate incompatibility between resource sets as a lack of understanding. Student two chose to imagine the difficult conversation as one in which repetition is necessary, and that repetition becomes the avenue by which shared meaning is made. Student three, using her perspective stemming from monocultural patterns, did not anticipate any communication difficulty, showing the link between the form of communication and its ability to engage resources in risk. Student four hypothesized issues of trust regarding resources at risk, as well as highlighting the need for questions in conversation. Students five and six also used questioning and repetition as ways of bridging difficulties, and stated that difficulties would be in understanding or transmission of meaning.

The fifth question asked students to imagine the effect, both short and longer term, this study abroad will have on them. This was asked to demonstrate any potential resource change the students anticipated, thereby denoting resources at risk. Beyond the subject matter of the study abroad, students reported cultural awareness, the ability to compare and contrast their experiences, and to receive a broader education.

The final question of the pre-departure interview focused on communication changes, and students expected a range of occurrences. This question also sought to get at resources at risk, specifically through communication, and what resources did the students think would change. Some students reported little expected change, while others were quick to note changes in both their ability to communicate and their ability to create shared meaning. Resource change can be seen throughout student responses, as well as the students' comfort with new situations and encounters.

After examining trends within the data for pre-departure answers, returned student interviews now complement those answers and can provide clarity to the experience. The first three and final two questions are past tense versions of the pre-departure questions, and trends will be examined in that regard. The additional questions revolve around students retelling a moment of conversational difficulty, and what they might have changed during that incident. This allows for students to re-enact the conversation and demonstrate any resource at risk. The challenges faced by students were largely reported as logistical ones, such as transportation, adjusting to the time, food, and other concerns. One student did mention that the accents and mechanics of language were difficult, especially with the plurality of people she encountered.

The descriptions of the people in London were very interesting, especially given the diversity of communication forms present by the students. Adjectives used to describe people in London ranged from private, reserved, and professional to kind and European in general. The communication difficulties students faced did not make themselves readily apparent, as multiple students chose not to report any upon questioning. Accent and word selection were mentioned, but not elaborated on, through the interview. The effect of the study abroad also ranged greatly, from primarily academic benefit to cultural perspective gain. In general, students took away a greater sense of awareness and appreciation, as well as opportunities they might have encountered in a different set of circumstances.

Lastly, the perceived communication change as a result of the study abroad demonstrated new resources the students received. Students reported cultural awareness, confidence, a desire to be more knowledgeable, and the ability to adjust speech to create

a better social world. These answers demonstrate the change in resources from prior to departure and then after return, illustrating the applicability of study abroad to the elucidation of CMM. Students were able to identify stories of difficulty, how their conversational reality affected them, and what they now possess as resources moving forward. Now each type of risk that was found will be discussed.

### **Restorying**

Student two and student two's sister demonstrate the balance between restorying and challenging in putting resources at risk. Prior to study abroad, student two anticipated difficulty with accent and repetition, suggesting that those areas could challenge understanding and the conversational reality created. In the post interview, student two mentions a story concerning different understandings of the same phenomenon. The restory effect is seen as student two makes sense of what transpired.

Student 2: Yes.

Nicholas: And you walked up and she laid the earrings down, correct?

Student 2: Yeah.

Nicholas: Ok, and then at that point, so uh what did the conversation sound like? Did she greet you, and then just kind of like talk the conversation out, so to speak. So I said, she said, etc.

Student 2: Okay, well yeah um well of course she said 'hi', did we find everything, because we were in her store...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: ...and we said 'yes', and then um actually they had advertised a ten percent student discount...

Nicholas: Uh-huh...

Student 2: ...so my sister showed her school ID, and it's really interesting because every time we showed them our student ID, everyone looked really confused, because they had never seen an ID like that before.

Nicholas: So she said 'did you find everything', and then you guys said 'yes', and then, was it at that point that she said 'oh I have my student ID with me'?

Student 2: Yeah, my sister said 'I have my student ID here', and then she goes 'oh, absolutely' and she took it and looked at it, and looked at my sister, and looked at it again and um she goes 'are you guys from the states?'

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 2: And my sister goes 'yeah', and she goes 'I can't accept this as a student, we can only do British universities'.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: And my sister was like 'oh that's fine no big deal', you know, and so um she goes 'so, so what are you guys doing in London?', and 'why are you here?', and my sister goes 'well we are on a study abroad trip through our school', she said 'oh really, well what kind of break are you on? Are you here, like, what for? How long are you here?', 'just a week' my sister said, and she goes 'oh, well is this a school break for you?', and she goes 'yeah, it's our spring break', and she goes 'oh you guys call it, you Americans call things such weird names. Over here it would be half-time', or something like that, so...

Nicholas: And then at that point what was said?

Student 2: My sister and I just laughed.

Nicholas: Just laughed?

Student 2: Yeah, and I mean what can you say?

Nicholas: Yeah. And then at that point you would say the conversation just kind of stopped and then it was just...

Student 2: And then we just kind of exited the store, we said 'thank you', and 'have a great day', all of the usual pleasantries, and then we left.

Student two then expressed curiosity about the nomenclature, as well as identifying the conversation within a 'cultural norm' frame. Ultimately, student two sought to identify similarities and differences between her resource set and the resources presented in the conversation. This is consistent with an augmentation of her resources, rather than a reshaping based on conflict. This difference is what makes restorying different from challenging; rather than changing one's resources based on conflict with an outside set, student two chose to integrate and differentiate with the resource set present, restorying her individual resources. Student two also did not anticipate much change in her communicative style as a result of the study abroad, rather seeing her ability to engage in a deeper level amplified because of the experience.

Student four also displayed restorying in putting her resources at risk. Student four anticipated a lack of veracity with information presented to her during unfamiliar



interactions, and was concerned that this lack of veracity would lead to excessive question and answer diatribe. After the experience, student four describes a story in which prior, anticipated knowledge would have benefitted her interaction. This knowledge, while generated in the afterlife of the conversation, can be thought of as restorying. Student four felt she had inadequate resources prior to the interaction, and chose to restory her resources based on the new interaction she obtained.

Student 4: Um, well I was like, I asked where their tea menu was, and then they um, so they showed me on the...

Nicholas: So they came up to you, and then you said 'excuse me, where's your team menu'?

Student 4: Yes. And then they pointed it to me, and there was like a long list, some of the words I didn't know how to pronounce, and um I was like 'uh, I guess I'll take this one' and I just pointed to it, and they just reiterated like, you know to make sure I knew what I wanted.

Nicholas: So they asked 'is this the one you wanted'?

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then you said, what did you say?

Student 4: I said yes. Yeah, I was kind of just like 'yes', I hope I get it and like it (laughs), because I wasn't familiar with all the teas, so I was kind of like I just picked one and you know...

The restory effect is seen with both students in their narratives, and the dichotomy between restorying and challenging is also present in student two's narrative. The difference in restorying and challenging will become more apparent with a subsequent discussion of challenging.

### **Challenging**

Student one provides an example of challenged resources. Prior to studying abroad, student one imagined that positive conversational reality would entail an implicit understanding, and that difficult interaction would consist of a lack of understanding. To alleviate this, student one posited that asking more questions would provide the best solution to the conversational problem. In examining the following transcript from the

post interview, the resources she displays are incommensurate with the conversational reality being created, and hence the repetitive nature of the question, and ultimate frustration.

Nicholas: you were an American, okay, and then she said, was that the point when she asked?

Student 1: I think so.

Nicholas: Okay so then she said...

Student 1: 'Will you be living here in the next couple months or will you be leaving here in the next couple months?'

Nicholas: Ah, okay. So then what did you say?

Student 1: And then I said 'excuse me, can you repeat that?' (laughs), and then, um she asked again and I did not understand and I just said 'no'.

Nicholas: Okay, okay. So then you said 'no', and what happened right after that? Was that the end of the conversation?

Student 1: That was the end.

Nicholas: Okay so then she just said 'it's this much'...

In the aftermath of the episode, the student suggests that asking more questions or receiving more depth from the cashier would have alleviated the situation and provided for a clearer conversational reality than was created. The resources the student displayed, which included understanding of checkout procedures and proper protocol for paying for merchandise, were challenged by the cashier, who was operating with a different set of resources for the same procedure. Ultimately, the student chose to move past this point by ignoring the difference, rather than fully exploring the potential for resource change. In the subsequent post interview, student one did report a more acute knowledge of interactions, such as more knowledge of 'how we spend our time', or 'how we get along', and chose to engage in primarily ethnocentric understanding of her experience abroad. Now that restorying and challenging have been articulated, forgetting and obsolescence can be placed in this context.

## **Forgetting**

Student five specifically remembered an instance of misunderstanding, and suggested that by realizing her pronunciation of certain words, she would be better able to communicate. This could suggest forgetting, a type of risk associated with episodes that allow for new resources to be created due to older resources being forgotten. If she had encountered this difficulty with pronunciation before, it would be forgetting. However, if this was the first time she had encountered difficulty with her pronunciation and audience, a restory effect could be observed; by gaining a previously unknown appreciation for her vocal style, she can choose to accept this new perspective and employ the resources in future situations. Ultimately, both effects can be seen in this short interactional structure.

Nicholas: Okay, so you said 'can I get a captain and coke', and they just kind of went...

Student 5: Well I said like 'cap'n'.

Nicholas: Okay, so well you said 'cap'n' and coke, and they just kind of looked at you?

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then what happened?

Student 5: One guy whispered to another 'I have no idea what she just said'...

Nicholas: Oh, you could hear it?

Student 5: Someone else told me that.

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 5: And then I had to say out 'can I have a captain morgan and coke'

Nicholas: Oh, okay so there's three of them, and then one whispered to the other one 'I don't know what she said'...

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...and then you slowed it down and said 'can I have a captain and coke', and then what happened?

Student 5: Then they got it for me.

Nicholas: And then one guys started making it. And then once he gave you the drink, what happened? Was there any more interaction after that or?

Student 5: He probably said 'cheers', because they all say 'cheers'.

Nicholas: Okay. And then what did you say at that point? Just...

Student 5: I just said thanks and walked away.

Student six experienced a similar difficulty to student five, in that misunderstanding occurs between the two conversational participants and is quickly rectified by altering voice pronunciation. In the pre-departure interview, student six imagined that repetition of words or difficulty in hearing the words would be a problem, and this was confirmed during the post-interview. The effect is also the same as student five, in the dichotomy between forgetting and restorying.

Student 6: ...so I came up to the register, and I handed him the food, and I said 'hello', and I mean he was probably like 'good evening', or something, um...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...and I, and he totaled it and told me the total, and um it was like ten pounds or something, and that was fine so I handed him, um the money for that, and said 'thanks', and then he said 'would you like this warmed up?', and um he kind of changed around the sentence, and that I would expect here in like my version of English, 'would you like this warmed up', or something like that, or um but I think he rearranged his sentence a little bit, and I think he probably also ended with yeah...

Nicholas: Uh-huh...

Student 6: ...because people that, I noticed a lot of people that at restaurants or workers that we ran into would be up talkers, where they would finish all of their sentences with yeah, and say 'would you like another drink yeah?'...

Nicholas: Oh, okay...

Student 6: ...so we would be kind of alarmed for a second because we thought that it wasn't a question, almost...um,

Nicholas: Oh...so he said that...

Student 6: ...so he said that 'would you like this warmed up yeah?'...

Nicholas: Okay, and it was very fast?

Student 6: It was very fast and he had a strong accent, it was like a regional accent that I could tell like...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...it wasn't like a London accent but it was some, like district of England that was really distinct so...I was just kind of, I had no idea

what he said and I said 'I'm sorry', and he said 'oh would you like this warmed up?', and he slowed it way down for me...

Nicholas: Ah, okay.

Student 6: ...like he realized like at that second I hadn't heard him properly so he like restarted and slowed down for me and I said 'oh yes thanks that'd be wonderful', and he said 'no problem', and um and then continued on, so...

These students demonstrate the challenge of placing rigid definitional walls on the narrative interaction, and crossover is experienced. While obsolescence did not present itself throughout the transcripts, it does enhance the discussion and examples the other types of risk show.

### **Obsolescence and Forms of Communication**

Through each student, unique implementation of the concepts of restorying, challenging, and forgetting resources can be seen. Unfortunately, obsolescence was not able to be identified in this context. This could be the result of a myriad of factors, and future studies should seek to test this construct in different environments. The lack of obsolescence could also be tied to the way the students chose to communicate, and the patterns they engaged in.

