AMERICAN STUDY-ABROAD PROGRAMS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA: A COMPARISON OF OBJECTIVES AND PERCEIVED LEARNING OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

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Participation in study-abroad programs has become more and more prevalent in the last fifty years. This increase has created a greater need for research on the effects of study abroad. The objective of this study was to determine participant-perceived learning outcomes of study-abroad programs in Germany or Austria. These outcomes were centered on the social and cultural domain, language acquisition, career influences. I also analyzed the objectives of the study-abroad programs to determine whether those aims were met.

Seven established university programs with similar designs were used for this research. A total of 203 study-abroad alumni completed a carefully designed, online survey instrument. Survey questions asked participants to gauge the impact of the study-abroad experience on their language learning, cultural awareness, and career paths. Program literature from each university was analyzed, and interviews with program administration were conducted to designate the objectives of the programs.

Results of the study showed that alumni reported increases in all three learning outcome domains. This perception, however, was strongest within the realm of personal and cultural development. While subjects recognized a degree of language acquisition, a feeling of missed language-learning opportunities emerged. Interestingly, participants did not indicate that gaining job marketability was a main goal for going abroad, and they, consequently, perceived a lower level of job marketability. The three main objectives of the university programs were language acquisition, personal development, and academic immersion. Over 80% of alumni felt a
significant increase in their personal development, while 80.3% perceived a great deal of academic immersion, and 72% a significant increase in language acquisition.

This study was a first step in objectively verifying the learning outcomes of study abroad. Recommendations for practice and improvement of programs were included as well as suggestions for further research.
Zwei Dinge sollen Kinder von ihren Eltern bekommen:

Wurzeln und Flügel.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

For my parents, Hilda and Alex, who kept me grounded and lifted me up. Thank you for seeing me through every phase of my accomplishments and showing me that all things are achievable, one step at a time.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The term *study abroad* has evolved into a commonplace phrase on almost every university website today. The likelihood of the average American undergraduate student participating in a study-abroad program during his or her academic career has been growing steadily each year. In fact, the Winter-Spring 2006 edition of the *Association of Departments of Foreign Languages* states, “Forty-eight percent of students entering college intend to study abroad” (Fitch 32). The truth of the matter is that only a disappointing 3% actually carry out this intent. What educators want to know is how this 3% of students truly benefit from their experience. Mary M. Dwyer at the Institute for the International Education of Students states in a 2004 article in *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, “While the benefits of full-year study abroad are strongly embraced by study-abroad professionals, there is a dearth of quantitative research supporting a correlation with positive outcomes” (152). In other words, what learning outcomes can be determined after the study-abroad duration? Study-abroad programs certainly and hopefully cannot exist only to fade into vague memories with no effects on participants once the program has ended. This study will not only investigate how participation in a study-abroad program affects a student’s life, but also if the program was successful in meeting its own objectives. Due to the growing prevalence of study-abroad programs today, research on the impact these programs have on participants is more important than ever before. By investigating the effects of study abroad we not only are able to understand just what learning outcomes it offers students, but we are also challenged to look critically at the programs themselves in order to improve their design. We might assume that participating in a study-abroad program in Germany or Austria frequently increases the participant’s cultural awareness, can pave the way to greater career opportunities, and strengthens foreign language
skills. This research attempts to identify in more concrete ways how taking part in study abroad affects the student’s life in the areas of cultural awareness, foreign language skills, and career opportunities. In order to address these questions this researcher investigated the short- and long-term effect of study abroad programs on students upon completion of the study-abroad program in Germany or Austria. For this investigation, a carefully devised assessment survey was distributed to the alumni of study-abroad programs.

This chapter will first discuss an overview of current study-abroad statistics. Along with these statistics, a short outline of study-abroad trends will be discussed as well as the prevalence of German study-abroad programs in American universities. Following these statistics, the methodology and implementation of the survey and study conducted will be presented. Mention of other previously conducted studies will be included within the study methodology. Chapter Two will then, begin with a detailed portraiture of the German/Austrian study-abroad programs in the selected universities.

Current Study-Abroad Statistics

As mentioned above, study abroad has become a very important part of the university curriculum, and there is no shortage of programs available in the United States. There seems to be a growing appreciation among students and educators surrounding the opportunity to study outside of the United States, yet less than 1% of all American college students study abroad each year according to a 2005 article by Tammy Lewis and Richard Niesenbaum from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (1). The Institute of International Education, the leader on study-abroad statistics, quotes the number of all American students who participated in study abroad during 2004/2005 as 205,983, up from the previous year by 14,662 students ("Open Doors 2006 Fast Facts").
Jolene Koester reflects on the origins of study abroad in the United States: “In the 1920s the University of Delaware and Sweetbriar and Smith colleges introduced the concept of spending a junior year abroad for undergraduate language majors and, in doing so, began a pattern of study abroad that is still very much in effect” (21). This trend of studying in foreign lands has been steadily increasing, as Aubrey Immelman and Peter Schneider report in “Assessing student learning in study-abroad programs – A Conceptual Framework and Methodology for Assessing Student Learning in Study-Abroad programs.” In 1994/1995 the count was at 84,400 students who had studied abroad and nearly double the number reported one decade earlier (59). From these trends, we can predict numbers in the four to five hundred thousand ranges ten years from now. Three Midwestern states also saw large numbers of students studying abroad. In 2004/2005 7,774 students from Michigan, 8,948 students from Ohio, and 5,762 students from Wisconsin studied outside of the United States (“U.S. State Fact Sheets”).

Sixty percent of study-abroad students choose to travel to Europe. At a noticeable step down, the most sought after region for study-abroad students after Europe is Latin America with 14.3%. The United Kingdom continues to dominate the study-abroad market, welcoming 15.6% of all American students who study abroad, although this number has seen a very slight decrease. Countries where Romance languages are spoken – namely Italy, Spain, and France - are also alluring destinations, seeing 29.7% of the students who go abroad. Argentina, Brazil, China, and India also saw significant increases in the number of students choosing to study within their borders.

Just as patterns emerge in the destinations students choose, they also can be identified in the fields of study. For the past decade, students majoring in the social sciences have comprised
the largest number of study-abroad participants. Those studying business are the second largest group to go abroad and make up 17.5% percent of the total. The percentage of those going abroad who are foreign language majors has declined by 3.8% over the past ten years perhaps because fewer people choose language majors. These students made up seven and a half percent of the total students who go abroad. Mathematics and computer science majors made up only 1.7% of study-abroad students in 2004/2005 ("Fields of Study").

As the rush to finish an undergraduate degree increases, the length of study abroad durations is decreasing. Rather disappointing for international educators is Beth Mcmurtrie’s article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which states that only six percent of students at American universities who go abroad stay for a complete academic year. The majority of students go for only a short stay lasting less than eight weeks, while 38% go for one semester (1). Interestingly, the Open Doors report at the Institute of International Education states that in 2004/2005 the percentages of students taking part in a one semester or a summer program were almost equal at 37.5% and 37.2% respectively ("Duration of Study Abroad"). Slightly over a decade ago in 1993, the percentage of students who went abroad for a full academic year was more than double what it is today.

The prevalence of German study-abroad programs could likely decrease in the 21st century as the importance of German as a global language has been overshadowed by other languages. In 1961, Werner Neuse wrote in *The German Quarterly*, “Everybody will agree that a year of study in Germany is a splendid experience for any young man or woman” (216). Yet in the United States during 2002, Spanish made up the largest percentage of foreign language enrollments with 54% (Alonso 15). Although many German-speaking study-abroad programs exist in the United States, only 6,995 students traveled to Germany in 2004/2005 to study.
Nonetheless, Germany has the seventh highest rate of American students with 3.2%, while Austria is down the list at number 12 and 1.3% in 2004/2005 ("Open Doors 2006 Fast Facts").

**Study Methodology**

The growing importance of study abroad has propagated the need for appraisal and valuation of this type of study. Yet research available is limited as stated in the *Comparative Education Review* in May of 2004: “Despite the growth in the numbers of U.S. students studying abroad, and study abroad’s increasingly common place in U.S. universities’ globalizing rhetoric, actual research on study abroad participants is quite limited” (Schmidt 142).

Despite the need for evaluation of study-abroad’s effectiveness, assessment can be problematic and involved. Alan Smith, author of “International Communication Through Study Abroad: Some Priorities and Pitfalls for Future Research” criticizes that problems can be found in assessment methods when those organizing the assessment are precisely the people who are promoting study abroad (140). Educators must attempt to look at study abroad critically and objectively. Dieter Breitenbach writes:

> If one looks at the numerous ‘evaluation reports’ which have been written on exchange programmes, one cannot avoid the impression that major survey and research institutes adopt unthinkingly and without even a minimal degree of scientific preparation the line of questioning suggested by their sponsors… they then proceed to eulogies which throw positive light on the institutions concerned with the administration of such programmes…but have little to do with academic credibility. (qtd. in Smith 140)

Aubrey Immelman and Peter Schneider, too, emphasize the importance of a well thought-out methodology for assessment. “Given this compatibility between the underlying philosophy of study-abroad programs and the requirements of academic assessment, what remains, effectively,
is for international educators to find a practical tool systematically to document learning outcomes that thus far they may have taken for granted or failed to document” (60).

Guidelines for academic assessment state that student learning must be documented in the areas of cognitive or knowledge acquisition, attitudes and values, and skills acquisition (60). *The International Encyclopedia* states that “international education is concerned with ‘the objectives and content’ of such endeavors, notably ‘the role education plays in bringing about certain competencies, such as the mastery of foreign languages or knowledge about other cultures, or certain attitudes conducive to international understanding’” (61). The cognitive domain of assessment includes remembering, reasoning, problem solving and creative thinking. The learning of a language is a cognitive process, whereas the behavioral or skills domain is defined more broadly as writing proficiency, group discussion and public speaking skills, study skills, group interaction and interpersonal skills as well as problem solving skills (63). The social domain is influential on cultural development and is described as “learning objectives that value, and ‘emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection … expressed as interests, attitudes, appreciations values and emotional sets or biases’” (qtd. in Immelman and Schneider 64). Immelman and Schneider state that a combination of these domains must be investigated in order to produce an authoritative assessment. They go on to agree with Alan Smith and Dieter Breitenbach that “[d]espite anecdotal evidence that students are generally satisfied with study-abroad programs, the assertion that international education provides an effective vehicle for promoting student development and the acquisition of valuable knowledge and skills requires objective verification” (qtd. in Immelman and Schneider 64).

In the past five years, there have been a number of studies conducted, but all were limited in scope. Lisa Chieffo and Lesa Griffiths report on an extensive assessment at the University of
Delaware of student attitudes after studying abroad. This assessment focused primarily on short-term programs, which had multiplied. In their words:

Given the enthusiasm with which higher education institutions tout their study-abroad programs, one might assume that a plethora of data exists to indicate that students reap significant academic and personal benefits from such experiences, but in fact the opposite is true. Professionals in international education have long lamented the lack of a concrete, quantitative foundation of data upon which to base recruitment and program design strategies in order to maximize student-learning outcomes. (165)

Chieffo and Griffiths report on the University of Delaware’s Center for International Studies (CFIS) first-ever study-abroad assessment initiative. This study only focused, however, on global awareness acquired while students were abroad. Moreover, the university’s growing number of short-term programs and the dearth of data on them established the need for an investigation on the effectiveness of short-term rather than long-term study-abroad programs. The study measured the perceived impact on global awareness and involved 2,300 respondents over a two-year period. It indicated a general recognition that even the shortest study-abroad program increases global awareness. Chieffo and Griffiths arrived at the following observations:

Based 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 student’s intellectual and personal lives. The data collected over a two-year period from over 2,300 students provide a much-needed base of information from which international educators can begin to draw conclusions about the impacts of short-term programs abroad. (174)
Not everyone is persuaded of the effectiveness of short-term programs, however. The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) conducted a 2002 investigation on the impact of study-abroad duration. Owing to their large participant database spanning fifty years, they achieved 3,723 responses from alumni. The IES study “was designed to measure the longitudinal correlations between specific program features – language study, housing choice, duration of study, enrollment in foreign university courses, participation in an internship or field study, among others – and a variety of student outcomes” (Dwyer, 153). Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the conclusion of this study determined that:

Studying abroad for a full year has more significant and enduring impact on students [...] While it has been long believed that study abroad changes people’s lives, little evidence exists to explain what kinds of tangible changes occur and for how long. This study shows that study abroad has a significant impact on students in the areas of continued language use, academic attainment measures, intercultural and personal development, and career choices. Most importantly, the study illustrates that this impact can be sustained over a period as long as 50 years. (161)

Clearly, this study supports the need for further research on long-term programs and the learning outcomes participants gain from taking part in them. However, while the IES study contained similar aspects to mine, such as showing impact on continued language use, intercultural development, and career choice, it is restricted to short-term programs. My research placed more emphasis on what outcomes programs, regardless of length, intend to assist their participants in achieving. Both the University of Delaware and the IES study focused broadly on programs in many different countries, whereas the study conducted for this paper pinpointed the impact on
participants from seven established German and Austria university programs, and data from alumni who participated in other German and Austria university programs.

The American University Center of Provence (AUCP) conducted a small-scale, eight-semester long study on study-abroad program design. Lilli and John Engle report on this study in their article “Assessing Language Acquisition and Intercultural Sensitivity Development in Relation to Study-abroad Program Design.” As this researcher has attempted to do by investigating the structure of the specific programs studied, Engle and Engle state:

Assessment results will never carry much meaning if they are not put in context. In this study we have tried to portray in precise terms the nature and design of the program in question, so that the specifics of the program could be established before examining the quality of the outcomes […] By assessing outcomes from programs of otherwise similar design, the true weight of program components in the acquisition of linguistic and/or cultural skills may at last become statistically evident. (235-36)

With this in mind, the AUCP designed their program to achieve the most favorable results in French language acquisition and in the development of cross-cultural sensitivity and skills (219). The AUCP established eight key components found in the nature of most study-abroad program types. The nature of the AUCP program, in relation to the key components, is as follows:

1. **Length of student sojourn:** one semester or academic year
2. **Entry target language competence:** high intermediate/advanced
3. **Required language use (in class and out):** target language
4. **Faculty:** on-site with local professors; supplementary direct university enrollment
5. **Coursework:** advanced language study; current social issues, literature, art history, etc.
6. **Mentoring or guided cultural reflection:** intensive one-week arrival orientation program, followed by required semester-long, credit-bearing course in cross-cultural communication.

7. **Experiential learning initiatives:** required community service, personal interest activity (club, team, lessons, etc.), “language exchange” with local students.

8. **Housing:** individual integration home stay (222)

An assessment of the success of this design was then undertaken. To investigate the outcomes of cultural development, AUCP used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which is a fifty-statement, multiple-choice, theory-based testing tool developed in 1998 (229). IDI scores show that an average of 14% of students decline in their cross-cultural competence, while 52% made between 30% and 100% of their achievable progress. In order to measure language competency, the AUCP utilized the *Test d’Evaluation de Français* (TEF), which is intended to evaluate the French level of international students applying at French institutions of higher learning. This test was administered to students before departure to the host country and after the completion of the program. Over the eight semesters in which the study was conducted, participants attained an average gain of 37% in language competency (224). The AUCP study was limited to the assessment of its program over a course of four years, and gathered data on the increase of French-language competency and cross-cultural competency.

A final, elaborate, yet incomplete, study that will be mentioned is reported in “The GLOSSARI Project: Initial Findings from a System-Wide Research Initiative on Study-Abroad Learning Outcomes.” The University System of Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) began in 2000 with an attempt to assess study-abroad learning outcomes in a systematic investigative process by developing a paradigm
with which study-abroad programs can be assessed (Sutton; Rubin 69). “Beyond the domain of foreign language education, a number of manifestoes have called for expanding learning outcomes assessment to broad-based evaluation of study-abroad programs (qt. in Sutton and Rubin, 69). Yet to date, assessments focusing on cognitive, academic outcomes of international education have been relatively rare” (69). This project was divided into six phases:

Phase I: Comparison of study-abroad participants and non-participants on self-reported learning outcomes;
Phase II: Comparison of pre-departure and post-departure self-reported learning outcomes;
Phase III: Comparison of study-abroad participants and non-participants on course-specific examinations;
Phase IV: Comparison of study-abroad participants and non-participants on academic performance measures, such as graduation rates and licensing examination outcomes;
Phase V: Correlation of learning outcomes with program design features, e.g., orientation, length of stay, location, post-return debriefing, percent of unstructured time in the host nation, etc.;
Phase VI: Comparison of study-abroad alumni and non-participant cohort on self-reported learning outcomes, career paths, and other factors two-to-five years after graduation.

At the time the article was published, Phases I through V were in various stages of implementation and only Phase I underwent analysis on which has been reported. Phase I consisted of 255 responses from study-abroad participants and 249 responses from the comparison group (71-2). Results for Phase I showed that the study-abroad group had higher scores in functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, knowledge of cultural relativism, and knowledge of global interdependence. The two groups did not differ
significantly in verbal acumen, interpersonal accommodation, or cultural sensitivity (73). While Phase I coincides with the study conducted for this paper by reporting on learning outcomes, this study combined Phases I and VI by investigating the self-reported impact from alumni reaching back further than five years.

These four studies have garnered important information in the area of study-abroad research. They have also devised their own methods of how to carefully gather that information. As previously mentioned, three of these studies focused on study-abroad programs in general, while the fourth study focused mainly on French-speaking participants.

The study executed for this paper encompasses several different aspects of these four studies. It involves self-reported learning outcomes of the alumni from seven distinct Midwestern university study-abroad programs specific to Austria and Germany. The oldest program was established in 1953 and allowed for alumni data reaching back as far as fifty-four years ago. Research focused on language abilities, cultural development, and skills acquisition within the cognitive, social, and skill domains. The design and structure of each program were analyzed in order to compare the objectives of the programs with the learning outcomes.

In an attempt to secure objective verification, I developed a survey instrument, which allowed the past participants of study-abroad programs to reflect on the effectiveness of their study-abroad experience, regardless of when they participated in the program. Moreover, the survey instrument was designed to evaluate alumnis’ language acquisition in the cognitive domain, cultural awareness in the social domain, and professional choices and careers in the skill domains. While the alumni responses are subjective, the survey allows for objective statistical analysis by using the Likert scale to determine answers to each question.
Richard C. Sutton and Donald L. Rubin write, “What is new to higher education and to study abroad is the demand for accountability in terms of measurable student learning outcomes” (65). Sutton and Rubin assert, “The application of learning outcomes assessment to study abroad means asking questions specifically about how the curricular content knowledge and cognitive understandings of participants have (or have not) improved” (68). A student’s cognition involves his or her ability to speak German as well as understand the language. The survey instrument poses carefully selected questions in regard to the participants’ newfound linguistic proficiency in German. These questions pertain to reading, writing, comprehension, and current, as well as continued, use of the language. Survey questions will be discussed in greater depth in later pages.

The survey instrument was also designed to concentrate on attitudes and values found in the social domain. This aspect is evaluated through questions relevant to cultural development while in the host country. By posing questions about personal development, and abilities pertinent to career goals, the area of skills acquisition can be assessed (see Appendix B for survey instrument).

In an effort to maintain objective verification of the effects of study abroad during this process, another measure was also taken. This research focused on seven separate study-abroad programs available at universities throughout the Midwest. In order to come to an objective review of the outcomes of study abroad, the structure and objectives of the programs themselves were also appraised. An evaluation of the seven programs was made through an analysis of what they present on program and university websites and through program brochures.

An investigation of what the individual programs offer their participants during their stay abroad permitted a checks-and-balance system when compared to what the participants reported
to have gotten out of the programs. This dual perspective allowed for a more comparative, objective critique of the outcomes of study abroad. This portion of the study can be found after the description of the implementation of the assessment instrument and study-abroad statistics.

Implementation Process of Survey Instrument

The internet link to the assessment survey was sent to alumni of undergraduate programs which took place in either Germany or Austria. The participants were contacted via e-mail or newsletters. These alumni have completed their undergraduate degrees and moved on to other phases of life, including careers or graduate school. No time restriction was placed on when a person participated. Thus, participants could have taken part in a study-abroad program one year ago or fifty years ago. In fact, a greater range of participation dates was hoped for to help determine if there have been any changes in the effects of study abroad throughout the decades. The directors and faculty members of the study-abroad programs at the various universities facilitated contact with alumni.

The study was restricted to established university study-abroad programs. Due to the small number of study-abroad programs in Austria or Germany for graduate students, this study focused mainly on undergraduate students. While any former participant of an undergraduate study-abroad program in Austria or Germany who has completed his or her undergraduate degree was able to take the survey, the main focus was on carefully selected programs. These programs, concentrated in the Midwest, have been sending students to Europe for five years or more, and typically have an average of ten participants per year or more.

The assessment survey was confidential and web-based in order to reach as many study-abroad alumni as possible. Through identifier codes attached to the e-mail addresses it was possible to know who had not completed the survey. After a two-week period, subjects were
contacted a second time if they were on the list of people who had not already taken the survey. The survey consisted of thirty questions, which centered on cultural development, language acquisition, career and achievement. Four demographic questions and a final, open-ended question were also included. While this study was strongly based on students’ perceptions of the effects of their programs, the survey implemented the Likert Scale so that as objective a statistical analysis as possible could be applied. The Likert Scale, named after Rensis Likert, is the most widely used scale in survey research in which respondents specify their level of agreement to a statement. Four and six point scales were used. Chapter Three outlines the seven university programs used for this study. It discusses the structure of each program. Next, I reconstituted a mission statement for each program.
CHAPTER II. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS CHOSEN FOR STUDY

Research done by Anastasia Kitsantas defines study abroad in the 2004 College Student Journal as “all educational programs that take place outside the geographical boundaries of the country of origin” (Kitsantas 1). This study, however, will focus on a specific type of educational program. With careful consideration and research, a list of fifteen specific programs that take place in either Germany or Austria overseen by mid- to large-sized universities was generated. Information regarding the programs was gleaned from program brochures, university websites, articles written about the programs, and also in-person or telephone interviews with faculty members who had close ties with the program. After speaking with the directors of these programs, the list went through another narrowing process and was reduced to seven university programs. This was due to either the small number of yearly participants or the lack of an alumni database. The oldest of these programs has been in existence since 1953. The current list of universities polled is as follows:

Bowling Green State University, Ohio

Illinois State University

Simpson College, Iowa

University of Michigan

University of Minnesota

University of Wisconsin – Madison

Wayne State University, Michigan

Program Analysis

Analysis of the programs will attempt to show the type and depth of information offered to potential participants in the websites and brochures. An attempt will be made to determine the
presence of learning outcomes within the information material of each program. The appraisal will begin with general information about the program, including the website addresses where information can be found. Information offered on the websites and in brochures will then be put into one of three categories: cognitive development, cultural development, or skills acquisition. Once again, cognitive development includes developing verbal fluency in the foreign language, recollection, reasoning, problem solving and creative thinking. The social domain is influential on cultural development and helps students develop new feelings, cultural views, values, and attitudes. The skills domain includes writing proficiency, group discussion and public speaking skills, study skills, and specific abilities learned in courses. Categorizing what programs offer will show what emphasis a program seems to put on each of the three assessment categories. Lastly, the explicit or implicit mission statement of the program will be established. Evaluation began with Bowling Green State University’s German study-abroad program in Salzburg, Austria. This program was used as a paradigm, as it is best known by this researcher.

Bowling Green State University, Ohio

The Bowling Green State University program takes place in Salzburg, Austria, and was established in 1968. It also has a graduate program alongside the undergraduate program. That component will, however, only be mentioned superficially in this paper. BGSU sends an average of 20 undergraduates to Salzburg each year. Participants are encouraged to go abroad for the full academic year, but can also opt for one semester or a summer program. Information can be located under: http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/greal/NewAYA/welcome.htm.

The Academic Year Abroad (AYA) website can be found by doing a search on the university website. Through the AYA website a fourteen page, color brochure including information for undergraduates and graduates can be requested. The website and brochure
contain similar information. The website, however, is able to offer a more in-depth look at the program. It includes links to: graduate, undergraduate, and summer program information, a wealth of information on Salzburg and Austria with pictures of the city taken by past participants, and alumni pages dating back to 2001/2002. In addition to the aforementioned information, prospective participants will find an application to download on the website and a paper application in the brochure. The cost of the program is also available. A protracted summary of the information within the brochure and website follows.