From a communication perspective, the students in this study each exhibited a form of communication that either encouraged or hindered putting resources at risk. Prior to departure, student one chose to engage in patterns likened to cosmopolitan communication; acknowledging an unknown set of resources and yet choosing whether or not to engage in putting her resources at risk. To alleviate this tension, student one suggested that the trip could bring a contrast to current life activities, as well as positing that questioning is the way to clarify a situation. Upon return, this method was explored with difficulty; student one conveyed that coherence was not as important as

coordination, another hallmark of cosmopolitan communication, as evidenced by the inability to understand via successive questioning. This allowed the student to choose whether or not to place her resources at risk. Student two also chose to engage in cosmopolitan patterns, hypothesizing that her study abroad experience will expose her to different people, but not different in an ethnocentric us and them paradigm. She equated a different city and culture to the myriad cultures present in her home city. After returning, she demonstrated a restored set of resources based on her experience abroad, and expressed curiosity about the possibility for further augmentation of her resource set. Student three participated in an interesting set of patterns, including monocultural communication and ethnocentric communication. In asking about the groups of people the student might communicate with, she noted no difference between the groups, even given the distance and the nature of study abroad. This could be seen as an attempt at monocultural communication, in that there is no difference between the groups of people, and everyone is treated as a native with a similar resource set. This was reinforced by her guess that no communication difficulties would be encountered abroad, although she did mention that new resources would be acquired from the journey. In the post interview, the student confirmed no difficulties or interesting episodes outside of the group abroad, and ethnocentrically stated that more interaction outside of those people deemed 'tourists' would have been beneficial. These patterns account for the lack of resources at risk, as with monocultural and ethnocentric communication, resources are not placed at risk.

Student four communicated ethnocentrically, but alternated with cosmopolitan patterns. In the pre-departure interview, the student discussed the potential culture she

would encounter in an ‘us and them’ manner, and expressed anxiety about possible misunderstanding or deception when interacting with ‘them’. However, she also expressed that the persons encountered would possess their own unique culture, similar to encountering individuals within the home city, lending to cosmopolitan patterns. In the post interview, the student expressed surprise at the cultural diversity, as well as an augmented resource set, stemming from a hybrid of ethnocentric and cosmopolitan patterns. Student five expressed different patterns in communication before and after the study abroad experience. Prior to departure, student five spoke in a modernistic pattern, noting that everyone has a different point of view, and choosing not to make a judgment on that point of view. She also expressed ethnocentric communication in assessment of the culture she would encounter. After the experience, she again expressed ethnocentrism by stating that a group speaks the same, as well as noting differences between the domestic cultures of both places. Lastly, student six expressed cosmopolitan patterns both before and after study abroad. Before, the student expressed a general variety of persons and cultures she would encounter abroad, as well as searching for deeper coordination rather than coherence in moving through conversation. After returning, the student described a situation in which she privileged coordination over coherence in paying for food, as well as in situations in which she could understand the language but felt inadequate in response.

### **Implications**

The purpose of this study was to illuminate CMM, by clarifying the phenomenon of putting one’s resources at risk according to Parrish-Sprowl (in press). This clarification examined four ways in which this is done; restorying, obsolescence,

challenging, and forgetting. By better understanding the ways in which a communicator places his or her resources at risk, CMM is better able to articulate what it means to experience a change in the resource set. This could be an addition or subtraction of information. Restorying allows for new understanding(s) of a communicator's outside world, thus adding to his or her resource set. Obsolescence is the decline of resources that are no longer in active practice, thus ultimately subtracting from the resource set through forgetting. Lastly, challenging allows for an addition or subtraction of resources based on the conflict the communicator is engaged in, and the new resource set that is generated. This new understanding can hopefully lead to the creation of better social worlds, as challenged by Pearce (2007). Also, these four ways of placing one's resources at risk provide further detail to the forms of communication; if a communicator is found to demonstrate these ways, he or she may be engaging in certain forms that either facilitate or hinder resource risk. For example, if a communicator was found to exhibit restorying, he or she may be engaged in cosmopolitan communication patterns, as those patterns allow for the resources to be placed at risk. Monocultral patterns would not be exhibited, as these do not allow for the placement of resources at risk. This is a complementary understanding but nonetheless valuable to CMM.

In a more practical sense, practitioners of the theory may gain a deeper understanding of related concepts from this new conception of resources at risk. The deeper description provided by each type helps articulate how a communicator places his or her resources at risk, and can allow practitioners to create deeper mutual understanding in their contexts with their co-creators. For example, an educator of the theory can provide examples of forgetting and obsolescence to students to demonstrate



conversational ways CMM is enacted, as well as the forms that CMM displays. Because CMM is meant to be interpreted and tailored by the user to his or her needs, these descriptions are another building block of understanding to each practitioner who can choose to utilize them or to modify them as he or she sees fit. Those who utilize CMM in practical applications, such as professionals in a youth program, may also benefit from a clearer understanding of how a communicator places his or her resources at risk, and ways to encourage or discourage this phenomenon. For example, a mentor might better understand how to guide a youth away from dangerous or undesirable behavior if he or she is able to change the youth's resource set through challenging or restorying. As always, the conversational reality is co-created, and CMM allows for the creation of better social worlds through its execution and understanding.

### **Limitations & Future Research**

As with any study, there are limitations and areas for expansion that must be considered. To begin, the study abroad aspect of the study is one that is highly variable; by adjusting the length of the study abroad program, location, and various other factors, a different outcome could possibly be obtained. Future studies should carefully consider their design if study abroad is to be the avenue for discovery. Another consideration is the sample present in the study; while uniformly female and fairly small, future studies could address larger groups with complimentary measures, such as mixed method approaches for groups of students. Also, the four categories did not present themselves equally throughout the findings; obsolescence and forgetting were not able to be solely identified in the given environment. These two categories are nonetheless important, and should be addressed in future study design. Also important to consider is the relationship

between the forms of communication and the types of resources at risk; is there a connection between the types of resources at risk and the forms of communication? Does modernistic communication primarily exhibit obsolescence, and cosmopolitan communication exhibit restorying? This linkage could be tested in different contexts and applications for further understanding. In conclusion, the challenge still remains to create better social worlds, both by understanding our shared reality and by being mindful authors of that reality. By better clarifying the Coordinated Management of Meaning, we can take steps to better ourselves and those around us.

## Appendix A: Student Interview Guides

### Pre-departure:

- 1) If you've had any experiences abroad, tell me about them generally.
- 2) What challenges do you think you will face during your study abroad?
- 3) Please describe who you will encounter on your trip, generally.
  - a) Describe the people and culture, for example.
- 4) What communication difficulties do you think you will deal with abroad?
- 5) What effect do you think this study abroad will have on you?
- 6) Do you think the way you communicate will change as a result of study abroad?
  - a) If so, how?
  - b) If not, why not?
- 7) Describe the conversation (scripts) via stories. Imagine a conversation, what would each person say? If the conversational episode (went well, was awkward, went wrong)?

### Post-departure:

- 1) What challenges did you face during your study abroad?
- 2) Please describe who you encountered on your trip, generally.
  - a) Describe the people and culture, for example.
- 3) What communication difficulties did you will deal with abroad, generally?
- 4) Get at critical incident. Think of one instance where you had an interesting or difficult communication episode. Describe it generally.
  - a) What did you say, and what did the other person say? Re-live the conversation.
  - b) If you were going to change that episode, what would you have said differently?
- 5) What effect do you think this study abroad will have on you?
- 6) Do you think the way you communicate will change as a result of study abroad?
  - a) If so, how?
  - b) If not, why not?

## **Appendix B: Student Interview Transcripts**

NOTE: Transcripts are organized by student number, beginning with pre-departure interviews.

### **Student Pre-Experience Interview Transcripts**

#### **Student 1**

Nicholas: All right we should be good. That should be fine. Uhm, so first off, uh if you've had any experiences abroad...have you ever been abroad before?

Student 1: Uhm I went on vacation.

Nicholas: ...you went on vacation?

Student 1: That's it.

Nicholas: Was it long-term, short-term, just tell me about it in general.

Student 1: It was for a week. We went to Antigua over the summer.

Nicholas: Oh okay, very nice. Ok, so it was just, did you stay in a resort or just a...

Student 1: Mmmm...just in a resort area.

Nicholas: Very Nice. Uhm, the next question...again, this is just general, getting at stories...what challenges do you think you are going to face when you do study abroad over spring break, if any?

Student 1: Um, I don't anticipate too many I suppose, but...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 1: ...I 'm probably will be a little overwhelming, just the differences you probably take for granted, just like getting oriented...

Nicholas: Okay. Getting oriented, getting around...?\

Student 1: Right.

Nicholas: All right. If you were going to describe, in general, the kind of people you are going to encounter, how would you do it?

Student 1: I don't know if I could.

Nicholas: Yeah? Well, even to think of it from a cultural perspective, like what kind of things do you think you're going to face as you get off the plane, as you're going around the city, etc.?

Student 1: I think, I don't know...

Nicholas: You can be creative.

Student 1: Um, I'm sure there will be some language barriers, even though it's the same...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: ...basic language, but just maybe, probably they are at a different pace than we're here in Indianapolis even...

Nicholas: Mmmhmmm...

Student 1: I mean different cities, it's almost disorienting going to Chicago even though it's close, just a different pace.

Nicholas: Okay, so you see pace as kind of, one difference, do you see any others that you anticipate or things that you might, that might be challenging to you in any way?

Student 1: Um, I mean not any huge things, maybe just like I said getting oriented and just taking it in that I've never been there before and...

Nicholas: Of course.

Student 1: ...never been to Europe, so...

Nicholas: Mmmkay. Umm, now we're kind of going to do, basically umm like imaging the conversation, so conversations you might have with uh people at the public transport stop, or conversations you might have at museums you'll go to, or anything else. Um how do you think, if you had to kind of give a story of a conversation that went well, so if you just had to imagine a conversation between you and someone else that went well, what do you think would be the characteristics of that? Like could you imagine what would be a good exchange?

Student 1: Um, I suppose someone where you can understand each other on a basic level and not just verbal but...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: ...something deeper than that, being able to connect with someone and possibly taking some new interesting insight from the person...

Nicholas: Okay...

Student 1: ...not just from the conversation but, some tone or...

Nicholas: Something deeper than the conversation, okay. Um what about, um, the same kind of thing like a story, but more something along the lines of something that's either difficult or awkward. Like how do see that conversation going as different from what you just described?

Student 1: Um I suppose just a lack of understanding...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: ...would make for an awkward situation.

Nicholas: Okay. So you would characterize it as a misunderstanding between you and whomever you are speaking to, okay. How would you go about correcting that, like if you were experiencing that, what would you try and do?

Student 1: Um just probably try and ask questions and...

Nicholas: Okay...

Student 1: ...clarify the situation.

Nicholas: Mmmmmm, so try and get you and the other person kind of on the same page, so to speak, okay. Uh let's see...what effect do you think this program, this study abroad will have on you, both you know kind of immediate and then longer term?

Student 1: Um I think it'll be just a huge, being exposed to so many things that are not available here, just...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: ...the vast I mean amount of art that we are going to be seeing is just...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 1: I mean how do you not be changed by that? It's things you read about in art history all the time, the big things that changed the world...

Nicholas: Yeah, yeah absolutely.

Student 1: ...just being able to be in the presence of that and being able to see that and just taking in some more cultural information experience.

Nicholas: Okay, so you think, do you think that because you'll be taking in that cultural information experience do you think you'll be, like how would you describe yourself as being changed, to be more, do you see what I'm...?

Student 1: Um, I think it'll probably be more awareness of the way I live and the way we live here...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm, so kind of contrasting, something different...

Student 1: Right.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, do you think your communication, the way you communicate with just anyone, do you think that will change as a result of your study abroad?

Student 1: Um, possibly I haven't thought about it much...

Nicholas: Feel free to be creative, or anything like that.

Student 1: Um I don't really know what to expect, what kind of communication issues I'll have, but...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: I guess I'm not expecting to change too terribly much, just being that it's a similar language and it's a short-term...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm. So you think that because it's a shorter term, because it's roughly the same language that you don't see, at least the way you're responding to others changing dramatically?

Student 1: Probably not.

Nicholas: Probably not, okay. Um, let's see...I think we'll only do probably one other thing, and I think that will be um basically going back to conversations, um and then we'll be done actually.

Student 1: Mmmkay.

Nicholas: Looking at the conversations that you anticipate happening, I mean this is kind of getting back to the communication aspect, when you are going to be going around the city, going to be talking to these different people, uh we already talked about challenges that you might face, what would be a sort of a best-case scenario? I mean do you see anything that you could say 'this is ideally what I'm after', so to speak?

Student 1: Um I don't know I guess I haven't really thought about who I'll be communicating with besides the people in my group, like I haven't envisioned really that aspect of the trip...

Nicholas: mmkay...

Student 1: ...but ummm I mean asking for help if someone can, help with that but I don't really know if I'll be seeking too much conversation outside of...

Nicholas: ...of course...okay. So you'll probably keep it in the group. Do you see, even within the group, do you see, you know experiences that you guys will have, etc. kind of changing the conversation that you have, you know before and then during? Yeah?

Student 1: Umm I mean I think it'll be, I don't know any of these people I've never met them before the meeting for this trip so I think just that general things with getting acquainted with new people and being in such close proximity of people that you don't...

Nicholas: mmmhmmm...

Student 1: ...really know at all...

Nicholas: ...and then being in a new situation, and things like that...

Student 1: Correct, yeah.

Nicholas: Um, well we'll kind of end with basically what I'm looking at is I'm looking at, um as I mentioned communication patterns, both before and then after, um you get back and we'll, you don't have to set anything up now you'll get an email about that...

Student 1: Ok.

Nicholas: ...but umm the overall thing I'm looking at is will your communication change because of your environment, because of where you are, do you see any experiences that you might have beyond the art that you will bring back with you and say 'you know what, this is going to affect me, just in the way that I see people just in general'? I mean do you see anything that you could foresee like 'this will be a definite impact', or something you might experience?

Student 1: Umm, honestly...

Nicholas: ...and again this is all anticipatory, you know...

Student 1: Right...um I guess there's always little things just in regular encounters that you have that, um, it's not necessarily verbal but some thing in a tone or in an experience that you can take and apply it in other situations, if you see someone, I don't know how to explain it...

Nicholas: ...oh no no, take your time...

Student 1: Um I mean just those little moments where something basic kind of happens inside of you and...

Nicholas: ...so it's almost like a small click or like a change of sorts, okay. So then you see that as kind of carrying through and something that could be lasting, okay. Well thank you, very much, that's all.

## **Student 2**

Nicholas: Um so first question is just kind of like a baseline question. Um beyond you mentioned the experience at, uh, the same site, London right? Last year?

Student 2: Um I spent most of the week in Darby; I spent a couple of days in London.

Nicholas: A couple of days in London most of the time in Darby, any other overseas experience?

Student 2: Um just Mexico, a couple of times, but that's it.

Nicholas: but that's the only, okay. Um what challenges do you think you're going to face during your study abroad being that you've been abroad once, but not in this context?

Student 2: Um...

Nicholas: ...I mean do you see anything like that, or?



Student 2: oh absolutely. Um I think that my biggest challenge will just simply be transportation, because I'm not used to especially the underground. I'm just not used to that type of...

Nicholas: ...so kind of grasping the detail, and...

Student 2: Yeah, exactly, and in being comfortable with getting on and off the train and making sure that I'm there at the correct time, you know all of that stuff so.

Nicholas: Yeah, yeah okay. Um, in terms of thinking about, you know my research is largely communication based, so thinking about...

Student 2: Mhmmm...

Nicholas: ...the people you're going to encounter on your trip. Now these could be other classmates or, um you know people at the underground stops, etc., um who do you think you're going to encounter? Like what will they kind of be like, so to speak?

Student 2: Oh, um....

Nicholas: ..and you can be creative with this question. That's completely fine.

Student 2: Well I mean as far as people I mean I think that you can encounter just about anything, anywhere, even here in Indianapolis you can do that, but um I think that it'll be interesting I mean I had an experience last time where I would bump into people and I would say 'excuse me'...

Nicholas: Uh-huh....

Student 2: ...and um and they would give me the weirdest looks, and it took me five days before my friend told me that if I bump into someone I need to say sorry, because if I say 'excuse me' that means I farted (laughs).

Nicholas: I mean you bring up kind of a cultural aspect...

Student 2: Right, right so um I think that in a lot of ways I think London is just as much of a melting pot as anywhere here can be. So as far as the different kinds of people I'll meet, it's...

Nicholas: ...hard to say?

Student 2: ...hard to say. I think that in my group um I think I'm about the oldest one who's going, so and I think that for a lot of them maybe, and I could be wrong about this, but it's probably their first time out of the country so that might be interesting, so.

Nicholas: Yeah. Okay, uh moving right along the next question, uh, I'm going to ask you to kind of, again from a communication perspective, we're going to look at conversations. So it'll be sort of in that you're trying to imagine what the conversation would sound like so...

Student 2: Okay...

Nicholas: ...it'll be you say something, and then whoever you're interacting with will say something and that's the back and forth. Okay?

Student 2: Okay, all right.

Nicholas: Um I mentioned difficulties and you mentioned the underground, etc.

Student 2: Mmmhmm...

Nicholas: Specifically in communicating with other people, you mentioned some of the younger students, and you mentioned other people within London, what communication difficulties do you think you're going to deal with abroad, even given that it's the same language roughly?

Student 2: Um I think that the accent will definitely prove difficult at times. Um, especially...

Nicholas: Just from an oral perspective?

Student 2: Just from, just being able to hear and understand. Um, and that's based on experience, you know last time I was there it took me a good four days to figure out how to listen to people, and...

Nicholas: Yeah...

Student 2: ...and interpret how they speak I think that the accent will cause not necessarily problems but will be more challenging than, um, than I expect, and I think that that will be on both sides as well, because I know that I will probably have to repeat myself more.

Nicholas: So what would that sound like? Like I mean would it be let's say you're in the underground...

Student 2: Right.

Nicholas: ...and you have to ask someone where you are.

Student 2: Okay.

Nicholas: Where would the difficulty come in, in that conversation? You know, would you say would it be a lot of 'what did you say?' and...

Student 2: It would be. It would be 'excuse me, I'm sorry, I didn't quite get what you just said to me, that type of thing, and um I think that's fairly typical but uh it would definitely that's 'what? I'm sorry, I didn't get that', and it would probably be the three times, you know?

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 2: 'What I'm sorry?', 'oh I didn't hear that again', 'oh, ok', and then go to the next person and ask them (laughs).

Nicholas: Okay, no it's, that's certainly you know it's well you look at just basically the question is getting at you know the back and forth, you know where's the challenge or difficulty there, you know and even not necessarily the subject but just what well I'm trying to say this what, and you think it's the meaning is what the problem is, and that it's not conveying the accent, okay.

Student 2: Right, right.

Nicholas: Okay. Um what effect do you think this study abroad will have on you, in terms of something that's maybe more immediate and something that's longer term? I mean what are you going to take away from this?

Student 2: As far as communication?

Nicholas: Oh no just in general.

Student 2: Just in general? I think that just generally speaking it will give me a chance to go to all of the places that I didn't get to go to last time I was there, um and it will really I'll get to see some great art and be around people who are interested in things not necessarily a lot of people I know are that interested in, you know?

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: It's not, I think it will be fantastic just to go and be immersed by people who know and understand and are just interested in art and that's what they like and it'll be a new experience for me because that's not, it's not that I'm not interested in art, it's just not something that...

Nicholas: ...that you've been exposed to.

Student 2: Right. Exactly. Um, as far as communication-wise, um...

Nicholas: Perfect segue into the next question.

Student 2: (laughs)

Nicholas: The next question is do you think the way you'll communicate will change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 2: I think it will, definitely. At least short-term, um...

Nicholas: How? Would it be, would you notice it in, again, the back and forth that we kind of mentioned, um something that you take with you, something that, that you encounter abroad?

Student 2: Um it will definitely be in the back and forth. Last time when I came back I had an accent for about five hours.

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 2: Um, and I found like I just didn't even realize it until I started speaking to my mom, and she was saying all of these things and I was like wait, that's not how I've been saying these things for the last few days, you know?

Nicholas: I'm curious, you know you mentioned speaking with your mom, what did the conversation sound like? You know not necessarily the subject but you know was she saying 'oh, you know how was your day, etc.?' and then you would say...

Student 2: It was a 'how was your trip?' conversation. It was I got off of the airplane and my mom was waiting there for me and I was elongating my o's and like that type of thing and I didn't like, I didn't have an accent, it wasn't like oh I just came back with a British accent, you know?

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: It was just like certain characteristics and I was using words, I was using lift and I was using rubbish bin and I was that type of thing...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: Um because that's what my friends used and I was definitely in, I was in a tourist that week, for the most part in Darby, I was staying in apartment with friends, we went around the city, you know we did a pub crawl, that type of thing.

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: So um, so I was elongating my o's and it was just really an odd experience but like it was something corrected really quickly.

Nicholas: Yeah, and that's really the only lasting thing you noticed?

Student 2: Yeah. That's um that's it. I think though that if you were to spend more time there you would definitely come back with a, with more, just in general.

Nicholas: okay, well that's really uh all the questions that I have. Thank you.

### **Student 3**

Nicholas: All right we'll go ahead and get going. Um first thing have you ever been abroad before?

Student 3: No.

Nicholas: Okay. Um that's basically the first question if you had any experiences abroad. Second one, uh what challenges do you think you're going to face on your study abroad, just general?

Student 3: Um the only thing I'm worried about is, like getting lost, I don't really think I will since I've been to New York and like wandered around by myself before...

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 3: ...I won't be able to use my phone so that will be kind of stressful, but it should be okay.

Nicholas: Okay, very nice. Um, this is more just kind of a cultural question, um but if you were going to describe kind of the people you are going to interact with, both inside and outside of the group, um how would you describe them?

Student 3: Uh I don't really know anyone in the group, to describe, um...

Nicholas: Yeah, okay.

Student 3: ...I know a few people in London, and I might go see them...

Nicholas: Oh wow.

Student 3: ...um probably just hang around like the more indie-punk-hipster, people in like bands and stuff...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 3: ...art groups.

Nicholas: Yeah, so do you see, you know in talking about that group of people versus people that you would find here, kind of the same niche, do you see any differences, or do you see?

Student 3: They'd probably be pretty much the exact same.

Nicholas: Yeah?

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 3: Slightly different, but...

Nicholas: Slightly different...

Student 3: ...but mostly the same.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, let's see, what communication difficulties do you think you're going to deal with abroad?

Student 3: I don't really think that there will be anything...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 3: ...because, I don't know, it seems like a well-organized city...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 3: ...so like they are geared towards tourists, so even tourists who don't speak English get along.

Nicholas: Yeah, yeah, okay. Um I'm going to kind of ask you, this is more just looking at the conversation, which is one of the aspects I'm studying, but I'm going to give you a scenario and I just kind of want you to imagine what the conversation would be like and then sort of talk it out. Um it could be very general, or anything like that but I'll kind of give you the scenario. So let's say um you're at a public transport stop, on the tube it's your day off, uh and you're not exactly sure, you mentioned getting lost or navigating the city, you're not exactly sure where you want to go. So you approach, um one of the people on the platform and you have to ask for directions. You know kind of getting back to the difficulties how do you see the conversation kind of evolving? Like you would approach and just say, like what would you say?

Student 3: Like 'hey, I'm trying to get to Kensington Square, does this train run that way?' and they'd be like 'yeah, take it to two more stops' and be like 'thanks'.

Nicholas: So you really don't see any, like...

Student 3: No.

Nicholas: ...misunderstandings or anything like that? Okay, very interesting. Um what effect do you think this study abroad will have on you? I mean both immediate term and then kind of longer?

Student 3: Um I think it'll mostly just be, like reinforcing my like of art, and like how that's what I want to do, and like hang around that more, so I think that'll be good and then like long-term probably just be like more reinforcing of my like for big cities, and a fond reminiscence for later on.

Nicholas: Okay. Do you think the way you communicate, just the fundamental way you speak, will change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 3: Um yeah probably.

Nicholas: Yeah?

Student 3: Even when I read books, I've read like 'Little Women' and that changed my, like speaking to myself and out loud a little bit...

Nicholas: Mmmmhmm...

Student 3: ...so I'm sure it'll change a little bit.

Nicholas: What how do you think it'll change? Do you think I mean, and I know it's kind of hard to forecast but just being creative, I mean do you see yourself focusing on one thing and not another, etc.?

Student 3: Um I'll probably just start picking up different words or like speaking in different rhythms.

Nicholas: Okay. I know it's kind of a difficult question...

Student 3: Yeah...yeah.

Nicholas: Okay. Um the last one will kind of be going back to that conversational thing you mentioned that, you know it'd be pretty straightforward – asking for directions, getting them, and moving on. Do you see, like that being an example of sort of a good or something you expect to happen and just conversation something like 'this would be a good conversation for me to have', so if you were to encounter difficulty, or let's say somebody else encountered difficulty in having that same, what do you think that would sound like? Like what would be the misunderstanding, what would be kind of the difficulty in that?

Student 3: Um I guess they could like, if someone was like 'ask someone else for directions', and then like 'I don't know, I don't live here'...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 3: ...or I don't really know.