In keeping with the cognitive dynamic of assessment, the AYA program, as stated in the website and on page eleven of the brochure, requires participants to have two years of college German or the equivalent, as well as be in good academic and have at least sophomore standing. Housing, which is in student dorms throughout the city, is used to help students increase their German fluency. The program attempts to pair each student with a German-speaking roommate. Students also receive a weekly food allowance enabling them to cook in dormitory kitchens. To further promote language ability, the information material states that students receive most of their German language instruction in Deutsch als Fremdsprache (see App. C) courses with other international students, which are conducted by faculty in the Department of German as a Second Language at the University of Salzburg. Graduate students are required to take the Österreichisches Sprachdiplom (ÖSD) (see App. C) at the end of the year and undergraduates are encouraged to take this language assessment (AYA Study Abroad Welcome).

Emphasizing the social and cultural domain, the program offers German 300, which is a course taught before the student departs for Salzburg and prepares him or her for living abroad in Salzburg. The website also offers an AYA survival guide with tips for living in Salzburg, a Fun Facts section and quiz about the city. Page four of the brochure discusses the depth of cultural
learning a student will receive through trips to concerts at the Festspielhaus (see App. C), historical and cultural sites, the theater, hiking, a weekend trip to Vienna in the fall semester and a five-day trip through Germany with Berlin as a focal point in the spring semester. The AYA website lets students know that throughout their stay abroad they will be supported by a BGSU professor who is in tune with both the American and Austrian university systems. An Austrian associate assists with housing, orientation and excursions. A listing of faculty with whom students will work is included in both brochure and website.

With regard to skills acquisition, the brochure and website list what courses the student can participate in. In the fall semester the program courses offered are as follows: 300 and 400-level Deutsch als Fremdsprache courses, Introduction to German Literature, Contemporary Austria, Conversation and Living Grammar, Creative Writing, Renaissance and Baroque Art, and Geography of Central and Western Europe. Spring semester courses are: Deutsch als Fremdsprache, German Literature in Context, Business German, Vocabulary Building/Language Skills in Training, 20th Century European History, German and Austrian Music, and Governments of Central and Western Europe. Students will earn thirty credit hours and can enroll in University of Salzburg classes with approval of advisor. To encourage the procuration of skills, graduate students offer small group tutorials to assist with program and German language courses. Eligible students can take courses at the Mozarteum, the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Salzburg, in addition to program classes and at additional cost. Internships are also mentioned on the website and in the brochure within the graduate program information. Undergraduates, however, are eligible to participate if they have the requisite language skills.
Mission statement

While a philosophy or mission statement is not explicitly stated within the program information materials, one can be deduced from specific wording chosen. Found on the AYA website, the program offers students the opportunity to discover the German-speaking world and perfect their German language skills. They will continue to earn a year’s credit while abroad (“AYA Study Abroad Welcome”). The brochure, through past participant quotes, suggests students can gain maturity and become cosmopolitan while learning more about themselves and the world around them (German Studies Abroad in Austria). The brochure also lets students know their German language skills will improve and they will have an experience that gives them the most for their time and money (2).

Illinois State University, Illinois

Students participating in Illinois State University’s program live in Bonn, Germany, for the spring semester or for the academic year. The program sends an average of twelve students per year to Bonn. Information can be found under:

Through some navigation, the Office of International Studies and Programs (ISU Programs) website can be found. By searching under specific criteria such as “Semester/Academic Year Programs” students are directed to the Bonn website. This is a one-page, black-and-white portable document format (PDF) file with nine sections of information. These sections cover information about: the city of Bonn, the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, academic programs, cost, duration of stay, housing, application deadlines and how to apply, as well as prerequisites. While a brochure is not offered, navigation of the university
website will bring students to a thirty-six page PDF guide for parents. This guide is not specific to the Bonn program, but does offer general study-abroad information such as cost, how to prepare, grading issues, insurance, and safety and security.

The cognitive realm includes the prerequisite of having had German language instruction. It is not stated how much instruction is required. Students must, however, be German language majors or minors, be of junior, senior, or graduate standing and have been at Illinois State for two years or more. The language of instruction while in Bonn is German. Participants will also participate in five-week intensive language course. Students are housed in residence halls in Bonn where they have single rooms.

With regard to the social and cultural domain, the website states that during the five-week introductory course students will participate in field trips, concerts, and trips to the theater. Also included in this category is the information provided about the city of Bonn. Students read that Bonn was the former capital of West Germany, has a population of 300,000, is located on the Rhine River, and its proximity to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, etc. allows for travel. From this pdf file, students can also access the host university website at http://www.uni-bonn.de/. The university is a place of study for 5,200 international students. The international office at the university will support participants.

Specific information, with regard to the skills acquisition domain, about courses is not found on the website. However, students enroll in program courses or language courses designed for international students only.

**Mission Statement**

While a mission statement is not unequivocally stated, the Student and Parent Guides offer an implied study-abroad philosophy. During study abroad “All students gain a better
understanding of other cultures and help to promote understanding of our culture” (Parent Guide, 4). It can also increase fluency in another language, deepen intellectual and personal maturity, foster independent thinking, and build self-confidence. The parent’s guide implies that study abroad is an asset to the participant’s resume. The student’s guide states that study abroad enhances career preparation by teaching cross-cultural and workplace skills of value to today’s employers (Student Guide, 3).

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin – Madison has been sending its students to Bonn, Germany to study at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhems Universität since 1969. Students live in Bonn for the full academic year or the spring semester. A direct link to study abroad can be found on the main university website at http://www.wisc.edu/. From the study-abroad page it requires some navigation to find the Bonn website at http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/europe/ger_bonn.asp. This is a multi-faceted, easy to follow website including links to application deadlines, program costs, eligibility, academic information, housing and insurance, a course equivalent list, a 37-page student handbook, and photos of a market, the Bonn office, and a Bonn street.

Students are required to have some training in the German language, which addresses cognitive development. They must also be University of Wisconsin junior or senior students or Wisconsin residents and have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA) and 3.0 GPA in German. The Bonn program is divided into two language options. If a student has had four semesters of college German, he or she can enroll in both university and program courses. A student with two semesters of German can participate in the Intensive Language Program (ILF). In ILF, students take language courses in the first semester and can enroll in university courses the second semester if their language proficiency allows. Language courses offered by the
International Office at the university begin with German level A1 – elementary/basics, and end with level C2 – Advanced which includes such courses as *Deutsche Literatur des 19. u. 20. Jahrhundert*, *Lektüre und Sprachpraxis*, *Textproduktion*, and *Wortschatz und Konversation* (see App. B). Students are housed in single rooms in university dormitories among German and international students. They also have the option of eating in university cafeterias. At the start of the semester students receive four credit hours for a four to five-week orientation and language training course.

To account for the social and cultural realm, the website tells students they will be supported by the *Akademisches Auslandsamt* (see App. C) as opposed to a resident director. This office provides students with two German native peer counselors who are familiar with both German and American universities. Before departure, however, students take an orientation, which discusses academic, financial, and administrative issues, as well as culture and regional information. In Bonn, a limited number of theater and concert tickets are available to students throughout the year. The five-week orientation course in Bonn also includes German cultural learning.

Specific courses that students will take to fulfill the skills acquisition realm are not offered on the website. However, a course equivalency list is provided which tells potential participants what host-university courses former participants have taken and how they transfer into University of Wisconsin credits. The website also mentions tutorials for selected university courses much like the tutorials offered by University of Wisconsin-Madison teaching assistants. Program courses are taught by the *Akademisches Auslandsamt* and designed for international students. The website also mentions the European Extension Module (EEM) offered in the spring semester at additional cost. An EEM student puts focus on political, economic, or
monetary issues of the European Union. They participate in a Euro Policy class, a European Institutions class, an excursion to Strasbourg and the European Parliament, an excursion to NATO headquarters in Brussels, and OSCE Headquarters in Vienna.

Mission Statement

A mission statement was not included in the information materials. However, the student handbook implies that a year of study abroad will be one of the most formative in a participant’s life.

Simpson College, Iowa

Schorndorf, Germany, is the home of Simpson College’s spring semester study-abroad program. Information is available at: http://www.simpson.edu/academics/studyabroad/schorndorf.html. This program is structurally different from the other seven university programs. It takes place every other year and is designed for German majors and minors. The program was established in 1985 and has an average of ten to twelve students per program year.

By doing a search for “Schorndorf” on the main website, http://www.simpson.edu/, students are easily directed to the Schorndorf site. The attractive, one-page website includes general information on requirements, the structure of the program, and why students should participate in this program. More information can be sent to students in the form of a nine-page packet with a broader range of information including cost, housing, courses, excursions, and frequently asked questions.

The information packet and website also list aspects of the program which were delegated to the cognitive domain. Students are informed that they must have at least three semesters of college level German or the equivalent and a 2.5 GPA. Housing is a large part of
language learning in the Schorndorf program. Students live with German family for the duration of the semester, eating breakfast and evening meals with them. The information packet states that “host families play a very important role in the success of the program and contribute greatly to the learning of German and to the understanding of the German way of life.” Students must also sign a “no-English” contract promising they will not speak English during the duration of the program.

The cultural and social realm is emphasized in the Schorndorf program. Before departure, Schorndorf participants take German 211: Orientation to Study and Life in Germany for one credit hour. The information packet also notifies readers that living with host families affords students the opportunity to learn about the German way of life. Tips on living with a host family are also included in the packet. Weekend study tours and all-day visits to cultural and historical sites, required of all students, also encourage learning about the culture of the host-country. A schedule of the tours is included in the information packet and includes cities such as Tübingen, Rottweil, Heidelberg, Rothenburg o. d. Tauber, Munich, Ulm, Stuttgart, Freiburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, and the island of Mallorca.

Courses are listed in the information packet, which foster skills acquisition. They are taught in German by the Simpson College German professor, who is also the program director. Courses students complete are: Intermediate German 202, Practical Conversation 207, German Culture and Civilization 213, Advanced German 301 and 302, Survey of German Literature 305, German Lifelines, 1945 – Present 310, and Contemporary Germany 325. A three credit hour course on Berlin is offered during May Term. Eighteen credit hours may be completed during the program, which fulfills requirements for a major in German.
Mission Statement

The information packet includes a type of mission statement. Schorndorf participants increase their German fluency. “Since all participants pledge to speak only German for the entire time we are in Germany, our students emerge from the program with a remarkable degree of fluency.” Host families also “contribute greatly to the learning of German and to the understanding of the German way of life.” The information packet also states that the program “continues to play a role in our students’ professional lives after they leave Schorndorf. Our students find that they are very well prepared for graduate school or their working lives.”

Wayne State University, Michigan

Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan boasts the oldest American study-abroad program in Germany and was established in 1953. Junior Year in Munich (JYM) sends an average of 55 students to Munich, Germany each year to study at the Ludwigs Maximillion Universität. The JYM website can be reached by doing a search for study abroad on the main university website, http://www.wayne.edu/. The JYM website is an extensive source of information about the Munich program and can be found under: http://www.jym.wayne.edu/. From the website, potential participants can request a twenty-page color brochure. The brochure offers a wealth of information about the program emphasized by photos and student quotes and includes reasons as to why students should participate in the JYM program in Munich. The website goes into even greater detail of information, including history of the program, program events, program features, and alumni resources.

The cognitive realm is addressed in both the website and brochure in the way that students must have a B-average, be of junior standing, and have taken two years of German or
the equivalent. To participate in the second semester option, students must have five semesters of German and an A-average. The website offers language tips and “everyday vocabulary” as well as websites that can help prepare the student for living in Germany. Language training is provided at the outset of the year during a fall orientation course. Students are also required to take Advanced German Language and have the option of taking Phonetik und Aussprachetraining (see App.C) to improve their pronunciation. At the end of the year, participants are encouraged to take the German proficiency exam Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber (DSH) (see App. C). Single rooms are provided for students in German residence halls in an effort to maximize language and cultural immersion.

The website informs students they can participate in a Berlin Seminar during the semester break and a Vienna Seminar during the spring, thereby promoting cultural and social learning. Page three of the brochure lets students know that by simply living in culturally-renowned Munich they will have an excellent opportunity to increase their knowledge about Germany. The website also encourages students to embark on travels which are not organized by the program. While in Munich, students will be supported by an established staff of a German-native resident advisor and program assistants in the JYM Institute.