Nicholas: So you don't necessarily see it as, you see it just more as information...

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...and not knowing or maybe not understanding, things like that.

Student 3: Yeah. I don't think it's really a broad cultural issue, going from like United States to UK...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 3: ...so I feel like it'd mostly be irrelevant to like, they'd know everything that's like, all going on.

Nicholas: Okay. Uh well that is it, that's all I have.

#### **Student 4**

Nicholas: Um so first one is just a basic kind of question, have you ever been abroad before? And if so...

Student 4: No.

Nicholas: Ok, so this is your first time?

Student 4: This is my very first time.

Nicholas: have you ever been outside of the country before?

Student 4: To Mexico.

Nicholas: To Mexico, okay. Uh what challenges do you think you're going to face during your study abroad, just real general?

Student 4: Challenges...I'm nervous about the transportation, like finding my way around...

Nicholas: Okay...

Student 4: like can I read the map? Like I'm terrible at directions!

Nicholas: Oh no that's fine so you think it'll be, like you could imagine yourself going into a tunnel station or anything like that and just trying to figure out where you are and where you need to go...

Student 4: That'll be a challenge I think.

Nicholas: Okay. Do you see any others or do you just see...?

Student 4: I think since I'm going with a group it won't be as challenging as if I tried to venture out on my own, so and having a professor who has already been there, it I'll pretty much be directed of where to go and what to do...

Nicholas: Yeah...

Student 4: ...so I don't think it'll be as challenging as if I were to just go there and vacation on my own...yeah.

Nicholas. Okay. Um let's see, this is, again, just in general, but who do you think you're going to encounter on your trip, like if you had to describe the people you'll encounter on your trip and not just in the group, but like people in that tunnel station for example, who will they be, what will they be like?

Student 4: I hope I'm going to encounter friendly people, people that are friendly and willing to help me if needed...

Nicholas: Mmhmm...

Student 4: Um I'm sure, I'm sure it's going to be like people over here, you know?

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 4: You're going to have your people that are in a busy, hustle, hurry and people that are kind of sketchy, you know you're going to have your friendly people, so I think it'll be a mixture.

Nicholas: Okay. Um if you had to describe the culture that you'll encounter, and just any adjectives, any type of way of describing the culture, how would you do it?

Student 4: I feel like they might be a little bit higher class than we are...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: ...I think they'll be a little bit more formal.

Nicholas: More formal, okay.

Student 4: I would say a lot more rich in culture.



Nicholas: Rich in culture, what do you mean rich in culture, like?

Student 4: I think they will probably embrace their traditions and their lifestyle a lot more so than we do...

Nicholas: Okay, so a lot, like things you'll see visually, or that just around, or...

Student 4: Yeah, just conversation that I may hear, I feel like it's just going to be, just going to be rich, you know, a lot more traditional and you know...

Nicholas: Okay so you mentioned formal like a lot more very formal kind of language, or?

Student 4: Um, like their behavior, the more mannerisms...

Nicholas: Mannerisms...

Student 4: ...like more proper I should say.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: Not as laid back like we are here, we can get kind of lazy (laughs).

Nicholas: No that's all right. Um all right so the next one kind of is a communication question, you mentioned kind of the conversation I can probe a little bit, if you were going, if you were in, we'll keep using the analogy of being at the train station, so let's say you're at the train station, somebody comes up and asks you for directions, what would say to them? I mean would, what would be your first response?

Student 4: 'I am not from here'.

Nicholas: 'I am not from here'...

Student 4: 'I cannot help you'...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: ...but I could be like 'I have a map do you want to use it?'.

Nicholas: Yeah. So you would try, and if they said 'oh, well you know can I see the map etc.', so then you'd just kind of go back and forth that way?

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: I'd converse with them.

Nicholas: What do you think would be difficult about that? Or even if you had to approach somebody and ask them for directions, what like let's say you approached them and asked somebody 'hey, you know, hey is this King's cross?' you know, something like a station that you'd be at. What challenges do you think you'd face in that moment?

Student 4: Um...

Nicholas: Like what would they say that'd be difficult?

Student 4: I think their honesty, I think I would question whether they're honest with me, or you know they are probably going to know that I'm not from there, and just kind of lead me in a direction, just to get me out of their hair...

Nicholas: So you think that, they would say, what would they say to you? Would they just say 'oh...'

Student 4: I think they might like point in general directions, almost like halfway assuming I know where I'm at, and not like be like pinpointing my exact location, like 'this is the direction you need to go', like...

Nicholas: So they would say, 'go this way'.

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then you would say...

Student 4: 'what is that way?' (laughs)

Nicholas: What is that way, huh?

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: So you would kind of seek to just confirm a lot of knowledge as...

Student 4: Yeah I would definitely yeah, confirm a lot, ask a lot of questions...

Nicholas: ...ask a lot of questions...

Student 4: ...and I'm very visual, so I'd be like 'what am I going to see in this area?'

Nicholas: Oh, okay, so that would be almost your next question, so you would say 'where do I need to go?', 'what is there?', and then 'what would I see?'...

Student 4: Yeah, because I'm a lot more landmarks than street names...

Nicholas: Ok, all right. Um, and the next question kind of goes off of that, beyond just the conversational, do you think you're going to encounter any difficulties just in terms of speaking to anyone, not necessarily just directions?

Student 4: I don't think so.

Nicholas: Don't think so?

Student 4: No.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: I think, I don't think I'll, I mean I think vocabulary that's different than what we use, so I would just ask them if I don't know what something means.

Nicholas: Yeah, so then you would go back into that 'what does that mean?' and then...

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: Do you think that would be challenging in itself?

Student 4: It would be awkward, like I would feel hesitant...

Nicholas: So if somebody said a sentence and then you'd go, what would you say, like 'what does that mean?', or...

Student 4: I'd be like 'I apologize but I'm not quite sure what, I don't understand what you told me, I don't know'.

Nicholas: Okay, and then 'what does that mean?' and then hopefully they would respond, okay.

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: Um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you, both short-term and long-term?

Student 4: Um...

Nicholas: And it's a very general question, so...

Student 4: Yeah. I think it'll improve me as an artist, because I'm going to be a lot more culturally aware, so it might become an inspiration for me...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 4: ...and further work could be short-term or long-term. I definitely think I'm going to be more open-minded, and more aware...

Nicholas: Of just things that you experienced, or different...

Student 4: Mmmhmm...I think I'd be doing a lot of compare and contrast.

Nicholas: ...between what your experience has been here versus there...

Student 4: Yeah, and I think id' continually do that throughout...

Nicholas: Yeah. Um, do you think the way you'll communicate when you come back will change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 4: Possibly.

Nicholas: Possibly, how do you see it changing? Or potentially...

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...I mean this is all kind of creative...

Student 4: Theoretical?

Nicholas: Yeah, theoretical.

Student 4: I think I might be...I feel like I would maybe talk with a bit more confidence...

Nicholas: Mmhmmm...

Student 4: ...because just going through that experience I think I'm going to grow as a person...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 4: ...so yeah I think I would just talk with a lot more confidence, and be more aware of my environment.

Nicholas: Aware of your environment, okay, um well that is it that's all I have for you.

### **Student 5**

Nicholas: Um so the first question uh, I asked you this already, but so you said you've been abroad to Mexico before but nowhere else outside of the country?

Student 5: Right, right.

Nicholas: Ok and that was vacation, not study abroad?

Student 5: Yeah, yeah family vacation.

Nicholas: Ok, Um the next question, what challenges do you think you're going to face studying abroad, just general, I mean could be anything.

Student 5: Um, probably the setting challenges, it's a little different set-up than a regular class so I'll have to time manage outside of class for it, um, besides that probably...

Nicholas: Probably not anything, okay. Um if you had to describe people that you're going to encounter on your trip, not just people, like the people that will be in London, how would you do it, what would you say? How would you describe them?

Student 5: Um I'd probably ask them where they are from, because most likely they'll be tourists, um hopefully I'll meet people that live there, or something like that, um, probably just ask about them...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 5: ...if I even do that because I'm not very social to some people...

Nicholas: Mmhmm...

Student 5: Um, that's probably about it...

Nicholas: Probably about it. So do you, like if you were to, not even about what they look like, but just general traits, about people you'll meet. Maybe you'll meet them at the train station, maybe you'll meet them in museums, what would they be like?

Student 5: Um, probably more artistic because we are going to art museums...

Nicholas: Yeah, art areas.

Student 5: ...um hopefully, I don't know.

Nicholas: Don't know? No that's okay, that's completely fine. Um all right so now I'm going to kind of ask you to imagine a scenario and kind of what you would say in it...

Student 5: Okay.

Nicholas: Um, you're going to get on a train, a couple different times to go to different places, so let's say you're at the train station waiting on the train, and you don't exactly know where you are, and you have to come up and ask somebody where the next station is, where to go, etc. How do you think that conversation would go?

Student 5: Um...

Nicholas: I mean if you were to ask, like what would you say and what would you expect them to say in return?

Student 5: I would probably say 'excuse me, do you know how to get to so and so', wherever I'm going, and then I'd hope that they would politely answer me...

Nicholas: Yeah. And then would that be the end of the conversation, what would you say after that?

Student 5: Oh I'd thank them and then probably go on.

Nicholas: Thank them and go on. So if they didn't answer, if it wasn't like 'oh it's just right down there', how else would they be able to answer, like what different scenarios can you see?

Student 5: Um, they could walk me there...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 5: Um, or they could just say that they don't know, and point me to someone else, to ask.

Nicholas: Okay, okay. Um, let's see, what if, on the flipside, what if you were in a train station and someone came up to you and asked you for directions, what would you say...

Student 5: Um...

Nicholas: ...if they said, 'where is tottenham square?' or something like that, what would you say?

Student 5: If I knew I'd point them in the right direction, I probably wouldn't walk with them there, but...

Nicholas: ...but what would say you would just say 'oh it's'...down there...

Student 5: ...oh it's up this way towards there up this way and that way...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 5: Um or I'd direct them towards a map, if there was one around, I guess...

Nicholas: Okay, so just very simple 'oh it's over there', or 'I don't know, etc.' and then they would say 'ok thanks', or whatever, okay. Um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you, both short and long term?

Student 5: Um short-term, I think it'll be good experiences with new people, and long-term it'll definitely broaden my understanding of some of the pieces I'm going to be seeing...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 5: ...because I'm an art major, and hopefully that'll influence my work in the future.

Nicholas: Now when you say, what was the short-term influence, say that again, the...

Student 5: The people I meet and hopefully they'll have some kind of impact while I'm there to understand things, which is kind of long-term I guess too, but...

Nicholas: Well no that's okay, what do you think that impact will be, do you think it'll be more...?

Student 5: It'd probably be their point of view, because everyone has a different point of view of different things...

Nicholas: Yeah...

Student 5: ...so hopefully it'd make me think of things in a different way, and just not mine...

Nicholas: Okay, and specifically relating to art and other things as well, okay...

Student 5: Right.

Nicholas: Um do you think the way you communicate when you come back, so when you're back in The United States, do you think that's going to change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 5: As in an accent?

Nicholas: Oh no, anything. Could be anything, could be an accent, could be words, could be...

Student 5: I might have a few more words in the art world, of how to describe things...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 5: Um, that's probably about it though, I don't see myself...

Nicholas: You don't foresee much change?

Student 5: No.

Nicholas: Okay, honestly, I think that's it.

### **Student 6**

Nicholas: Um so remind me, have you been abroad before?

Student 6: I have.

Nicholas: Okay, and that was for vacation, correct, or no?

Student 6: Um vacation and study. I went during high school...

Nicholas: That's right.

Student 6: ...with my Japanese class as part of a school trip. So...

Nicholas: Okay, excellent. Um, first thing what challenges do you think you're going to face during your study abroad, very general?

Student 6: Oh, um, I mean there's probably going to be some form of culture shock I assume...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: ...just um, also getting used to a new urban environment, I find that to be a little bit disorienting at first...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...just needing to find places to, uh, find food or get back to the hotel not get lost, um a little bit of museum shock as well...I think a lot of standing and looking at a lot of...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...beautiful art but it's all beautiful all the time, so um...

Nicholas: Exactly.

Student 6: ...a little bit of that, and um, I shouldn't, I shouldn't think that jet lag would be much of a problem this time, but that's been a problem with me before.

Nicholas: Oh ok, all right. Um if you had to describe the people that you are going to encounter on your trip, kind of just general, not necessarily people in the group, but just people in London, how would you do it?

Student 6: Oh, I think it's going to be really diverse group...

Nicholas: Mhmm...

Student 6: Um, from the descriptions from our teachers, it sounds like there is a really really diverse ethnic and cultural mix in London itself, so I think a lot of people that I'll just encounter on the street or meet at places that I go will have a lot of different backgrounds and different experiences than...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...me as a Midwestern, you know, student in The United States, but um, I just kind of expect to be a big different mix of people.

Nicholas: A different mix of people, okay. Um, well we're going to start and try and do, I'm going to give you a scenario and basically what I want you to do is just try and tell me how the conversation would go, so it'd be like well I would say this, and I think he or she will say this, and kind of back and forth, um you're in the tube, so you're in a train station, and you don't know exactly where you are, and you approach someone, um and ask for directions. First off, if the conversation went well, or or it was a good experience, how would that sound? So you would walk up and you would say...

Student 6: I would say 'excuse me, do you know, uh which line this is or what the next stop is?'...

Nicholas: Mmhmm...

Student 6: ...and hopefully they would tell me which stop it would be or, um like which the end stop is the name of the line, and so then I'd be able to check a map...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...and um I would say 'thanks', or...

Nicholas: So it'd be a very quick, um 'do you know where this is', 'you're here', and then 'thank you', and that's it?

Student 6: Mmmhmm...

Nicholas: Okay. Um if that conversation were to be difficult, or if you could foresee it going kind of challenging, what would you say? Like how would that sound different? So you would come up and you would say...

Student 6: Well, um...



Nicholas: ...and it's okay to be creative, I mean that's the...

Student 6: Gosh, I don't know, I'd probably ask them again, um 'do you know which stop is next?', or um, uh 'which line is this', and um I don't know I mean maybe they would realize that I'm not from London or England, and you know maybe call me out on that, I'm not sure, um...

Nicholas: ...so what would that sound like?

Student 6: I really wouldn't know, I've never had a negative experience in a foreign country where people were unwilling to, um like give me help on directions or something, but um, I mean perhaps I'd need to repeat myself several times or have them repeat themselves several times and...

Nicholas: So, so you would be repeating yourself, 'I'm sorry I need directions to this place, etc.' and then that person would say like 'I don't understand', or...

Student 6: ...or maybe they'd say 'Charing Cross' and I wouldn't understand I'd say 'which stop?' and they'd have to repeat themselves and I would say...

Nicholas: Ah, okay.

Student 6: ...'did you mean charrington cross, or chattingham station, or', and then I would have to excuse myself, 'sorry to bother you', and things...

Nicholas: Okay, um, what, kind of out of that same vein but not necessarily in the back and forth, do you think you're going to encounter any communication difficulties, just in general?

Student 6: I really shouldn't think so, um...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...especially since we have the same language and most people even if they have a, a different first language, um speak English in day-to-day business, um I shouldn't think there'd be too much, difficulty...

Nicholas: Okay. Um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you both in the short-term and the long-term?

Student 6: Well short-term I think it'll just be a really good break to get me motivated again, about um studying art and art history and also enough of a break to keep me motivated here on-campus, just feeling like, you know I have to get up and go to school every day, it's the same old same old, and this will be enough of a change to kind of get me out of that rut and um, in the long-term hopefully um I feel that I'm, just like a more aware person of the world and even my own surroundings each time I go abroad...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...and hopefully just becoming a more balanced person, and more well-rounded, and um it keeps me motivated to you know, learn things here at school, or elsewhere when I do have that new experience by going abroad.

Nicholas: To draw on...?

Student 6: Yeah. So I think of studying abroad as just a, really good way to become a well-rounded and well-educated person.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, do you think the way you communicate, so not necessarily what you say but just the way you say it, will change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 6: It might, um...

Nicholas: How? Like what do you foresee? And again, it's ok to be creative...

Student 6: ...I'll probably, I'll probably try out different ways of like approaching a conversation, saying excuse me sir or maim, or um, those are just general ways that I would approach a conversation...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...here, with someone, um I might find that just another turn of phrase or a different way of approaching someone might be a lot more effective and um having someone be willing to help me out with a map or, um just different things that I might want to communicate to someone, and um, I might pick up different ways of arranging my sentences even, um...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...when I speak to people I tend to parrot what they say, and the way that they speak, so that hopefully they won't find me as strange and they'll be more willing to give me information, um so that I can fit in a little bit more, so...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 6: ...I might even end up adapting what I want to say and how I say it, um, just to help myself fit in, with the community there.

Nicholas: Uh so the last question, um kind of going back to that back and forth that we talked about earlier, now I'll give you the same scenario but imagine you were approached by someone, that's not part of the group that's asking for directions, um let's say that you don't know kind of where you are, and they are approaching you how would you see that conversation going?

Student 6: Well if they came up and asked, you know 'excuse me, do you know where xyz place is?'...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: I would say 'I'm sorry, but I'm not familiar with this area either', but you know maybe say something like 'I know there's a, I saw, a place over there, like that next street where you could buy a map and I'm sure that the workers there would, they would know where that place is', or um 'I know where another landmark place is', I'd probably say like 'you can take this street or this place to get to that spot where you can orient yourself and find where you need to go next', but I don't know specifically.

Nicholas: ...and then that person would just say, what? Like after you give them that information what would you expect them to say?

Student 6: They would either um, I don't know maybe say 'thanks' and leave, or 'oh, I'm sorry, I thought...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: ...you would know or have a map', or um, or maybe even they would say like 'are you sure you don't know?', maybe where this other place is, or...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...can you like show me where to find help or directions or...

Nicholas: Okay, so you would either say, that would be it, or just try and provide a little bit more assistance and move on?

Student 6: ...yeah, just like enough of what I know to help them, and like they are probably in the same situation as me, and...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...enough to get them started to find where they need to go or what they need to do.

Nicholas: Okay, well that's all we have.

Student 6: Great.

### **Student Post-Experience Interview Transcripts**

#### **Student 1**

Nicholas: So now looking back on the trip as opposed to looking forward, uh generally, what challenges did you face on the study abroad? Just real general, doesn't have to be specific in any context.

Student 1: Um, I guess the, it was kind of challenging to just get accustomed to, um, transportation was a little confusing but, it's a great design...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 1: ...so easy to pick up after that. Um...

Nicholas: Did you guys all go to the transportation collectively or was it kind of...yeah...

Student 1: Yeah we usually went together in the mornings...

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 1: ...um, which is also, kind of, more stressful than doing it on your own because you have so many people and it's rush hour and getting through these tiny little stalls like this...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...yup.

Student 1: ...um, and I thought that getting to know the group would be more challenging than it was but...

Nicholas: Did you find you gelled pretty quickly?

Student 1: Yeah, it was a good mix of people, everyone was really nice, and...

Nicholas: Excellent, good to hear, good to hear. Um, if you were going to, uh, describe some of the people you encountered on your trip outside of the group, in general just like culturally, what would you say?

Student 1: Um, I would um I noticed, just in general observing the people on the transportation and on the street, um they seem to be a lot more private...

Nicholas: Private?

Student 1: ...I think than people around here, even landing in Philadelphia from London, the plane was really quiet and on the underground people were normally pretty reserved like reading a book or listening to their Ipod and then getting on the plane to Philadelphia there's like all these people talk, talk, talk, talk, talk really loud, and...

Nicholas: So you noticed a big difference, you mentioned just talking and volume, so...

Student 1: Right.

Nicholas: ...when you were in London, you noticed it was quieter, most people would you say kept to themselves?

Student 1: Um, maybe...

Nicholas: Mmmhmmmm...

Student 1: ...I mean unless people were in groups and having their own things but it was much more private even when people were talking, and people were really easy to approach and really helpful and clever when you needed help but...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 1: ...in general it was...

Nicholas: ...a very?

Student 1: ...like not wasting words.

Nicholas: Not wasting words, ok so succinct? Just very...

Student 1: Right, yeah.

Nicholas: Okay. Um what communication if you, um had any communication difficulties abroad, um, what were there or did you have any, would you say?

Student 1: Um I didn't really notice any, too much, there were a few, um like little words and things that are different...it's the same language essentially, but um it wasn't too rough.

Nicholas: when you say 'few words', what do you mean? Do you mean someone would say something to you and you were unfamiliar with that term?

Student 1: Right, like going to the 'lift', or um instead of exit signs they say 'way out'...

Nicholas: Uh-huh...

Student 1: ...which is different.

Nicholas: So just those little kind of, okay.

Student 1: But it really didn't pose any, like problems.

Nicholas: All right, so think back over the week and pick one time, and this can be, if it's not, well you know I asked if you had difficulties, think of either one time you had difficulty communicating with somebody or just an interesting communication episode. So maybe it was something that went really well or something that was difficult just think of one instance for a minute and let me know when you have it.

Student 1: I was shopping at Top Shop...

Nicholas: Okay...

Student 1: ...and the sales clerk was asking me about something about a certain tax I wasn't familiar with...

Nicholas: Okay...

Student 1: ...and she, um was kind of speaking in terms I was unfamiliar with and she asked where I was a UK citizen or whether I would be in the near future, and then she asked me something about if it was this condition I wouldn't have to pay a tax and if it was this condition I would have to pay a tax and she asked if I'd be, I couldn't tell if she asked if I'd be leaving the country or living in the country...

Nicholas: Ah, okay.

Student 1: ...and there I had to repeat several times.

Nicholas: So, so the conversation went something like, so were you checking out?

Student 1: Yes.

Nicholas: Is that what...okay. So you had a couple items I'm assuming?

Student 1: Mmmhmm...

Nicholas: And then you approached the counter, and then you basically just laid them up there, correct?

Student 1: Mmmhmmm...

Nicholas: And then when it, so she rung them up? And that was...

Student 1: Yes.

Nicholas: Okay. She rung them up and then what did she say to you? Was she like, just kind of remember the conversation out loud. So she said something, you said something, then just go back and forth.

Student 1: Um...

Nicholas: And it's okay if you're not one hundred percent on it...

Student 1: Yeah, I'm not, I don't remember it...

Nicholas: ...that well?

Student 1: ...but um, I think she just asked about my citizenship...

Nicholas: Okay, and then you said? What did you say to that?

Student 1: I think I said I was an American.

Nicholas: you were an American, okay, and then she said, was that the point when she asked?

Student 1: I think so.

Nicholas: Okay so then she said...

Student 1: 'Will you be living here in the next couple months or will you be leaving here in the next couple months?'

Nicholas: Ah, okay. So then what did you say?

Student 1: And then I said 'excuse me, can you repeat that?' (laughs), and then, um she asked again and I did not understand and I just said 'no'.

Nicholas: Okay, okay. So then you said 'no', and what happened right after that? Was that the end of the conversation?

Student 1: That was the end.

Nicholas: Okay so then she just said 'it's this much'...

Student 1: And I said it's less of a hassle to just deal with the tax than...

Nicholas: Ah, okay. So it wasn't necessarily as important as figuring out if you had to pay tax or not rather than just paying it an moving on.

Student 1: Right.

Nicholas: Okay, um, let's see...if you were going to change that, like episode, so if like you could change dynamics of that interaction, how would you do it? Would you have said something differently? Would, you know, looking back on it what would you have changed?

Student 1: Um, I mean I guess I could've...

Nicholas: Or even on her part, what do you think she could've done differently on both?

Student 1: Um, I feel like I could've probably could've asked a different question for clarification or if she would've gone into more depth about like what the issue actually was she was trying to address...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 1: ...it would've made it...

Nicholas: ...a little bit easier (inaudible)...

Student 1: Right.

Nicholas: So instead you felt like you were kind of getting around the same thing over and over...

Student 1: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...and finally it was like 'well, we need to get past this'.

Student 1: It's easier to ignore it.

Nicholas: Easier to ignore it. Okay. Um what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you now that you've been abroad and you've come back?

Student 1: Um I think, um I'm a little bit more aware of just things in everyday life that you take for granted and just the general dynamics of transportation, how we get along, how we spend our time, um public interaction, um and then the art...

Nicholas: Yeah, of course.

Student 1: ...transformation which is amazing, just like all of this art that seemed mythical kind of, like you read about it and you know about it but you don't know that's it tangible and that it actually exists...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 1: ...being able to be in the presence of those art objects was really amazing, and it's possible.

Nicholas: (laughs) Um, and the last question do you think the way you're going to communicate in the future, any lessons that you might've taken or any experiences, do you think that's going to change as a result of being abroad? And if so, how?

Student 1: Um, I mean maybe indirectly in a small way, I think um, just that little bit of cultural awareness that you gain, and um I don't know, just the general knowledge coming from it, um gives you a wider...I don't know the words for it...(laughs)

Nicholas: That's okay, do you think you're going to be, would you say more comfortable in different or troubling interaction?

Student 1: I think so, just having gained experience and knowing that I'm able to handle certain situations and certain challenges.