Within the skills acquisition area, students can read on the website and in the brochure what courses they will have the option of taking. Typically students enroll in approximately 70% program courses. Program courses in the fall semester include: Advanced German Language I, Phonetik und Aussprachetraining I, Studies in Early Modern Germany, Introduction to the Study of German Literature, Germany: 1945 to the Present, Das Studium an deutschen Universitäten (see App. C), and Undergraduate Research Project. Spring semester includes:
Advanced German Language II, *Phonetik und Aussprachetraining II*, Art in Munich, Hitler in Munich, German Drama and Theater, *Das Studium an deutschen Universitäten*, Undergraduate Research Project, and Overseas Internship for one to nine credits. Tutorials are also offered alongside certain program and university courses. According to the brochure and website, JYM has many connections in Munich, which gives students the opportunity to do an internship or gain volunteer experience. The website offers an alumni section called German Bridge – Connecting JYM alumni to Careers. This offers advice and information on finding a job which will utilize their language skills and overseas experience.

**Mission Statement**

Wayne State University’s JYM program website offers an explicit mission statement:

The mission of the Junior Year in Munich is to provide an opportunity for undergraduate students to become fully immersed in German society and academic life by attending the renowned Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München as an integral component of their college education. This is accomplished by providing the administrative, academic, and personal support needed for them to be matriculated at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, prepared linguistically and academically for studying at a German university, and equipped with the knowledge, experiences and cross-cultural skills that enable them to succeed socially as well as academically while living and studying in Germany. ([http://www.jym.wayne.edu/studyabroad_germany_jym_mission.html](http://www.jym.wayne.edu/studyabroad_germany_jym_mission.html))

In addition to this mission statement, we can also read that the JYM program leaders feel study abroad is not a one-time episodic adventure. It is part of a continuum of experience which students can and should build upon after graduation and into future careers and endeavours. The
program aims to strengthen international understanding and cooperation between Germans and Americans in particular.

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Michigan

The University of Michigan currently takes part in the Academic Year in Freiburg (AYF) as a consortium program in Freiburg, Germany. The consortium is made up of Michigan State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (lead administrator). AYF has existed since 1964 and is located at the Albert-Ludwigs Universität. Currently, the program has fifty-four students in Freiburg, fourteen from the University of Michigan, and is a full academic year program.

The University of Michigan website detailing the Freiburg program can be found at http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/oip/Programs/Flyers/germany_freiburg.html. This simple, one-page site offers basic information on location, duration, cost, eligibility, and the application process. From this site, students can open a four-page PDF brochure, which offers an overview of the program and program center, a description of the German academic system, housing, cost, and application information. From the Michigan website, students can access the more in-depth AYF website maintained by the program’s German-native administrative coordinator at http://www.ayf.uni-freiburg.de/index.php. This website offers a wealth of information including courses, the administrative team, alumni pages and photographs, and information for prospective and incoming students.

The information materials include cognitive information when informing students about language requirements, housing, and language courses. Participants must be German majors to participate, have a 3.0 GPA, a minimum of four semesters of college-level German or the equivalent, and junior standing. They must also complete a language proficiency exam. At the
start of the semester in Freiburg, students take a four-week intensive language course for three credits. Page two of the brochure states participants are able to participate in *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* courses during the year. The AYF website and brochure discuss housing, but not as an encouragement to learn the language. Students typically live in single rooms or suites with other American students in university dormitories located close to campus. The AYF website also includes links to some of the possible dormitories students will live in. Occasionally students live in private housing.

Addressing the social and cultural realm, the AYF website includes pictures of students’ travel destinations as well as information on the city of Freiburg. Program-organized excursions are limited and include a trip through the Black Forest and theater outings. However, the brochure mentions that the resident director, who is chosen on a rotating basis from the professors of the five universities, helps students adjust to the new culture and arranges several group events through the year.

Regarding skills acquisition, prospective students can read about the courses they will take on the AYF website. Students are encouraged to take classes at the university, but may also participate in program classes taught by the director or local professors. Fall semester program courses listed for 2005-2006 are: *Die Europäische Union, Von Goebbels nach Hollywood, Berlin von A bis Z* (see App. C). Spring semester courses listed for 2005-2006 are: Learning German Poetry and From Unification to Reunification – German History from 1871 -1990. Internships are not yet a part of AYF.

*Mission Statement*

A mission statement is not clearly stated within the information material. However, the welcome page of the AYF website does report that the Freiburg program “offers students the
opportunity to improve their fluency in the German language and culture while taking a combination of program classes and regular German university courses.” Through past-participant quotes, it is implied that the Freiburg program allows students to learn about themselves and vastly improve their foreign language skills. The program brochure states:

Study abroad encompasses more than just course work. The opportunity to live in a different culture permits students to gain new perspectives on the world and on their own society. Returning students often comment on the impact studying abroad has had on them; they feel more confident and mature after their integrated experience in an international setting. The program is committed to making your intercultural experience as rich as possible.

University of Minnesota, Minnesota

This program is set in Freiburg, Germany. It can be taken for a full academic year or the spring semester. Students of all majors can participate. The program has a smaller number of students participating each year than the above-mentioned programs. In 2004/2005 two students participated through the University of Minnesota for the full year and less than seven students participated for the semester term. Information can be found under: http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/programs/EUROPE/freiburg/academics.shtml.

The University of Minnesota’s Freiburg program has a basic, multi-page website through which students can apply to the program and find a twenty-one page handbook on preparing for a study abroad experience. Academic, budget, Freiburg information, as well as the profile of an alumnus is included. The website promotes the beauty of Freiburg and its surrounding areas. Through some navigation, potential participants can find the program by searching on the main university website: http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/index.php.
In the area of cognitive assessment, the website states that students must have four to five semesters of German language instruction, a 3.0 GPA, and junior or higher standing before going abroad. Upon arrival in Freiburg, students take a four-credit orientation course lasting three weeks. This course focuses on language training and is taught by German instructors familiar with teaching foreign students. Students are also required to take an advanced language course through the University of Freiburg. Though not specifically stated as helpful to language learning, the website informs students they will live in university dormitories among Germans and international students, which will have an impact on their social learning.

According to the website, students begin the social and cultural development process of the program with Maximizing Study Abroad (MaxSA). This is a one credit hour, on-line intercultural communication course offered before departure. MaxSA is designed to help ease the adjustment of living in a different country. Students are expected to arrange their own transportation to Freiburg and to the university. Once in Freiburg, the three-week orientation course focuses on cultural learning as well as language. Students are supported by the Institution for the International Education of Students (IES). The website offers links to Freiburg excursions and tourist information, a map of Germany, and the University of Freiburg. The University of Freiburg and IES offer cultural exploration events throughout the year. A more detailed description of these excursions was not found.

Students develop their skills through the courses they attend. During the academic year, students typically complete thirty-one credits, nine to twelve of which are taken at the University of Freiburg. Participants are required to take at least one program course. The spring semester required course is German Domestic Politics between Tradition and Innovation. During the fall
semester the course is German History from 1945 to 2005. The website does not mention internship possibilities.

Mission Statement

A clearly expressed mission statement was not found within the pages of this website. The details of the program are discussed; however the aims or values of the program are not defined.

In conclusion, then, a comparison of Wayne State University’s explicit mission statement and the implicit mission statements of Bowling Green State University, Illinois State University, Simpson College, and the University of Michigan reveals three core goal themes. The first goal of these study-abroad programs is to bring about cultural awareness and development. These mission statements include the desire to offer students a new cultural perspective and allow them to become immersed in the German or Austrian way of life. The second goal of the programs is to encourage personal development in the participant. This includes, but is not limited to, increasing maturity, independent thinking, and self-confidence. The third aim gleaned from the mission statements is language acquisition. Increasing participants’ capabilities in German is an important aspect for these specific study-abroad programs. Finally, an ancillary fourth goal of these programs is to increase students’ career marketability. In the third chapter, I will investigate whether these goals were met according to concrete data collected from alumni surveys.
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to conduct an investigation on what learning outcomes study-abroad programs produce. The assessment focused, specifically, on concrete ways in which study abroad affects a participant’s life, especially in the areas of cultural awareness, foreign language skills, and career opportunities. In the introductory chapter, I suggested that these three areas increase after participation in a foreign-study program. The study also concentrated on seven key university programs in order to determine whether they meet their objectives.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first section informs the reader how the data were analyzed and, subsequently, describes the sample profile. The second section relays the general quantitative survey frequencies in correlation to the research questions. The third section provides cross-tabulated survey results. The fourth and concluding section discusses the results of the final open-ended survey question.

Profile of the Survey Sample

The data were collected and analyzed using the computer software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This software made it possible to cross tabulate the results and verify the validity of those results. The online survey was completed by 203 respondents. The demographic results of the survey are displayed in Table 1. The majority of respondents was female at 62.6%. This may be because students who study abroad are more likely to be female or because females, in general, are more inclined to respond to surveys. Respondents were more likely to have had German as a major (70.9%). The largest number of students participated in a study-abroad program during their junior year of college (60.1%) while the second largest number of participants had either senior or graduate standing (16.3% each). Only one person
who responded held freshman standing and fourteen held sophomore standing. Over half of the sample population (67%) spent at least one academic year or longer abroad. Sixty respondents or 29.6% participated in a one-semester program.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>62.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Duration</td>
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<td>Shorter than 1 semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>One semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic year or longer</td>
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<td>67.0</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</table>
Table 2 outlines responses from specific universities. Bowling Green State University generated the most responses with 30%. The University of Michigan made up 17.2% of the responses, and Wayne State University submitted the third largest number of responses at 10.3%. The University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin-Madison had 9.4% and 5.4% respectively. The lowest number of responses was from Simpson College (3%) and Illinois State (no responses). Surveys submitted from participants of universities not among the seven studied totaled 24.2%. Responses were obtained from participants dating as far back as 1955 and as recent as the summer of 2006.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Program</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State University</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
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<td>University of Michigan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State University</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>49</td>
<td>24.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Results

The following survey data are presented within the three research realms of cognitive/language, skills acquisition/career, and social/cultural development. The first section summarizes the social and cultural development realm of survey responses. The second section
organizes data from the cognitive and language domain, while the third section outlines participants’ responses within career and skills acquisition. The final section reviews themes within the open-ended question of the survey.

Social and Cultural Development

Students were asked if they consciously set specific goals for their time abroad before departure and 42.4% responded affirmatively. Tables 3 and 4 emphasize the value that students placed on specific cultural goals versus the perceived degree to which they actually achieved these goals while abroad. These goals included learning about the host culture, meeting people from other cultures, and developing personally. All respondents indicated that learning about the host culture was either very important, important, or somewhat important to them, and 81.3% learned a great deal about the host culture. It was very important to 54.2% of respondents to meet people from other cultures during their time abroad, and 70.9% were able to achieve this to a large degree.

Table 3

Students’ Cultural/Social Goals before Departure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire to learn about the host culture</td>
<td>126 62.1</td>
<td>60 29.6</td>
<td>17 8.4</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people from other cultures</td>
<td>110 54.2</td>
<td>71 35.0</td>
<td>18 8.9</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>126 62.1</td>
<td>59 29.1</td>
<td>15 7.4</td>
<td>2 1.0</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Perceived Goals Attained during Study Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about the host culture</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people from other cultures</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 on the following page presents data for the social/cultural realm of the survey.