Nicholas: Okay. Well that is it.



## **Student 2**

Nicholas: All right, we'll go ahead. Uh, first question, let's see, uh: what challenges did you face when you were abroad, this time? In general, they don't have to be...

Student 2: Oh just in general?

Nicholas: ...yeah, just in general.

Student 2: Um, well I think the biggest challenge this time was learning the tube because I didn't use it last time...

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 2: ...um, but it was also really fun, a really fun experience, I got to learn how to use mass transit in a foreign nation...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: ...you know, it's cool. Um, my suitcase also broke, so that was interesting...

Nicholas: Oh, wow.

Student 2: ...and I carried on, so...(laughs)

Nicholas: Oh, yes that is interesting.

Student 2: Um, other challenges, um actually it was really interesting and this might segue into something else...

Nicholas: Mmhmmm...

Student 2: ...but um it was interesting the amount of foreign people for England, for Britain that I saw, probably about only half of the people I interacted with were actually British.

Nicholas: Were actually British, and did like you ask that question like 'oh are you guys from here?' or what gave you that impression, is my question?

Student 2: Language.

Nicholas: Language, okay.

Student 2: Yeah, language and accents and that type of thing.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, so if you had to describe, this is a perfect segue actually...

Student 2: There you go.

Nicholas: ...if you had to describe the people you encountered on your trip outside of the group, um what would you describe them as? Or what adjectives, would you describe the people, so kind of like a cultural question, like who did you meet, very generally.

Student 2: Okay. Um, generally people were very reserved, except for the Americans, you could always pick out of the Americans in the group...(laughs)

Nicholas: Uh-huh.

Student 2: ...um, but much more reserved...

Nicholas: Reserved how?

Student 2: Um, they kept to themselves, they didn't really speak much, um...

Nicholas: And this was in seeing them in public situations?

Student 2: This was in seeing them mostly on the tube.

Nicholas: Mostly on the tube, okay.

Student 2: Um, we spent a lot of time on the tube.

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 2: Um, but and then in the morning you know you were all up in people's grills and everyone was trying not to look at people, it was really interesting.

Nicholas: So in terms of eye contact, there wasn't a lot of eye contact made?

Student 2: Not a lot of eye contact no.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: Um, let's see, yeah, I mean...

Nicholas: You just got the sense that there was a more reserved sense...

Student 2: ...it's just a much more reserved culture, I think, than we are. I think we don't, they don't really tend to spill their feelings or talk a lot and that type of thing, so...

Nicholas: Okay, very interesting. Um, what communication difficulties did you deal with abroad, generally, if any?

Student 2: Um, I don't think, I'm not sure I really had any...

Nicholas: Or even just challenges, or maybe interesting times that you can think of?

Student 2: Um, my sister and I did go into this store and...

Nicholas: Okay, what kind of store?

Student 2: It was just like, it was called 'Accessorize', it was like a 'Claire's', like a...

Nicholas: Oh, okay. So like a clothing accessory kind of place?

Student 2: Right. Basically, and my sister decided to buy a pair of earrings, and so um we went up to the cash register to buy them or whatever, and she asked us, you know, why we were here and what we were doing, and we told her that we were on a school trip, and she said 'so are you on a break right now', and we go 'yeah, spring break', and she goes 'well that's interesting, you Americans call things such weird names, we would call it like half-time or something like that'...

Nicholas: Really?

Student 2: Yeah...(laughs)

Nicholas: That's really interesting.

Student 2: So, um which is interesting because I mean it's nowhere near half-way, I mean we are far over half-way through the semester at this point, so she didn't understand what spring break was at first, so.

Nicholas: Okay, so actually that's a good segue into the next question is think of that moment in time so kind of remember what it looked like, etc. and what the conversation sounded like, and then you kind of already did this, but think about the conversation. So, you walked up, and you were with, uh, Jordan?

Student 2: Yes.

Nicholas: And you walked up and she laid the earrings down, correct?

Student 2: Yeah.

Nicholas: Ok, and then at that point, so uh what did the conversation sound like? Did she greet you, and then just kind of like talk the conversation out, so to speak. So I said, she said, etc.

Student 2: Okay, well yeah um well of course she said 'hi', did we find everything, because we were in her store...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: ...and we said 'yes', and then um actually they had advertised a ten percent student discount...

Nicholas: Uh-huh...

Student 2: ...so my sister showed her school ID, and it's really interesting because every time we showed them our student ID, everyone looked really confused, because they had never seen an ID like that before.

Nicholas: So she said 'did you find everything', and then you guys said 'yes', and then, was it at that point that she said 'oh I have my student ID with me'?

Student 2: Yeah, my sister said 'I have my student ID here', and then she goes 'oh, absolutely' and she took it and looked at it, and looked at my sister, and looked at it again and um she goes 'are you guys from the states?'

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 2: And my sister goes 'yeah', and she goes 'I can't accept this as a student, we can only do British universities'.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 2: And my sister was like 'oh that's fine no big deal', you know, and so um she goes 'so, so what are you guys doing in London?', and 'why are you here?', and my sister goes 'well we are on a study abroad trip through our school', she said 'oh really, well what kind of break are you on? Are you here, like, what for? How long are you here?', 'just a week' my sister said, and she goes 'oh, well is this a school break for you?', and she goes 'yeah, it's our spring break', and she goes 'oh you guys call it, you Americans call things such weird names. Over here it would be half-time', or something like that, so...

Nicholas: And then at that point what was said?

Student 2: My sister and I just laughed.

Nicholas: Just laughed?

Student 2: Yeah, and I mean what can you say?

Nicholas: Yeah. And then at that point you would say the conversation just kind of stopped and then it was just...

Student 2: And then we just kind of exited the store, we said 'thank you', and 'have a great day', all of the usual pleasantries, and then we left.

Nicholas: Pleasantries. Okay so it was kind of an interesting moment to go through that conversation and just see the differences, so to speak. Okay, um if you were going to, like if you were going to imagine that same episode, and in two ways; one, if it would've been a difficult episode, if something would have gone wrong in that moment, or if it could have been better, what do you think that would have sounded like? So let's say we'll start with if that was going to be a difficult conversation or like a challenging conversation or something bad happened then, what would you anticipate the problems being conversationally, like she would say, like let's say with the student ID example...

Student 2: Right.

Nicholas: ...so she hands her the student ID and looks at it and what would she say that you would kind of go 'oh, that's, this is going to be challenging'?

Student 2: Um....

Nicholas: Just imagine.

Student 2: Well I suppose that when she said she couldn't accept our IDs as student IDs we could've gotten really upset about that.

Nicholas: But instead you took that as...

Student 2: Right, as just a cultural, a cultural norm. She doesn't, she, an ID like that she wouldn't be able to tell if it was fake or not because that's not their system...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: ...so.

Nicholas: And if it would've gone better, you know if there was any other way to kind of communicate differently or communicate a different idea in the case of the spring break...

Student 2: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...example, what would that have sounded like?

Student 2: Um, I don't know I guess probably um her 'half-time' or whatever she wanted to call it...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: ...I would be a little bit more curious to see like what that entails for them, because I know exactly what our spring break looks like...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 2: ...but I don't know what their half-time or their version of a spring break would look like.

Nicholas: So kind of seeing if there are parallels?

Student 2: Right, and whether or not and how much they differ, and so.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you now that you've experienced the format of going abroad and been through the university, etc., what would you say your impact is going to be for you? What are you taking away from it?

Student 2: Um I actually really enjoyed the trip for a number of reasons but I think the most academic reason that I really enjoyed it was because I got to look at, I'm not, I'm not in Herron, not an art major, so...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 2: ...I got to look at some really really awesome and famous works of art through the eyes of an artist and from an artistic perspective, instead of just simply from a spectator's perspective, you know?

Nicholas: So you felt like you got more depth?

Student 2: Definitely more depth, um I definitely learned a ton about um just what we looked at while we were over there; a new way to look at art, so...

Nicholas: Okay. Um, do you think the way you're going to communicate in the future will change as a result of your experiences, you know?

Student 2: Um, I don't think so...

Nicholas: Don't think so?

Student 2: ...I think that maybe when I go abroad, when I ask people those types of questions, maybe next time I'll have the guts to ask them 'ok, so what does your half-time look like?', you know, but...

Nicholas: Okay, so you feel like you'd be a little bit more open to exploring that?

Student 2: Definitely, and I think that that's, um, that that's normal...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 2: ...I think that I didn't know how to interact and whether or not what I said would be taken, would be taken the wrong way, or if I would take something she said the wrong way, so...

Nicholas: Yeah, okay. Well that is it.

### **Student 3**

Nicholas: Okay. Good to go, uh, so in general did you face any challenges abroad or just, and if you did, what were they? I mean they could be big, small, anything that was challenging.

Student 3: Um, the only like challenging thing would be heights, because I'm afraid of heights, and so like even in the subway stations the tubes are at such a like such a steep incline...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 3: ...if you look down it's not fun.

Nicholas: You mean like coming, going into the subway station and looking down as you're kind of, uh coming into it? Yeah. I remember how close those were to, they always seemed tight depending on what time you are travelling.

Student 3: Yeah, people.

Nicholas: Yeah, um if you were going to describe people outside the group, so just people in London that you encountered generally how would you do it?

Student 3: A lot of foreign tourists.

Nicholas: Really?

Student 3: Yeah. So, mostly people not speaking English.

Nicholas: Really?

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: That's surprising, that's interesting.

Student 3: I guess it's because we were mostly at museums and tourist spots but even on like the subway...

Nicholas: That was what you'd say the majority, kind of like a cosmopolitan kind of environment?

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: Ok, um if, did you deal with any communication difficulties when you were there? You know, either in the group or maybe on like the subway or anything like that?

Student 3: Not really.

Nicholas: Not really?

Student 3: No.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, if, I'm going to ask you think of one instance where you had a like an interesting communication episode. So maybe you were talking to somebody, outside of the group, or you were at a museum talking to somebody, just one instance that you thought 'that was an interesting episode' for whatever reason. And just let me know when you have it.

Student 3: Um, I really didn't talk to many people outside the group...

Nicholas: Okay. It could be in the group too. Just one, one episode that you thought 'wow, that really sticks out in my mind as a time when I had a good conversation or bad conversation'.

Student 3: Um, probably just like talking with everyone else in the group about, like on the plane ride back, like reflecting, and talking about the artwork and stuff, how cool it was to see some of the pieces.

Nicholas: So when you were talking with everybody, was it, were you guys all in a line on the plane or was it kind of scattered, or?

Student 3: Kind of scattered, like here, here, here, and there.

Nicholas: Mmmhmm, were you sitting next to a classmate of yours or was the conversation kind of across...

Student 3: I was sitting next to a classmate.

Nicholas: Um, so you guys were talking and it, did you recall specific instances and then just kind of say 'what did you think of that' or 'what did you think of this', like how did the conversation go, I guess?

Student 3: It was kind of like that, like piece-mealish, just like one piece, like talking about like how did you see that, that was really cool, and then go to a different like piece, and talk about that one...



Nicholas: Okay, so the conversation sounded something like ‘oh did you see, you know a piece of art’, ‘yeah I thought it was this’, and then that person would switch it up and say oh well did you go to this, etc.

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay. When you were on, um, before I asked kind of the, the tube scenario, when you are on the tube and asking for directions, how did you find travel on the tube? I mean was it, did you guys do as a group I’m assuming?

Student 3: Most, yeah. Most of the time we did it as a group. It wasn’t really that bad. The only hard time was like morning, nine o’clock, and then evening from like five to six when it’s like packed the whole time.

Nicholas: Yeah. Like when you were in there, did you find it hard to move around, did you find yourself saying ‘excuse me’, and trying to navigate through or?

Student 3: Yeah, there’s a lot of like polite like ‘excuse me’, like...

Nicholas: Oh, okay. Did you ever have any conversational interaction with people outside the group in that instance?

Student 3: (shakes head)

Nicholas: Not really, just literally an ‘excuse me’, and moving on? Okay, um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you? You know after experiencing it and coming back?

Student 3: Um, don’t really know...

Nicholas: Yeah?

Student 3: ...because mostly London just seemed like New York, except full of tourists, more so, and maybe if I had gotten to talk to people who lived there more, then that would’ve been cool, but...

Nicholas: You think that would’ve been something that you would’ve liked to have done a bit more, or?

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay, how was, did you go on the optional trip?

Student 3: Oxford?

Nicholas: Yes.

Student 3: Yeah.

Nicholas: How was that?

Student 3: It was cool, um by that point we were pretty tired, just like worn out from walking all the time, so we didn't really go see much, but...

Nicholas: Was that towards the end of the trip?

Student 3: (nods in agreement)

Nicholas: Ah, okay. Um, do you think, you know in kind of getting back to wishing that you got a bit more time conversationally with people from London, do you think, like how do you think that would've affected you? Or what do you think that would've changed about your experience? Do you think you would've gotten more out of it because of that?

Student 3: I, yeah I think so, because, um, I don't know, it'd be good to just get a better feel of London, because right now it just seems like a place full of museums that was kind of cool, but not like the most amazing thing in the world.

Nicholas: When you were in the museums were you in a group, or was it kind of individual?

Student 3: Um, we met briefly as groups and like split up and did our own thing and like re-convened to like check back in when we leave.

Nicholas: Okay, so did you, when you were in the museum did you encounter anyone that was looking at the art as well or was it very much an individual experience?

Student 3: Um, not like, I mean there were people around, but it wasn't like conversations or anything, so...

Nicholas: But not necessarily kind of engaging, just like very private conversations, okay. Um, let me see how we are doing, and we are good, that's it.

#### **Student 4**

Nicholas: Okay, um so the first thing we talked a little bit about it but what would you say some of the challenges that you faced, very general, not necessarily communication, but just challenges that you faced?

Student 4: Um at the very start it was getting used to the tube map.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: Being like ‘do I go east or west, north or south, where am I going?’

Nicholas: It is a very big map.

Student 4: Yeah, but it’s like once you got the hang of it, it was so easy, so simple to read, it was just like the first two days getting used to that...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 4: ...um I was challenged in my patience, um getting along with, you know, cooperating doing what others wanted to do, if it’s not exactly what you wanted to do, um...

Nicholas: So you’d say within the group and then also outside of the group and kind of interacting?

Student 4: Yeah, um that’s really kind of the basic, I mean it was really easy functioning and getting around, um it was just you kind of just wandered and I don’t know, that was pretty much the challenge – getting used to the tube and then interaction within the group.

Nicholas: Interaction within the group, okay. Um if you were going to describe who you encountered on your trip generally, so outside of your group...

Student 4: Mmmhmm...

Nicholas: ...people actually in London, how would you describe them?

Student 4: All nationalities.

Nicholas: All nationalities.

Student 4: Yeah, I didn’t expect that, I mean I heard German, French, Asian, I mean it was just a wide variety which I did not expect, which was kind of neat because just standing in the tube you would hear all of that, you know...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 4: ...um it was just interesting because there was this time people that actually spoke English these two girls were talking about um, they should get their license or they probably wouldn’t do it for the next few years and I’m like, in America a license is important, like that’s something you need to do, like right away...

Nicholas: You mean driver’s license?

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: Ah.

Student 4: So it was really interesting for them to like ponder it, you know what I mean? You know like 'maybe I should do it now', and like that's something crucial to have when you are here, so that was just interesting to hear that conversation.

Nicholas: Well that's very interesting. Um, let's see, so now in terms of difficulties with communication, um I would say, think of some times, again general times that you struggled a bit, what would you say some of those were?

Student 4: Um, I think when I would like order something, like...

Nicholas: ...so like ordering food, or...

Student 4: ...yeah, when I would order or really when it came to like ordering tea, I wasn't quite sure what to say, because they have so many different kinds, and sometimes they kind of looked at me like 'is this what you want?' (laughs), I mean that's...

Nicholas: So you kind of felt ignorant and just they were looking at you...

Student 4: ...yeah...

Nicholas: ...like 'I don't know exactly'...

Student 4: ...yeah, like just unfamiliar.

Nicholas: ...yeah.

Student 4: You could tell that I wasn't...yeah.

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 4: You could tell I was a tourist.

Nicholas: So beyond that can you think of any other times, or is that probably the one that sticks out in your mind?

Student 4: That's probably the one that sticks out in my mind because I mean I really didn't...when I asked people questions, like how do I get here, like there was no, there wasn't a miscommunication, like they understood and they told me exactly as if you know I hadn't been from there.

Nicholas: Oh, that's good. Okay, um so thinking about actually it's a perfect segue because I wanted you to think of one time that stuck out in your mind as 'this was difficult for me to communicate', and what you just mentioned about the tea was a great exchange, now um just to set that up it was at a café or was that, where was that? Where did that occur?

Student 4: Um, we were in Chinatown, and we were in a Chinese restaurant.

Nicholas: In a Chinese restaurant, okay. Um, was, so there was English being spoken though, correct?

Student 4: Yes.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, if you were going to change that episode, if you were going to make it better so to speak, how would you change what you said? Or actually let's just start there, just kind of go through the conversation like 'I said this', and then he or she said that, and then kind of back and forth.

Student 4: Um, well I was like, I asked where their tea menu was, and then they um, so they showed me on the...

Nicholas: So they came up to you, and then you said 'excuse me, where's your team menu'?

Student 4: Yes. And then they pointed it to me, and there was like a long list, some of the words I didn't know how to pronounce, and um I was like 'uh, I guess I'll take this one' and I just pointed to it, and they just reiterated like, you know to make sure I knew what I wanted.

Nicholas: So they asked 'is this the one you wanted'?

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then you said, what did you say?

Student 4: I said yes. Yeah, I was kind of just like 'yes', I hope I get it and like it (laughs), because I wasn't familiar with all the teas, so I was kind of like I just picked one and you know...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm. So if you were going to change that, do you think, what would've made that interaction a bit better?

Student 4: um, probably if I had looked at the menu beforehand, and got familiarized myself with it before I spoke.

Nicholas: Do you feel like it's a confidence thing? Like you felt like if you had more confidence in the way you spoke that that would've gone better...

Student 4: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...and that would've been like this.

Student 4: Right, yeah.

Nicholas: Okay. Is there anything else you thought you would've changed, even if you could change the way they approached you? Or what they said? That would make you more comfortable, more you know, kind of open to the exchange.

Student 4: I think it's just familiarizing, you know familiarize myself, like since I wasn't familiar with teas, or what tasted good and what not tasted good, I think if I would've maybe looked at that beforehand even before going there.

Nicholas: Before going there, ah okay.

Student 4: Yeah, because I knew I was going to try tea when I went over there but I didn't look into it or anything.

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 4: It's kind of silly to talk about tea, but I mean...

Nicholas: No, I mean that's a great example of the communication absolutely.

Student 4: ...(laughs) yeah.

Nicholas: Um, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you now that you've experienced it?

Student 4: Um...

Nicholas: Just in general.

Student 4: I'm going to be more open to doing it again.

Nicholas: okay.

Student 4: And I think this time I would like to go on my own...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 4: ...not like by myself, but like a trip that I plan myself, not a study abroad.

Nicholas: Okay. So kind of something to experience differently.

Student 4: Yeah, because I think I felt like I could've fully wrapped myself in the culture if I went by myself.

Nicholas: If you went by yourself, okay. Um, do you think the way that you will communicate in the future is going to change as a result of this study abroad?

Student 4: Oh, I think just make myself knowledgeable before I speak...

Nicholas: So kind of...

Student 4: ...I think so. Kind of look into things before I talk about it.

Nicholas: as a result based on the episode we talked about, that feeling of knowing this is what I would've changed...

Student 4: Having a general idea before I speak about it.

Nicholas: Okay. Well that's all I have for you.

### **Student 5**

Nicholas: all right, so um in general what challenges did you face when you were abroad? And I mean they don't have to be communication-related, they could be anything.

Student 5: Um, sleeping (laughs).

Nicholas: Sleeping. Did you find the jet lag was kind of difficult?

Student 5: Yeah, especially the first day, because we just kind of went with it and just got off the plane and went all day, so.

Nicholas: How was the flight, I mean not too bad or was it?

Student 5: It was long.

Nicholas: It was long, and then getting off was the tough part.

Student 5: Yeah, didn't sleep well, everyone was making noise.

Nicholas: Hmm...okay.

Student 5: But I got there.

Nicholas: Yeah, you did get there that's for sure. Let's see, any other things that you can think of that stick out in your mind besides just adjusting to the time?

Student 5: Um, some of the food, I didn't like...

Nicholas: Oh, okay. So just kind of getting used to...

Student 5: Yeah, nothing else really.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, if you were going to describe the people that you encountered on the trip outside of the group, so you know people in the tube, or people in museums, etc. how would you do it? What would you say kind of the culture is?

Student 5: They are a lot more kind than we are.

Nicholas: Hmmm, okay.

Student: Especially their communication, really.

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 5: Just the way they say things, is so much nicer, I understand why they are happier over there, than we are (laughs). Um, yeah as soon as we got on the airplane and we had an American stewardess you could definitely tell a difference.

Nicholas: Yeah. You could definitely tell a difference, that's very interesting.

Student 5: It was interesting.

Nicholas: Okay, um did you deal with any sort of communication difficulties or any kind of interaction with people that you felt was difficult or challenging?

Student 5: Sometimes they couldn't understand what I was saying.

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 5: Because of my southern accent. Um, some people there I couldn't understand because they have accents that are deeper and it all kinds of runs together, but that was pretty much it.

Nicholas: Okay. So think about just one instance where it was difficult to understand someone, just one. So something that sticks out in your mind, okay. Do you have it?

Student 5: They couldn't understand me or I couldn't understand them?

Nicholas: Both, whichever one works.

Student 5: Okay.

Nicholas: Okay. Um, if you had to just kind of talk out what was said, so kind of give me the background of what happened and then just the conversation.

Student 5: Um, we were at the bar, and I went up and ordered and I said 'can I have a captain and coke'...



Nicholas: Captain and coke, okay so you were at a, what kind of bar was it? Was it just like?

Student 5: It was a pub.

Nicholas: It was a pub, okay. And was this like in the evening, night hours, etc.?

Student 5: Yeah, it was probably eight or nine o'clock or something.

Nicholas: Eight or nine o'clock, okay, and you guys were all in a group or was it?

Student 5: Yeah, but I went up to the bar by myself.

Nicholas: Oh, okay and just tried to order.

Student 5: I asked if I could have a Captain and coke and they all just stared at me.

Nicholas: So when you say 'they' was it just like a bartender or server, or?

Student 5: There was like three of them behind the bar serving people.

Nicholas: So three bartenders?

Student 5: And they just all happened to be right there, they just stared at me.

Nicholas: So they didn't say anything to you?

Student 5: No they didn't understand a word I said.

Nicholas: Okay, so you said 'can I get a captain and coke', and they just kind of went...

Student 5: Well I said like 'cap'n'.

Nicholas: Okay, so well you said 'cap'n' and coke, and they just kind of looked at you?

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then what happened?

Student 5: One guy whispered to another 'I have no idea what she just said'...

Nicholas: Oh, you could hear it?

Student 5: Someone else told me that.

Nicholas: Oh, okay.

Student 5: And then I had to say out 'can I have a captain morgan and coke'

Nicholas: Oh, okay so there's three of them, and then one whispered to the other one 'I don't know what she said'...

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...and then you slowed it down and said 'can I have a captain and coke', and then what happened?

Student 5: Then they got it for me.

Nicholas: And then one guys started making it. And then once he gave you the drink, what happened? Was there any more interaction after that or?

Student 5: He probably said 'cheers', because they all say 'cheers'.

Nicholas: Okay. And then what did you say at that point? Just...

Student 5: I just said thanks and walked away.

Nicholas: ...said thanks and walked away. Okay, that's very interesting. (laughs) Um, if you were going to change that episode, if you were going to try and have that same interaction differently, what would you have done initially? Or what do you think would've been a way to make that a better interaction?

Student 5: I probably would've just said it more clearer the first time.

Nicholas: More clear, so you would've like slowed it down, or...

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...kind of enunciated it more?

Student 5: Yeah, I didn't realize I had such a southern twang (laughs).

Nicholas: Well no that's okay. And you think that that would've basically solved the problem, that it would've been...

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...okay. Very interesting, um, let's see, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you now that you've experienced it?

Student 5: Um,

Nicholas: And again, just in general.

Student 5: I definitely see the different cultures, you don't think really because they speak the same language as us, but they have a completely different culture, um it was really interesting to see that, um...

Nicholas: To kind of experience something, yeah?

Student 5: Yeah. It's weird because you think 'oh, it'll be the exact same as here', it's not. Um, but besides that...

Nicholas: Besides that. So just kind of getting exposure to something new?

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: And then being prepared for it in the future, okay.

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: Uh, let's see, do you think the way you're going to communicate in the future will change as a result of your study abroad?

Student 5: Um, I'll probably try to speak more kindly to people but I'm not sure about that, because I'm just surrounded by Americans all day.

Nicholas: So you think that your experience with the bartenders, or your experience you know just over there...

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: ...will kind of be a memory for you to move forward from?

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay. So if you ever encounter the same situation or something similar, that will stick out in your mind?