One-third of participants were strongly satisfied with the amount of effort they made to immerse themselves in the local culture and with the amount of contact time they had with the local people. However, 26.1% disagreed with the statement that they spent at least 60% of their time with people from other countries. The majority of participants somewhat to strongly agreed that they gained a different perspective on American culture and a greater understanding of the host culture’s way of life as well as its history and politics. Students were most strongly unified, however, on the increase in their ability to adapt to a new context (66% strongly agreed). Sixty-five percent have since returned to the host country, and 96.1% have plans to return again. Of the total respondents, 23.6% do not communicate with foreign contacts from their time abroad, yet 76.4% do continue to communicate with foreign contacts from their time abroad.
### Table 5  Frequency Results for Cultural/Social Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the effort I made to immerse myself in the local culture</td>
<td>67 33.0</td>
<td>75 36.9</td>
<td>48 23.6</td>
<td>11 5.4</td>
<td>2 1.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the amount of contact time I had with the local people</td>
<td>60 29.6</td>
<td>59 29.1</td>
<td>57 28.1</td>
<td>21 10.3</td>
<td>5 2.5</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of world cultures increased</td>
<td>112 55.2</td>
<td>70 34.5</td>
<td>18 8.9</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gained a different perspective on American culture</td>
<td>117 57.6</td>
<td>59 29.1</td>
<td>15 7.4</td>
<td>8 3.9</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a greater understanding of the host culture's way of life</td>
<td>113 55.7</td>
<td>77 37.9</td>
<td>11 5.4</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a greater understanding of the host culture's politics and history</td>
<td>97 47.8</td>
<td>87 42.9</td>
<td>14 6.9</td>
<td>4 2.0</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have a strong grasp of German or Austrian culture</td>
<td>109 53.7</td>
<td>64 31.5</td>
<td>28 13.8</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I developed different viewpoints on society from those which I previously held</td>
<td>94 46.3</td>
<td>48 23.6</td>
<td>46 22.7</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td>9 4.4</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to adapt increased</td>
<td>134 66.0</td>
<td>47 23.2</td>
<td>16 7.9</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spent at least 60% of my time with people from other countries</td>
<td>75 36.9</td>
<td>35 17.2</td>
<td>40 19.7</td>
<td>28 13.8</td>
<td>17 8.4</td>
<td>8 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the amount of cultural interaction facilitated by the program</td>
<td>50 24.6</td>
<td>75 36.9</td>
<td>45 22.2</td>
<td>25 12.3</td>
<td>8 3.9</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognitive/Language Acquisition

As in the social and cultural section, students were asked what language goals they had before going abroad. They were then asked to state to what degree they achieved these goals while abroad. Improving their German proficiency was very important to 75.9% of participants and either important or somewhat important to another 22.6%. The rate of students who reported to having achieved this goal to a great degree was even higher at 76.8%. Participants were also asked to rate their German proficiency. Of the total respondents, 11.8% felt they are equally comfortable speaking German or English. The majority, at 49.8%, reported the ability to freely speak German regardless of topic. Students who can speak freely when the topic is related to their specialty totaled 17.7%. The remaining 20.6% speak German with difficulty or great difficulty. All survey participants answered this question.

Table 6 outlines respondents’ answers within the cognitive and language domain. Due to studying abroad, 95.6% of students at least somewhat agree that they would not have reached the level of German proficiency had they not participated, and 96.1% at least somewhat agreed that they gained more confidence and comfort in their German-speaking abilities. Regarding the statement that study abroad improved their German accent, 42.9% of respondents strongly agreed. Where subjects were most likely to somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree was in their satisfaction with how much their language proficiency improved while abroad. Of the respondents, 19.7% were not satisfied with the level of German competency they reached while abroad. On the subject of living arrangements, 19.2% did not agree that their style of housing helped them to learn German.
Table 6
Frequency Results for Cognitive/Language Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through my study-abroad experience, I have developed a greater sense of comfort and confidence in my German language abilities</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an increased fluency in conversational German, having overcome fears of failure in verbal expression</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through my immersion, I have developed an accent more closely resembling that of a native speaker</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not have reached the level of ability I have in German today, had I not participated in the study-abroad program</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I reached a level of German competency while studying abroad with which I was satisfied</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My living arrangements while abroad helped me learn the language</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Skills Acquisition and Career Influences**

When asked how important gaining job marketability was to participants, only 15.8% reported it as very important and 26.1% as not important at all, while the remaining respondents listed it as important or somewhat important. In response, 14.8% felt they did not gain any job marketability, while 28.1% felt they gained a great deal of marketability. Regarding job marketability, 46.8% of subjects strongly agreed, 20.2% agreed, 17.2% somewhat agreed, and only 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed that study abroad helped them in getting a job, being accepted to graduate school, or being accepted to other programs. Academic immersion was listed as a very important goal in study abroad by 35.5%, and 41.9% felt they achieved this to a great degree.

Table 7 on the following page reviews questions within the skills acquisition and career domain. Of the former participants that are employed, over 70% feel they utilize skills they learned while abroad in their job. Within a subject’s daily life, only 3.4% feel they do not use skills learned abroad. While not applicable for 41 of the responders (20.2%), over 60% reported to having a job with international, language, or cultural influences, while 21.1% travel for their jobs. Of the subjects who have not yet started a career phase of life, 34% intend to use German in their future jobs. Seventy-one percent of respondents said studying abroad influenced their career or graduate school paths. Thirty-five percent of respondents who are in the career phase of life actually use German in their jobs.

Table 8 (page 44) summarizes what aspects participants would find desirable in their jobs and careers. A high percentage of study-abroad alumni (86.2%) would find a job including frequent travel at least somewhat desirable. A slightly higher percentage (92.6%) would find a job which included German at least somewhat desirable. In concordance with the previous two
frequencies, a job which incorporated a participant’s knowledge of German history, culture, or politics would be at least somewhat desirable to 87.2% of the total sample population.

Table 9 on the following page states that 26.1% of respondents no longer continue to perfect their German and 28.6% do not continue to read, write, or speak German on a daily basis. However, 83.7% strongly agree that young people today should participate in study abroad.

Table 7

Frequency Results for Skills Acquisition/Career Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you currently use German in your job or career</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you plan to use German in your job or career if you have not yet started that phase of life</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you travel outside of the United States for your job</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are international, language, or cultural influences involved in your job</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you utilize skills you learned while studying abroad in your job</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you utilize skills you learned while studying abroad in your daily life</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did participating in study-abroad influence your career or graduate school path</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are currently in graduate school, will your degree be internationally, language, or culturally based</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8
Desirable Aspects of a Job or Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you be more likely to choose a job if</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it involved frequent travel abroad</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if it allowed you to use German</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it allowed you to use your knowledge of history, culture, society, or politics of Germany or Austria</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9
Lasting Effects of Study abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am continuing to perfect/learn German</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I still speak, read, or write German on a regular basis</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that young people study abroad</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-Tabulated Frequency Results

Using SPSS, data for certain demographics were retrieved to create cross-tabulated frequency results. Some of the cross-tabulated data included information from specific universities, responses by gender, academic standing, length of program, and students who had German as a major. A number of these tabulations were revealed by the Pearson-Chi Square to be statistically significant and will be displayed in this section.

Statistically Significant Cross-Tabulations by University Programs

Career Influences and Skills Acquisition Domain

Cross-tabulations were generated to determine correlations between specific survey statement results and university programs. This section indicates those correlations within the career and skills domain. Table 10 displays the significant relationships between the university programs studied and alumnus’ perceived attainment of being academically immersed in the host-university system. More than half of the Bowling Green State University’s AYA participants who responded felt they experienced a great deal of academic immersion, while 36.7% responded with somewhat and 8.3% with slightly. No respondents felt they had not received any degree of immersion into the Austrian academic system. While the Schorndorf program at Simpson College had a low response rate, the majority of responses came from one particular year and 50% felt they experienced academic immersion to a great degree. The University of Michigan had a 20% rate of responses who felt they received only slight immersion, while 42.9% felt they received a great deal. The majority of responses (52.6%) for the University of Minnesota’s Freiburg program answered “somewhat” to the immersion statement. The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s program generated responses in all categories with 31.6% answering “a great deal”, 52.6% “somewhat”, 15.8% “slightly”, and
27.3% “not at all.” Wayne State University’s JYM program also received diversified responses. Two participants felt they experienced no academic immersion, four felt they became slightly immersed, seven felt somewhat immersed, and seven perceived a great deal of academic immersion. Response rates from other universities correlated most with those from Wayne State University. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .040.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square .040

Table 11 (page 47) outlines two more statistically significant cross-tabulations organized by university programs. The first question asked students if they currently use German in their jobs. Bowling Green State University revealed the highest percentage of participants who use their German skills within their jobs at 50.8%. This question was not applicable to 9.8% of the population. While this question did not apply to 5% of the Wayne State University sample, 30% disclosed that they use German in their careers. One person from the University of Minnesota uses German in his or her job, while fourteen do not. All of the Simpson College’s respondents currently hold jobs, and one of them affirmed his or her use of German at the workplace. Nine of the University of Michigan’s Freiburg participants stated the use of German in their jobs and nineteen revealed they do not.
The second question asked working participants if the skills they learned while studying abroad could be utilized in their jobs. Eighty-two percent of Bowling Green State University participants felt they could utilize these skills. Half of the Simpson College program participants felt these skills were useful in their jobs, while slightly over 68% of both the University of Michigan and the University of Minnesota stated they utilized these skills on the job. This question was not applicable to a larger portion of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Bonn program alumni, yet 36.4% also felt they gained skills while studying abroad which were practical for their jobs. Wayne State University’s Junior Year in Munich participants reported a 75% rate of acknowledgement that their study abroad skills could be adapted to their workplace.

Table 11

Statistically Significant Relationships within University Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you currently use German in your job or career?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisc.-Madison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square .002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel you utilize skills you learned while studying abroad in your job?

| Bowling Green State Univ.                     | 50 | 82.0 | 5 | 8.2 | 6 | 9.8 |
| Simpson College                               | 3 | 50.0 | 3 | 50.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Univ. of Michigan                             | 24 | 68.6 | 6 | 17.1 | 5 | 14.3 |
| Univ. of Minnesota                            | 13 | 68.4 | 2 | 10.5 | 4 | 21.1 |
| Univ. of Wisc.-Madison                        | 4 | 36.4 | 1 | 9.1 | 6 | 54.5 |
| Wayne State Univ.                             | 15 | 75.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Other                                         | 28 | 65.1 | 4 | 9.3 | 11 | 25.6 |
| Pearson Chi-Square .031                       |    |      |    |      |    |      |
Participants were asked to what degree they felt study abroad helped them in getting a job, being accepted to graduate school or being accepted to other programs. Table 12 on page 48 diagrams subject’s responses to this statement from each of the six university programs. Slightly less than the majority of Bowling Green participants strongly agreed with this statement, while 8.2% at least somewhat disagreed. Exactly half of those representing Simpson College strongly agreed with this statement leaving the other half to either somewhat disagree or disagree. Of the University of Michigan participants, 32.4% strongly agreed and 17.7% indicated some level of disagreement. The percentage of the University of Minnesota participants who felt strongly positive about this statement was 42.1%, while 10.5% somewhat disagreed. Forty percent of the University of Wisconsin-Madison strongly agreed that their study-abroad experience helped them with a future endeavor. Twenty percent either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed. About one-third of Wayne State University’s participants strongly agreed (31.6%), while 21.1% somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed. This cross-tabulation was not statistically significant.

Table 12

My study-abroad experience helped me in getting a job, being accepted to graduate school, or being accepted to other programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square .163
**Cognitive and Language Acquisition Domain**

The responses to the following three statements are outlined to show cognitive and language acquisition among university programs. The first, outlined by Table 13, asked subjects if they felt they had an increased fluency in conversational German, having overcome fears of failure in verbal expression. Wayne State University had the highest rate of responses indicating a strong agreement to this statement. This was the case for 60% of the University of Michigan participants. Over half of Bowling Green State University alumni strongly agreed to this statement (57.4%). The University of Wisconsin-Madison with 45.5%, the University of Minnesota with 36.8%, and Simpson College with 16.7% followed. This cross-tabulation was not statistically significant.

Table 13

I have an increased fluency in conversational German

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
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<td>57.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square .173

The second statement, reviewed in Table 14 on the following page, asked alumni if their German accent more closely resembled that of a native speaker due to their immersion. More than the majority of Wayne State University’s participants strongly agreed (61.5%). More than half of the University of Michigan’s program alumni also strongly agreed (57.1%). Bowling Green State University participants strongly agreed 37.7% of the time. The University of
Minnesota followed with 26.3%, while 16.7% from Simpson College and 9.1% from the University of Wisconsin-Madison alumni strongly agreed.

Table 14

I have developed an accent more closely resembling that of a native speaker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square .047</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third statement was used to show correlation between university programs and language-based survey statements. This statement asked alumni to what degree they perceived they could speak German. Table 15 on page 51 shows the responses to this statement, although this cross-tabulation was not statistically significant. Eighteen percent of the AYA alumni from Bowling Green State University felt they are almost equally comfortable in German and English. Slightly less than half felt they can freely speak German regardless of topic, while 14.7% speak German with either some difficulty or great difficulty. Two of Simpson College’s alumni felt they can freely speak German regardless of topic, two felt they can speak freely on topics of their specialty, and two speak with some difficulty. The majority of students from the University of Michigan’s Freiburg program speak freely regardless of topic (62.9%), while 2.9% feel equally comfortable speaking German and English, and 28.6% speak with some or great difficulty. Participants from the University of Minnesota either felt they speak freely regardless of topic (42.1%), speak freely on their topic of specialty (31.6%), or speak with some difficulty (26.3%). Slightly less than the majority of the University of Wisconsin-Madison respondents speak freely
regardless of topic, 36.4% speak freely on specific topics, and 18.2% speak with some or great difficulty. Of the Wayne State University participants, 23.8% feel equally comfortable in English and German, while 38.1 speak freely regardless of topic, 14.3% speak freely depending on the topic, 23.8% speak with some or much difficulty. This cross-tabulation was not statistically significant.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square .101

A I am almost equally comfortable in German and English
B I can freely speak German regardless of topic
C I can freely speak German when the topics are related to my specialty
D I speak German with some difficulty
E I speak German with great difficulty

Social and Cultural Development Domain

Two cross-tabulations with statistical significance were chosen to emphasize the social and cultural domain. The first shows a correlation between university programs and the statement “I am satisfied with the amount of cultural interaction facilitated by the program.” The majority for each program indicated an agreement to this statement. Some programs, however, had a higher level of strong agreement or disagreement. Bowling Green State University saw a 32.8% strong agreement to this statement, while 9.8% somewhat disagreed. Wayne State University participants also strongly agreed (38.1%), while 19.1% either somewhat
disagreed or disagreed. One Simpson College Schorndorf participant strongly agreed and one somewhat agreed. The University of Michigan showed 11.4% who indicated a strong agreement that the program facilitated a satisfactory amount of cultural interaction, while 17.2% somewhat disagreed or disagreed. The University of Minnesota generated 10.5% of strong agreement and 21.1% who somewhat disagreed. No participants from the University of Wisconsin-Madison strongly agreed with this statement, 36.4% somewhat agreed, and 27.1% somewhat disagreed or disagreed.

Table 16

I am satisfied with the amount of cultural interaction facilitated by the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square .042

The second university cross-tabulation within the cultural domain focused on the survey statement “I feel I have a strong grasp of Austrian or German culture.” Table 17 on the following page outlines the results for this cross-tabulation. Almost all participants agreed with this statement on some level. Only 9.1% of participants from the University of Wisconsin-Madison somewhat disagreed. Slightly over 65% of Bowling Green State University program members strongly agreed with this statement. Almost half of the University of Michigan’s and Wayne State University’s participants strongly perceived having a firm grasp of German culture. The University of Minnesota program showed 36.8% who strongly agreed, while 27.3% from the
University of Wisconsin-Madison did so. One-third of Simpson College subjects felt strongly positive about this statement.

Table 17

I feel I have a strong grasp of Austrian or German culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State Univ.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson College</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Michigan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Minnesota</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State Univ.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Statistically Significant Cross-Tabulations

Cross-tabulations were made to see if any statistical difference between answers given by majors of German and answers given by majors of subjects other than German existed. When addressing the following five questions, German majors had an average of 25.7% higher feedback that was positive. Each numbered statement is followed by a short statistical description of the difference in responses.

1.) I learned the culture of the host country a great deal.
86.1% of students whose major was German felt this statement was true for them, as opposed to only 69.5% of students whose major was not German. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .010.

2.) I have an increased fluency in conversational German, having overcome fears of failure in verbal expression.
Over half of the German majors strongly agreed with this statement at 65.3%. Only 33.9% of non-German majors strongly agreed. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .000.

3.) Through my study-abroad experience, I have developed a greater sense of comfort and confidence in my German language abilities.

Less than half of the participants (44.1%) who did not choose German as their major strongly agreed with this statement, while 70.1% of German majors strongly agreed with it. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .001.

4.) Through my immersion, I have developed an accent more closely resembling that of a native speaker.

German majors and non-German majors revealed a 22.2% difference in response to this survey statement. German majors strongly agreed 49.3% of the time, whereas non-German majors only strongly agreed 27.1% of the time. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .030.

5.) I would not have reached the level of ability I have in German today, had I not participated in the study-abroad program.

The majority of the German major sample strongly agreed with this remark (83.3%). Only 50.8% of non-German majors felt the same, however. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .000.

Cross-tabulations were also performed on the academic standing demographic. Former study-abroad participants could check whether they were freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduate students during their duration in Austria or Germany. The variables showing statistically significant correlations follow.

1) Do you feel you gained a great deal of job marketability due to participating in a
study-abroad program?

Graduate students felt they gained the most job marketability with 45.5% of the sample population responding “a great deal.” Seniors followed with 39.4%, sophomores with 35.7%, and juniors with 19.8. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .034.

2) Did you gain a great deal of personal development through the study-abroad program?

In response to this question, graduate students did not feel they gained as much personal development as juniors and seniors. A total of 69.7% of graduate students responded that they perceived a great deal of personal development. The senior population revealed that 87.9% felt a significant degree of personal development. Juniors and sophomores had rates of 82.6% and 78.6% respectively. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .000.

3) My understanding of world cultures increased.

Sophomores felt most strongly about this statement, with 78.6% of the sample responding positively. Graduate students followed at 63.6%. Of the total sample of participants in their junior years, 54.9% experienced a great deal of increase in their understanding of world cultures. 39.4% of seniors strongly agreed that their understanding in this area increased. The Pearson Chi-Square rating for this tabulation was .009.

Themes Within the Open-Ended Question

The final, open-ended question of the survey allowed participants to comment on any influence study abroad had on them, their lives, and their future endeavors. Of the total 203 completed surveys, 115 provided comments to the open-ended question. Several were longer than the allotted amount of characters given. All comments were carefully read through and
screened for running themes. These themes included personal development, culture, missed language opportunities, and enthusiasm for study abroad. Further explanation follows.

**Personal Development**

Subjects offered strong opinions that study abroad affected them personally in a very significant way. Areas of increased learning included: maturity, self-confidence, independence, self-knowledge, flexibility and ability to adapt, empathy and understanding towards others, study skills, and communication skills. One respondent stated, “Studying abroad helped me grow as a person more than anything. It solidified my independence and my ability to make life decisions on my own. I stepped outside my box, as I am normally very into home and routine. It opened my eyes to a new world, a new way of life, and I enjoyed every moment. I came back a stronger and more intelligent person because I am more open, more understanding and more worldly now!”

**Culture**

Participants emphasized their cultural learning almost as strongly as they did their personal development. Cultural learning included gaining irreplaceable knowledge about the German or Austrian way of life, history, academics, international communication, and also learning about their own American culture. Participants seemed to gain new perspectives on their previously held beliefs about their own country and the world around them. Some comments tended toward emphasis of positives in European culture as opposed to American culture. As stated in the comment section, “Most Americans feel that America has the only way of life in the world. Once someone is exposed to other cultures, they find out there are other ways of living that are just as good, if not better than in the USA.”
Missed Language Opportunities

Another strong theme throughout participants’ comments was a regret that their language did not improve as they had hoped. Comments suggested two distinct reasons for this phenomenon. One reason was that alumni felt they themselves had failed to engage in the opportunities available to speak and learn German. The second reason was a feeling of deficiency in the program structure, including housing and amount of required time spent with other Americans. “[…] I was not fully satisfied with my ability to speak and write the language, despite having lived there for a year and studied it for four. Part of this I attribute to my own foolishness in spending too much time with my fellow Americans, and part because I chose to live in a single apartment.”

Enthusiasm for Study Abroad

This area was perhaps the most resounding throughout the open-ended comments. Even if participants stated some disadvantages of study abroad, they still mentioned their enthusiasm for these programs. Many stated that the study-abroad year was an extremely significant and gratifying year in their lives and emphasized the importance of participating in a study-abroad program for future students. One participant wrote, “I feel so strongly about having international experience in college to the point that I would recommend that every student, regardless of major or experience, should take part in a study-abroad program to not only further their academic and study-related endeavors, but to also further themselves personally.”

Summary

Study-abroad alumni were asked to address learning outcomes attributed to their time abroad. These learning outcomes were allocated into the domains of language proficiency, cultural development, and career influences. These areas were assessed through completion of a
thirty-question survey instrument followed by an open-ended response question, allowing for subjects’ perceived value of these learning outcomes to be determined.
CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSIONS

This closing chapter will provide a brief review of the study. It will then examine the results of the survey instrument in relation to the speculations this researcher made in the introductory chapter about the cognitive, linguistic and career effects study abroad has on participants. Continued discussion will interpret the findings centered on the three learning domains and university programs. Recommendations for practice and, finally, further research ideas will conclude the chapter.

Review of the Study and Results

The principal intention of this study was to determine the capabilities and effectiveness of study-abroad programs on attaining German language proficiency, increasing cultural awareness, and acquiring higher levels of marketability for future goals such as career or graduate school. The researcher pursued this by collecting the feedback of former study-abroad participants through the medium of a survey instrument and data analysis. The subsequent purpose of this study was to assess the aims of particular, similarly structured, American university study-abroad programs in Germany or Austria. This was done through careful examination of program literature, as well as interviews with persons working closely with the programs.

The review was based on the quantitative results from the survey, as well as the cross-tabulation results and open-ended question responses. The population sample was derived from the study-abroad alumni of the seven university programs outlined in Chapter II, and alumni from other programs, which took place in Austria or Germany. Demographic questions included gender, year of participation, length of program duration, academic standing during participation, and whether or not the participant’s undergraduate major was German. The survey results showed that the majority of subjects were female (62.6%). The years of participation were
between 1955 and 2006. Over half of the students surveyed participated for a full academic year or longer (67%), followed by one semester (29.6%) and shorter than one semester (3.4%). Most of the participants went abroad during their junior year (60.1%) and chose German as their major (70.9%).

In Chapter I, I surmised that participating in a study-abroad program, specifically in Germany or Austria, frequently increases the participant’s cultural awareness, can pave the way to greater career opportunities, and strengthens foreign language skills. The quantitative results of this study revealed that former participants of these programs in Germany and Austria did, indeed, perceive an increase in each of the three learning outcome areas. This is a positive outcome for study abroad, and possibly an expected one. There are, however, areas in which subjects felt a higher rate of increase than in others.

**Interpretation of Social and Cultural Development Results**

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed and compared the three areas of language acquisition, social and cultural development, and career influences. Interestingly, the group of former participants felt more strongly about the effect study abroad had on their cultural knowledge and intercultural social skills, then on to the other two areas. Learning outcomes within this realm included the ability to evaluate and understand another culture, understanding their own country’s culture and position in the world, evaluating their own perceptions of society, learning the politics and history of another country, and communicating with others outside of their culture. Social and cultural development questions received a total average percentage of 80.9%. This percentage represents the average quantity of participants who either strongly agreed or agreed with each cultural question. This number was reached by grouping the social and cultural questions together and adding the percentages of the two highest possible
answers. The sum of those percentages was then divided by the number of cultural questions within the survey. It is apparent from this high percentage that subjects felt they gained a great deal of cultural awareness during their experience abroad. We see this perception emphasized through the following open-ended comment:

Studying abroad allows people to understand that perspectives come from cultural, political, native backgrounds and to be able to know and understand others, a person needs to get out of his or her own box/perspective and get into others’. With increased interaction among people and states, understanding the perspective of others is vital and it enriches one’s life to an incredible degree – one only must be willing to utilize this opportunity and never take it for granted.

Some of the social and cultural questions, however, indicated a lower level of concurrence from the sample population. These questions were:

1) During my study-abroad experience I spent at least 60% of my time with people from other countries.

2) I am satisfied with the effort I made to immerse myself in the local culture.

3) I am satisfied with the amount of contact time I had with the local people.

These questions produced results of 54.1%, 69.9%, and 58.7%, respectively, of alumni who strongly agreed or agreed to these statements. While percentages of the other cultural questions were in the high 80’s and 90’s, these lower numbers indicate conflicting views within the participants. While they felt they gained cultural awareness, they seemed to show dissatisfaction in the amount of cultural learning they experienced. This interesting shift in response rate suggests that participants were somewhat unsatisfied with either the role the program’s structure played on their cultural learning, or with their own level of effort to engage in activities that
increased their cultural development. This is an area which should be further researched to
determine how much of their dissatisfaction lies with the programs and how much is a result of
participants’ own actions.