Student 5: Yeah.

Nicholas: Okay, um, do you think there are any other ways or do you think that's it?

Student 5: I think that's it.

Nicholas: You think that's it, okay.

## Student 6

Nicholas: Uh, let's see...first one, um in general, like what would you say some of the challenges you faced were? And this, it could be anything, it doesn't have to be communication related.

Student 6: Probably directions and being familiar with a new town and a city and there weren't really like sketchy areas of London like you'd probably get in an American city, like I know that north of here you kind of get some scary streets and like areas where people don't normally venture like if they are a tourist or just a random pedestrian. Um, but it was complicated at first to navigate through the different neighborhoods of London and find things you were looking for...

Nicholas: Yeah...

Student 6: ...just because even like advertisements and signs and directions would be different but it was really well-marked so that made getting acclimated to it a lot easier...

Nicholas: ...a lot easier but it was still a challenge?

Student 6: ...yeah, but it was still...you had to plan.

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: Like every day, like 'where are we going? What stop do we need to go to?', and I know for some people who weren't as well-oriented as like the cardinal directions they would get a little bit turned around sometimes like with their maps and stuff.

Nicholas: Yeah, okay. Um, if you had to describe the people you encountered on your trip outside of your group, so just um some adjectives, things that would describe the people, what would you say?

Student 6: Uh, really European. There were a lot of people French, Italian, um...

Nicholas: So European by nationality?

Student 6: Yeah, European by nationality and also kind of in behavior, like a general European behavior, um...

Nicholas: What would you say like...?

Student 6: I noticed um everyone is very professional and very polite. They are not friendly, like here we would call somebody friendly like a cashier at the supermarket would be friendly if they talk with you about your day but there they wouldn't do that at all, um...

Nicholas: Mmmmhmm...

Student 6: ...they uh, they looked more professional in that they didn't wear sneakers or bright t-shirts or things like that they all looked like they could've gone out to their work or to a theater or a nice restaurant or something and everyone seemed...

Nicholas: Seemed pretty dressed up?

Student 6: Seemed a little bit dressed up there was kind of this level of, they wanted to, gosh I don't even know it was like um...

Nicholas: Take your time, you're fine.

Student 6: ...they uh kind of, they kind of stepped it up for their general culture...

Nicholas: Okay.

Student 6: ...where it wasn't the attitude that like 'well, nobody's going to see me if I go out in sweats today', it was the attitude more of 'I'm going to be surrounded by a lot of people and if we are all wearing sweats it's going to be uncomfortable for everyone', so they had that attitude like you let other people mind their own business so that everyone's day is a little bit easier because there are so many people there.

Nicholas: Hmmm.

Student 6: But they were very polite and efficient when you did interact with them in a store or um on the street if you needed to talk to them they were, um, they were not unkind to you...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...but they weren't friendly to you like in the American way of acting...

Nicholas: So would you say shorter, in terms of just like speech, in terms of...?

Student 6: Yes. Yeah, um a lot of interactions were a lot shorter...

Nicholas: Mmhmm...

Student 6: ...I think it would be a lot more drawn out I think here or you would get to chatting with someone on the subway or on the street here in America but there it just didn't happen, they just everyone had a place to go and somewhere, somewhere to be, and so they didn't want to interact with anyone because it would interfere with their day, so you kind of left everyone alone and they left you alone, so...

Nicholas: Oh, okay. Um, what communication difficulties did you kind of encounter, if any?

Student 6: Oh man, the range of accents was extraordinary and that was the first time I had extreme difficulty with understanding an accent, um...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: ...even, even people who spoke English as their first language like British people, they would have such a range of accents that would be really, really strong compared to what I've experienced here or even with exchange programs. (inaudible) At a restaurant, we were actually over in the Picadilly Circus and SoHo area, SoHo is, we were heading in there at night so it was getting a little freaky, because all the freaks are out there, but um the man at the counter was, you know, I knew he spoke English, he knew I spoke English, but he said 'do you want this warmed up?', but the way he said it and the accent in which he said it and he said it so quickly that I thought he was, he could've been speaking like...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...some crazy language for all I knew, so that kind of realization that, like I would head into conversations after that knowing like they may say something so quickly that I can't understand it so I'm going to need to be a polite enough tourist that they are willing to repeat it to me.

Nicholas: Yeah, yeah so it was mostly you found the accents in general...

Student 6: Yeah, because um I don't have any trouble with French, German, Italian like little bits of different languages, um like I had an awareness of that enough, I had actually a museum guard come up to me in the British museum and she said in French 'please don't take photographs', and I understood her entirely but I mean I wasn't able to reciprocate in French but...

Nicholas: Hmmm...

Student 6: ...even then when I understood like the root of the language they were speaking it was just like when they tried to speak in English, and their accent influenced it, I would get really confused, um, for some reason.

Nicholas: Well think of, um, one incident where you had difficulty communicating with somebody, just one. So the one that sticks out in your memory, and let me know when you have it.

Student 6: Um, well probably that incident in the restaurant where speaking to the cashier, he spoke so quickly I couldn't understand him, um...

Nicholas: I'll actually ask you, go ahead and go into what the conversation was. So kind of what you said, and it was a male cashier?

Student 6: it was a male cashier, he was um gosh about thirty or something, obviously like Caucasian, he wasn't like a Japanese worker or anything, there were Caucasian workers at the restaurant, which is common, you know...

Nicholas: Of course.

Student 6: ...you get people of different nationalities at different restaurants, but um...

Nicholas: So you came up to him, and...

Student 6: ...so I came up to the register, and I handed him the food, and I said 'hello', and I mean he was probably like 'good evening', or something, um...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...and I, and he totaled it and told me the total, and um it was like ten pounds or something, and that was fine so I handed him, um the money for that, and said 'thanks', and then he said 'would you like this warmed up?', and um he kind of changed around the sentence, and that I would expect here in like my version of English, 'would you like this warmed up', or something like that, or um but I think he rearranged his sentence a little bit, and I think he probably also ended with yeah...

Nicholas: Uh-huh...

Student 6: ...because people that, I noticed a lot of people that at restaurants or workers that we ran into would be up talkers, where they would finish all of their sentences with yeah, and say 'would you like another drink yeah?'...

Nicholas: Oh, okay...

Student 6: ...so we would be kind of alarmed for a second because we thought that it wasn't a question, almost...um,

Nicholas: Oh...so he said that...

Student 6: ...so he said that 'would you like this warmed up yeah?'...

Nicholas: Okay, and it was very fast?

Student 6: It was very fast and he had a strong accent, it was like a regional accent that I could tell like...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...it wasn't like a London accent but it was some, like district of England that was really distinct so...I was just kind of, I had no idea what he said and I said 'I'm sorry', and he said 'oh would you like this warmed up?', and he slowed it way down for me...

Nicholas: Ah, okay.

Student 6: ...like he realized like at that second I hadn't heard him properly so he like restarted and slowed down for me and I said 'oh yes thanks that'd be wonderful', and he said 'no problem', and um and then continued on, so...

Nicholas: See that's very interesting in the sense that you experienced that and then it kind of resolved itself from slower, etc. Um, if you were going to change that episode in some way, it had a positive outcome, if you were going to change the kind of, both your and his understanding, what would you say, like how would you change it? I mean is there anything you think like 'well, I could've done this differently, or he could've done this differently', etc.?

Student 6: Not in that situation, that was, I was pretty on the ball in that situation, I didn't, like it didn't feel too awkward and he didn't feel awkward about it like 'gosh here's this tourist being really awkward'...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...but in other instances like that where i had to talk to people on the street, and or in a shop and I would get kind of arrested for a second by what they had, like trying to understand what they had said or deciphering how they said it, and I would just kind of, like you know stutter a little bit, and I would say like really, what I felt like were really American phrases like 'okay, yeah' or stuff like that and you could kind of see their attitude change where they are like 'here's an American English person' and sometimes they would just like continue on and um at that particular restaurant he was particularly like upbeat about it and happy to like make himself more understood, but other times, people really wouldn't change their attitude, I felt that there was um, like when the woman came up to me in the British museum and said in French 'please don't take photographs', even though I understood it I was kind of arrested for a second and said 'oh, okay, sorry', like you know...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...and I thought that like as soon as I opened my mouth and I said a few phrases and people could place my accent and like, they didn't really change their speech as much, but I would get acclimated to it and talk to them, so I think, I think I would um,



if I could know heading into that, that I would need to be really aware that I would have to listen closely...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: ...I think that would help it out a lot, and then also be more ready to ask for clarification or respond back I think it would've been a little bit smoother instead of, um making them feel a little bit awkward because I didn't understand and I wasn't able to vocalize quickly enough for them to get back started again, um I think that would be the only thing.

Nicholas: Yeah. Um, let's see, what effect do you think this study abroad is going to have on you, now that you've participated in it?

Student 6: Oh man, um, just in a cultural aspect it's, it was a really great way to view, like my own interactions in everyday life, um just like getting to see like their TV even, and like their ads and how they think about life and how people interact where it was a lot more community oriented where they, they wanted to help others even if they didn't really know them, there was that 'we don't know you, we don't need to know every one of you, because we just want to mind our own business', but then if you're in trouble, 'we will help you with a lot of coverage with Japan and Libya' and then even just that um, like they accepted that people aren't perfect you know, they didn't have all supermodels on TV and ads and that felt a lot more supportive as like a whole human culture, so coming back here I felt like some aspects that I was accustomed to just felt a little bit more shallow like I think we could learn from them so that kind of like re-assessing of what I do and what I see and how I interact with people...

Nicholas: That kind of impact...

Student 6: Yeah, but also that there are some things that I really like about my culture and being here where people are friendly and you can smile at people on the street and say 'hello', and they'll reciprocate, and you feel a little bit more connected, like that's something I really enjoy, and then through seeing so much art as well, like that had a big impact on me, just because of my interests and just started thinking about like history and um the interactions throughout history by seeing so all fo this work for so long and then personal like worries, and doubts, and aspirations, like 'can I ever be that good?' or 'I'll never be that good', things like that where a lot of us felt kind of humbled by being able to see so much art and architecture and great civic achievements and things like that where we kind of reassessed like who we are and what we do and where we are heading in relation to everybody else was a big thing where we kind of realized that global connection or like historical connection where...

Nicholas: Absolutely.

Student 6: ...you start wondering like 'what am I doing? Where am I going? What's it going to matter?' so...

Nicholas: That's very interesting.

Student 6: ...it makes you think.

Nicholas: Um, do you think the way you will communicate in the future will change as a result of some of the experiences, and if so how?

Student 6: I think so, um I definitely changed my own speech to like make things a little bit easier day-to-day, um someone had mentioned at the beginning of the trip that they don't say 'excuse me' when you bump into someone or anything like that you say 'sorry', um...

Nicholas: Mmmhmm...

Student 6: ...and I noticed that where they will look at you funny if you say 'excuse me' and um so I started saying 'sorry' and I kind of, I kind of picked up a very vague enough accent where they, if I just needed a really quick interaction with someone like I need to go into the store and buy a bottle of water and I don't need them to make a big fuss about me, like I've got the local currency, I just want to get in get out, you know I could say 'hello', 'thank you', and 'sorry' in a vague enough way that they would not be like 'tourist - this is weird'...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...so that, that kind of um, observation, I mean I'd like to implement that further where you acclimate yourself enough to the surroundings and the culture where it makes things a bit smoother...

Nicholas: Yeah.

Student 6: ...um, gosh I don't, I'm not thinking of anything else right at the second, but um...

Nicholas: That's completely fine, actually, let's see how we are doing here...

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**SERVICE:**

Undergraduate Student Government Senator, IUPUI, 2004-2006  
Informatics Student Government Executive, IUPUI, 2004-2006  
Oncourse Priorities Committee undergraduate representative, IUPUI, 2007-2008  
General Student Fee Advisory Board undergraduate representative, IUPUI, 2007-2008  
Honors College Dean Search Committee, Graduate representative, 2008-2009  
Student Development Funding Committee, graduate member, 2009  
Recognition and Programming Committee Chair, IUPUI Housing and Residence Life, 2008-2009

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

Orientation Services Phone representative, IUPUI, 2005-2007  
Orientation Team Student Leader, IUPUI, 2005, 2006  
Resident Assistant, IUPUI Housing and Residence Life, 2006-2007  
Government of The State of Indiana Intern, Indianapolis, Indiana 2007  
Information Specialist, IUPUI Admissions Center, 2007-2008  
Graduate Hall Director, IUPUI Housing and Residence Life, 2008-2009  
U.S. Department of State Intern, The Hague, Netherlands, 2009  
Indiana State Fair Intern, Indianapolis, Indiana 2010