Interpretation of Cognitive/Language Acquisition Results

As this researcher analyzed and compared the three areas of language acquisition, social
and cultural development, and career influences, the survey results showed that study abroad was
perceived to have the second strongest effect on language acquisition. These learning outcomes
for the subjects included gaining comfort and confidence in their German proficiency, increasing
fluency and losing fears of failure when speaking, and developing a more accurate accent close
to that of a native speaker. Grouping the language questions together, adding the percentages of
the two highest possible answers, and dividing the sum of those percentages by the number of
language questions within the survey generated a response rate of 72.2%. This number
represents the average percentage of alumni who either strongly agreed or agreed with the
language statements in the survey instrument. As seen from this majority, participants
obviously perceived study abroad to have had a significant influence on their German language
abilities. As in the social and cultural domain, however, there were some statements which
generated lower levels of agreement. These statements and questions are as follows:

1.) I reached a level of German competency while studying abroad with which I was
    satisfied.

2.) To what degree can you speak German?

3.) I am continuing to perfect and learn German.

4.) I still speak, read, or write German on a regular basis.

While the other language-based statements revealed percentages in the 70s, 80s and one in the
90’s, these four statements produced lower numbers. In response to question number one, only
64.1% of alumni strongly agreed or agreed. In response to question two, 61.6% of the total sample population answered either “I am equally comfortable in German as in English,” or “I can speak freely regardless of topic (not necessarily flawlessly).” While the majority still felt strongly about these two statements, the lower percentage rates in comparison to the other language statements indicates dissatisfaction with German proficiency gained during study abroad. According to “‘Hindsight is 20/20:’ Student Perceptions of Language Learning and the Study Abroad Experience” written by Vija G. Mendelson and published in the 2004 *Frontiers Journal*, students often go abroad with unrealistic linguistic goals and experience some disappointment post-program. While a great number of students definitely gain a higher level of language proficiency while abroad, it might not be to the degree of fluency had expected prior to departure. Mendelson writes about a group of students who participated in study abroad in Salamanca, Spain:

> Post-program, Salamanca students often expressed mixed reactions, suggesting that despite their improvement they had not entirely realized their goals; while students were proud of their improvement in language skills and a newly formed sense of personal independence, they mentioned more motives for disappointment, which often had to do with a sense of wasted opportunities, continued failure to understand native speakers, or lack of linguistic improvement. (48)

This overestimation of language goals is a strong possible reason why 35.9% of participants indicated some level of dissatisfaction with their acquired language abilities while abroad and 38.4% indicated they could not speak freely if it did not relate to their specialties. One alumnus questioned his language acquisition, “I’m not sure how much my knowledge of German
improved, but surely it must have?” Another wrote, “I was not, and never really became a great German speaker [...]”

Participants’ responses to the third and fourth statements showed percentages of only 50.7% and 51.3% respectively who strongly agreed or agreed. During their study-abroad programs, students felt they increased their language proficiency. Over half, however, only somewhat agreed or disagreed that they speak, read, or write German on a daily basis or continue with their language learning. An alumnus explained his or her reason for no longer speaking German, “Being a physician does not afford me any opportunity to use German and since it has been more than 15 years since my study abroad I am, unfortunately, no longer fluent in the language.”

Interpretation of Skills Acquisition and Career Influences Results

In his article “International Communication through Study-abroad: Some Priorities and Pitfalls for Future Research,” which appeared in the *European Journal of Education*, Alan Smith stated, “[...] the question as to possible impacts of study abroad on the employment prospects of graduates assumes particular significance. To be more precise, it would be important to know whether such study has an impact at the moment of insertion into professional life and/or upon later career development” (145). Of the three domains, participants felt the least confident about career influences and skills acquisition. While over 70% of participants felt they use skills learned while studying abroad in their careers, only 35% are able to use their German language skills within their careers. What’s more, data showed that job marketability was not a top priority for students before going abroad. Only 15.8% rated this goal as very important, while 28.1% felt they achieved a great deal of job marketability through the study-abroad program. Grouping the career and skills questions together, adding the percentages of the two highest
possible answers, and dividing the sum of those percentages by the number of career and skills questions within the survey generated a response rate of 57.1%. This number represents the average percentage of alumni who either strongly agreed or agreed with the career statements in the survey instrument. These career influences included gaining job marketability, the use of German in their jobs, utilizing skills learned while studying abroad in their jobs, intention to use German in future jobs, and influence on career or study paths. Open-ended comments suggested that those participants who did feel they gained a great deal of job influence went on to teach German or continue living in Europe today. One person wrote, “The experience abroad is invaluable to my career and to me personally. I am a German teacher and take my students back to Salzburg and Vienna yearly.” While others stated less positive influences on career, “I have not been successful at integrating German into my career thus far, but I speak the language and read a little bit every week.” and “In my particular case, time spent abroad is not very relative in the career environment, but I still think I did the right thing.” One participant commented on academic skills, “The most fun I’ve ever had… the best way to learn a language… absolutely the most meaningless year of my life academically.”

In 1958, John T. Gullahorn wrote in The Journal of Higher Education, “Of paramount importance in the students’ decision to study abroad was the goal of professional or educational advancement” (370). Interestingly, almost fifty years later, this study indicated that gaining job skills and marketability was not of primary importance to students when choosing to go abroad. Subjects, consequently, perceived fewer gains in job marketability than in areas such as cultural awareness, personal development, or language acquisition.
University Programs Objectives

As discussed in Chapter II, the seven university programs included in this study had similar objectives. The level of emphasis for each specific objective differed by program. The main goals, however, were academic and cultural immersion, personal development, and language acquisition. The Illinois State University was not included in data assessment due to a lack of responses from program participants. By analyzing the quantitative data of all responses, it proved that the three main objectives were met. This indicates that these university programs were successful in meeting their objectives across-the-board.

While subjects may have expressed some dissatisfaction with the amount of German proficiency they developed, the majority from each school, except Simpson College, agreed or strongly agreed that their conversational German fluency increased. Simpson College’s program literature indicated that students come away with a remarkable degree of fluency. The largest majority from Simpson College only somewhat agreed or agreed that their conversational German fluency increased. Of course, a larger sample size from this program would yield more accurate results.

In response to the program objective of academic immersion, participants from all six universities indicated that this goal was met at least somewhat. Fifty-five percent of Bowling Green State University participants experienced a great deal of academic immersion. However, less than the majority from the remaining five universities perceived a great deal. Ten percent of Wayne State University participants and 27.1% of the University of Wisconsin-Madison participants perceived no academic immersion whatsoever.

The objective of these programs to foster students’ personal development was definitively met. This study indicates that personal development is the area in which students
perceived the greatest increase. While a university cross-tabulation for personal development is not available, 80.3% of participants across-the-board strongly agreed that they developed personally through study abroad. From these results, it can be assumed that the mere act of going abroad has a significant impact on student’s personal development. The open-ended comments only served to articulate this outcome more clearly. As a final example, one participant wrote, “I think that my study abroad experience helped me to be a more well-rounded, flexible person. It taught me when to be independent and when to ask for the help that I need. It also helped me to shape a more empathetic and understanding world view from working with people from all over and being a foreigner myself.” In summary, the university programs were able to meet the three main objectives stated within their program literature.

Implications for Practice

In today’s globalized world, study abroad programs have the ability to increase cultural understanding between nations. They can provide students the opportunity to learn languages other than their own. They also offer new career ideas and opportunities. This research indicated that study-abroad programs achieve these goals. This positive outcome does not, however, preclude room for improvement.

The lack of clearly defined objectives stated in the program literature was somewhat surprising. While program mission statements were mentioned in Chapter II, they were collected and pieced together by the researcher, based on themes within the program literature. Establishing clear program goals of what the program hopes to accomplish and what it hopes students will take away from their experience will provide a foundation on which to build. Programs could assess their areas of success and make these permanent aspects of their structures. Increasing personal development is one such area of success and programs should
continue to strive to achieve this goal. They should, conversely, evaluate what their weaknesses are in order to strengthen and enhance these areas. One aspect of determining program goals is to decipher what the participants hope to get out of the study-abroad experience and tailor program aims to these aspirations. Program aims should also take into account which learning outcomes will most benefit students after studying abroad. Program goals do not necessarily have to be published in the literature, but should be determined and known by program administrators and program participants. Programs can then organize their structuring around those goals. Leslie Barnes emphasized this point in the article “Cross-Cultural Exchange: How Students Can Frustrate the Aims of Study Abroad Programmes.” This article appeared in the International Review of Education in 1982 and is still practical for today’s study-abroad programs. Barnes states, “[…] the effectiveness of such study-abroad programmes is, consequently, heavily dependent on good communications and detailed planning and agreement between the senior administrative staff of participating institutions, and on the clear formulations of the aims and objects of the programmes prior to their taking place” (376). Use of this quote by no means suggests that there is a lack of communication among program administrators. On the contrary, the programs used in this study are well established and well organized. They, therefore, would benefit wholeheartedly from the continued assessment and formulation or re-formulation of program aims and principles. A clear and concise outline of the program would also assist students in choosing whether or not they want to participate.

Job marketability and career influences seem to be of lesser importance for students and programs of study abroad. As with academic immersion, programs should assess their objectives to determine the importance of gaining job marketability and influencing careers. Simply by making students aware of the impact study abroad can potentially have on job skills, career
goals, and marketability, it will give them an advantage to cultivate this objective. It should, however, not stop at this step. Students not only need to know that study abroad can impact their future endeavors, they also need to know how to make it work for them within the job market. This encompasses being able to talk about the study-abroad experience intelligently as it pertains to job skills, how to include it on resumes, and what jobs could utilize their skills learned while abroad. Establishing internships or volunteer work could prove very influential on students’ perceived and actual job marketability. Not only will students feel they have gained skills useful for jobs, but internships or volunteer hours also offer the opportunity to increase language skills and feelings of cultural immersion.

One mission of these programs was to coordinate the academic immersion of students into the host country’s system of learning while they are abroad. This study indicated that programs are certainly accomplishing this. However, some students continue to feel lost in the new academic systems of the host-countries. One subject wrote:

The German university system is way different than the liberal arts style education here in the States. […] Lack of textbooks, homework and exams make it very difficult to know what exactly one should be focusing on. […] Lack of information on the actual courses makes it hard to even decide which to take in the first place. There was almost a complete lack information and assistance in regard to my academic experience.

In order to avoid negative responses such as this and more fully attain the goal of academic immersion, each study-abroad program should evaluate how important this goal is with regard to its program objectives. If program administrators decide academic immersion is of principal importance, students should be further encouraged or required to go through the matriculation process with assistance at the host-university, take host-university classes, limit the number of
program classes taken, or attend classes that are not primarily taken by Americans. Students should also be encouraged to join any existing university clubs, participate in sport classes, or attend university functions.

This, however, leads into the crucial need for preparation. No matter what the aims of the program are, it is essential that students be well prepared for the challenges of living and studying abroad before departure. This preparation will maximize their success in every domain while they are abroad. Propelling them into a German or Austrian university system without sufficient preparation will most likely fail to increase their perceived feeling of academic immersion or achievement. Students need to be well aware of the German and Austrian university system, the way in which courses are conducted, and the methods used to assess their learning. Organizing the assistance and advice of native German or Austrian students during the beginning weeks of the program could prove effective in helping students feel more prepared for classes in the foreign university.

Preparing the student linguistically will also have an enormous impact on his or her success abroad. This study indicated that participants felt some dissatisfaction with their German proficiency gains. While they indicated that studying abroad did increase their German fluency, they also alluded to linguistic goals that were not entirely met. Abram Friesen went so far as to suggest in his 1965 *German Quarterly* article “An M.A. Program in German with a New Approach” that undergraduates should not be sent abroad due to a lack of linguistic ability. Friesen stated:

Why can we not realize that a German university is no place for our undergraduates (with their two or three years of College German!), and ask ourselves whether we are not being just a trifle presumptuous in sending to German universities students the majority
of whom would probably never be able to obtain a German “Reifezeugnis”? Must we not admit that we should send only graduates? (685)

From our current study it can be seen that the personal gains alone for undergraduates is reason enough to send them abroad. However, Friesen’s suggestion that students are not linguistically prepared enough is one, which requires reflection. In order to avoid students’ possible feeling of dissatisfaction in their level of language gains, certain measures should be implemented. This leads to three important steps that study-abroad programs can take.

The first is the obvious requirement of intensive language classes before going abroad. Most of the programs included in this study maintain a language requirement of four semesters of German. This requirement should be no lower than that level and programs should firstly consider students who have taken more than four semesters of German for acceptance into the program. An intensive language course, which takes place shortly after arrival in the host country, will further expedite the student’s language transition.

The second step that study-abroad programs can take is assisting students in developing realistic aims for their time in Germany or Austria. Students will very possibly feel that their time abroad was worthwhile whether they set goals or not. Much like the necessity that study-abroad programs have pre-set missions, however, students will benefit greatly from carefully thought-out aspirations and goals. These goals should not only be linguistic, but also cultural, personal, academic, and career oriented. The key to this step, in order to avoid future dissatisfaction, is assuring that these goals are challenging, yet attainable. Program administrators should attempt to assist students in identifying possible hurdles that may arise in the quest to reach these goals. Students may identify more with previous program participants who could then offer advice and assistance in goal setting. Another option is to offer students a
list of possible goals they could set for themselves in order to give them an idea of what they can accomplish if they so choose. The simple challenges of living in a foreign country should be taken into account when determining these goals.

The third step may prove more challenging for study-abroad programs and students. It seems that a problem among study-abroad participants is initiative. Open-ended comments, left by subjects, lamented missed opportunities. These were opportunities which students could have taken to help increase their language learning. Clearly, this step requires much reflection and work on the part of the students. The programs themselves, however, can and should find ways to help participants with this initiative. This could include informing students about the language learning process and potential pitfalls before and after departure, giving suggestions on how to maneuver within specific language challenges they will face while abroad, organizing as many language learning opportunities as possible or acquainting students with opportunities not organized by the program. Programs should also attempt to avoid becoming isolated programs within the host country by being cognizant of the amount of time students must spend with other American members of the program. Limiting this time can aid in student motivation to learn the target language. These issues should be discussed not only before departure, but also continuously throughout the study-abroad duration.

A final, essential task of study-abroad programs must be the collection and maintenance of alumni data. Many programs could not be included in this study simply because there was no alumni database in existence. It is imperative that former participant information be available and up-to-date. This is not only to ensure the possibility of its use in future research, but also for the organization, development, and improvement of the programs.
Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the nature of this paper, research focused solely on students’ perception of their time abroad. To continue with objective verification of the learning outcomes and effects of study abroad, further research could entail obtaining concrete evidence of language ability of participants. This could be accomplished through test scores of proficiency exams taken before and after the study-abroad sojourn, course grades, and instructor evaluations. It would also require determining graduation rates and job placement figures. Objective cultural awareness tests, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), are also available. The IDI is a fifty-question, multiple-choice test, which measures an individual’s intercultural sensitivity and worldview orientation to cultural difference (Engle; Engle 229). Focus groups and individual interviews with former study-abroad participants would also offer a more detailed understanding to the perceived effects of study-abroad programs. Ideally, a comparison group of students who did not participate in study-abroad would be used, as well, to measure learning outcomes within the study-abroad group.

This study also brought to light other possible areas of research. Results of the cross-tabulations by major pointed to a difference in the level of learning outcomes obtained by students who had elected German as a major and students who had not. This phenomenon was lightly touched upon in Chapter III. It would be interesting to research this phenomenon further to determine whether students who chose German as a major experience greater learning outcome gains than students pursuing non-language based majors.

The survey results and open-ended comments pointed to another area of potential further research. An open-ended theme was missed language opportunities. This thread, left by participants, suggests an interesting need to investigate the motivation and abilities of American
students’ to learn the target language while abroad. Because the objective of many study-abroad programs is to increase proficiency in a foreign language, it is necessary to discover and understand the most efficient ways to achieve this goal. How students go about maximizing their language abilities, or how they fail to maximize these abilities is an important area for study-abroad programs to understand. Methods to increase student’s language learning initiative should be undertaken, researched, and analyzed.

Conclusion

This final chapter summarized the study and hypothesis of this thesis. This researcher then offered interpretations of the survey instrument data in the areas of cognitive and language acquisition, skills and career influences, and cultural awareness. Cross-tabulations of the six university programs were discussed. Recommendations for future practice and further research concluded this chapter.

Study abroad impacts participants in many different ways, which were discussed in this paper. A practical way to gauge this impact was through student opinion questionnaires. By assessing the learning outcomes of these study-abroad programs, it was possible to measure their success. Through investigation of these programs’ effects, I was not only able to determine the success and perceived learning outcomes of study abroad, but also able to identify likely pitfalls and new ways to improve on it.

As global doors continue to open, we have the right and the obligation to try and understand the world around us. The rich learning potential study abroad offers to students can be tapped through sufficient preparation and organization. Thus, study abroad poses the challenge to program administrators, as well as participants, to utilize the most influential methods of realizing this potential.
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APPENDIX A. EMAIL COVER LETTER TO ALUMNI RESPONDENTS

Hello! I am a graduate student in the department of German Russian and East Asian Languages at Bowling Green State University and am writing my thesis on study abroad. As you may know, study abroad has become very important in the past years. There is a benefit in understanding the effects study abroad has on its participants, so that programs can be even more effective. With these thoughts in mind, I am carrying out a research project to determine the effects of study abroad in German or Austria on language, cultural development, and career.

Your completion of this survey will be a great help in my efforts to investigate the effects of study abroad programs. The survey is available at: http://survey.bgsu.edu/surveys/IR/studyabroad/studyabroad.htm

You will be asked to fill out a survey and respond to questions about your study abroad experience, and its effects on your German language skills, your cultural development, and your career choices. You will be asked to answer four demographic questions and will have the opportunity to offer any further comments.

Your survey responses will be confidential; there will be no way to link them to your contact information. Responses will be kept in a secure, password-protected database in the Office of Institutional Research. I plan to send follow-up messages to those who have not responded to this message in about two weeks. Our survey software assigns temporary identification numbers to participants to allow us to only contact non-responders with reminder messages. The identification numbers will not appear in our survey responses, however. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Completion of the survey is a voluntary activity and you have the right to not complete any or all of it. Your decision to participate or not participate will have no impact on your relationship to your previous university in any way. This project is being supervised by a faculty advisor and the Human Subjects Review Board. Please direct questions or concerns to Heidi Schmoll at 419-372-3037 or hschmol@bgsu.edu or Dr. Christina Guenther at 419-372-7589 or cguenth@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair of the BGSU Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu with questions or concerns about participant rights. Partial or full completion of this survey constitutes consent in taking the survey.

I thank you very much for your anticipated assistance with this project!

Sincerely,

Heidi Schmoll

BGSU HSRB APPROVED
ID # H07T097GX2
FROM 11-9-06
UNTIL 11-2-07
APPENDIX B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Self-Assessment of the Effects of Study-abroad in Germany and Austria

Directions: For each item, please indicate your response by clicking on the appropriate button. When you have finished, click on the “SUBMIT” button once at the bottom of the page to send your responses. Thank you.

Q1 Please check which study-abroad program you participated in.
   Antioch College
   Bowling Green
   Central College
   Heidelberg College
   Illinois State University
   Northern Illinois University
   Simpson College
   University of Chicago
   University of Illinois
   University of Michigan
   University of Minnesota
   University of Wisconsin – Madison
   Wayne State University
   Other

Q2 Please check the duration of your study abroad experience.
   Shorter than one semester
   One semester
   Academic year, full year, or longer

Q3 What year(s) did you participate in the study-abroad program?

Q4 Are you still currently in an undergraduate degree program?
   Yes
   No

Q5 Was your undergraduate major German?
   Yes
   No

Q6 What was your undergraduate major if it was not German?

Q7 What is your gender?
   Male
   Female

Q8 What was your standing when you participated in the study-abroad program?
   Freshman
   Sophomore
   Junior
   Senior


Graduate

Possible Likert Scale answers for the following question were:
Very important, Important, Somewhat important, Not at all important

Q9 How would you rate the importance of these goals before your departure?
   Improving your German skills
   Learning the culture of the host country
   Gaining job marketability
   Personal development
   Traveling
   Meeting people from other cultures
   Academic immersion

Possible Likert Scale answers for the following question were:
A great deal, Somewhat, Slightly, Not at all

Q10 To what degree did you accomplish these goals?
   Improving your German skills
   Learning the culture of the host country
   Gaining job marketability
   Personal development
   Traveling
   Meeting people from other cultures
   Academic immersion

Q11 Did you consciously set specific goals for your time abroad before your departure?
   Yes
   No

Possible Likert Scale answers for the following question were:
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Q12 Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.
   I am satisfied with the effort I made to immerse myself in the local culture.
   I am satisfied with the amount of contact time I had with the local people.
   I am satisfied with the amount of contact time facilitated by the program.
   My understanding of world cultures increased.
   I gained a different perspective on American culture.
   I have a greater understanding of the host culture’s way of life.
   I have a greater understanding of the host culture’s politics and history.
   I feel I have a strong grasp of German or Austrian culture.
I developed different viewpoints on society from those, which I previously held.

My ability to adapt increased.

During my study-abroad experience I spent at least 60% of my time with people from other countries.

Q13 Did you travel outside of program planned excursions?
   Yes
   No

Q14 Do you still communicate with foreign contacts from your study-abroad experience?
   Yes
   No

Q15 Have you returned to the host country?
   Yes
   No

Q16 Do you have plans to return to the host country in the future?
   Yes
   No

Possible Likert Scale answers for the following question were:
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Q17 Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.
Through my study-abroad experience, I have developed a greater sense of comfort and confidence in my German language abilities.

I have an increased fluency in conversational German, having overcome fears of failure in verbal expression.

Through my immersion, I have developed an accent more closely resembling that of a native speaker.

I would not have reached the level of ability I have in German today, had I not participated in the study-abroad program.

I reached a level of German competency while studying abroad with which I was satisfied.

My living arrangements while abroad helped me learn the language.

I am continuing to perfect and learn German.

I still speak, read, or write German on a regular basis.

Q18 To what degree can you speak German?
   I am almost equally comfortable in German and English.
I can freely speak German regardless of topic (not necessarily flawlessly).
I can freely speak German when the topics are related to my specialty (not necessarily flawlessly).
I speak German with some difficulty.
I speak German with great difficulty.

Q19 Do you currently use German in your job/career?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q20 Do you plan to use German in your job/career if you have not yet entered that phase of life?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q21 Do you travel outside of the United States for your job?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q22 Are international, language, or cultural influences involved in your current job?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q23 Do you feel you utilize skills you learned while studying abroad in your job?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q24 Do you feel you utilize skills you learned while studying abroad in your daily life?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q25 Did participating in study abroad influence your career and graduate study paths?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Q26 If you are currently in graduate school, will your degree be internationally, language, or culturally based?
   Yes
   No
   Not applicable

Possible Likert Scale answers for the following questions were:
Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
Q27 Thinking about your future/current career, would a job be more desirable to you if:
   it involved frequent travel abroad?
   It allowed you to use German?
   It allowed you to use your knowledge of history, culture, society, or politics of Germany or Austria?
   It allowed you to use your knowledge of the international practice of your profession?

Q28 Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.
   It is important that young people study abroad.
   My study-abroad experience helped me in getting a job, getting accepted to graduate school, or being accepted to other programs.

Q29 Please include any other information you would like to share about your study-abroad experience and its influence on you, your life, and your future endeavors.
APPENDIX C. TRANSLATIONS

*Mission Statement*: a summary describing the aims, values, and overall plan of an organization or individual

*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*: German as a foreign language

*Österreichisches Sprachdiplom* (ÖSD) – official German language proficiency test in Austria

*Festspielhaus*: festival theater

*Deutsche Literatur des 19. u. 20. Jahrhundert*: 19th and 20th Century German Literature

*Lektüre und Sprachpraxis*: Reading and Language Practice

*Wortschatz und Konversation*: Vocabulary and Conversation

*Akademisches Auslandsamt*: Academic office for foreign students

*Phonetik und Aussprachetraining*: Phonetic and Pronunciation training

*Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber* (DSH): German proficiency test for the admittance of foreign students to an institution of higher education

*Das Studium an deutschen Universitäten*: Studies at German universities

*Die Europäische Union*: The European Union

*Von Göbbels nach Hollywood*: From Göbbels to Hollywood

*Berlin von A bis Z*: Berlin from A to Z