EXPLORING INTERCULTURALITY IN LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION,

TECHNICAL, AND RURAL (LIFTR) POPULATIONS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM LIFTR

STUDENTS AT A U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in fulfillment of
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Internationalization

by

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<u>Approval of the Dissertation</u>

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Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education Internationalization

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Abstract

EXPLORING INTERCULTURALITY IN LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION, TECHNICAL, AND RURAL (LIFTR) POPULATIONS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM LIFTR STUDENTS AT A U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dawn Renze Wood

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

The purpose of this comprehensive study is to explore interculturality in low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTR) students who study in U.S. community colleges. In the U.S., 41% of all undergraduates study in community college (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2022). Globally, 33% of all undergraduates study in a community college or global equivalent (UNESCO-UIS, 2020). These institutions are more likely to serve non-elite and marginalized populations and are often sidelined in mainstream internationalization literature.

This dissertation uses an anti-deficit theoretical framework to buoy LIFTR community college students by recognizing that LIFTR students are fully capable of navigating interculturality and realizing substantial benefits. LIFTR students' experiences are compared across three groups: those who study abroad, those who participate in Internationalization at Home (IaH), and those who do not participate in planned intercultural experiences.

Statistical methods measure the demographic profile of a Kirkwood Community College student enrollment dataset of 62,000 students. Findings indicate that students with certain LIFTR identifiers are often more likely to participate in intercultural activities than students who do not possess LIFTR identities. A retrospective study abroad survey gathers study abroad student data to analyze the long-term impact of interculturality. In addition, 63 semi-structured student interviews amplify community college student voices and experiences in interculturality. Qualitative themes emerge including community college students' purposeful choices, maximization of intercultural opportunities, and realization of immediate applications to their local work environment. Students experience growth in diversity appreciation, an awareness of their ability to overcome life struggles, and a realization about the importance of human connections.

These research findings provide an eye-opening perspective on the significance of intercultural experiences in the community college local context. This study substantiates that community college internationalization is an effective vehicle for promoting social justice and fostering inclusivity of historically underrepresented students in international education.

Lo scopo di questo studio è esplorare l'interculturalità negli studenti a basso reddito, di prima generazione, tecnici e rurali (LIFTR) che studiano nei community college statunitensi. Negli Stati Uniti, il 41% di tutti i laureandi studia in un community college (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2022). A livello globale, il 33% di questi studia in un community college o in un istituto equivalente (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics [UNESCO-UIS], 2020). Queste istituzioni hanno

maggiori probabilità di fornire servizi educativi a popolazioni non elitarie ed emarginate e sono spesso trascurate dalla letteratura tradizionale sull'internazionalizzazione.

Questa tesi utilizza un quadro teorico anti-deficit per promuovere gli studenti LIFTR dei college comunitari, riconoscendo che questi essi sono pienamente in grado di navigare nell'interculturalità e di ottenerne notevoli benefici. Le esperienze degli studenti LIFTR sono messe a confronto tra tre gruppi: gli studenti che studiano all'estero, quelli che partecipano a progetti di Internationalization at Home (IaH) e quelli che non partecipano ad alcuna esperienza interculturale programmata.

Attraverso metodi statistici abbiamo misurato il profilo demografico di un campione di 62.000 studenti iscritti al Kirkwood Community College. I risultati indicano che gli studenti con determinati identificatori LIFTR sono spesso più propensi a partecipare ad attività interculturali rispetto agli studenti che non fanno parte dell'identità LIFTR. Un'indagine retrospettiva sugli studi all'estero ci ha permesso di raccogliere i dati degli studenti all'estero per analizzare l'impatto a lungo termine dell'interculturalità. Inoltre, 63 interviste semistrutturate agli studenti hanno amplificato le voci e le esperienze di interculturalità degli studenti dei college comunitari. Da questi dati emergono temi qualitativi, tra cui le scelte mirate degli studenti dei college comunitari, la massimizzazione delle opportunità internazionali e la realizzazione di applicazioni immediate al loro ambiente di lavoro locale. Gli studenti sperimentano una crescita nell'apprezzamento della diversità, una consapevolezza della loro capacità di superare le difficoltà della vita e una consapevolezza dell'importanza delle connessioni umane.

Questi risultati innovativi forniscono una prospettiva illuminante sull'importanza delle esperienze internazionali nel contesto locale dell'università comunitaria. Questo studio dimostra che l'internazionalizzazione dei community college è un veicolo efficace per l'impatto sulla

giustizia sociale e l'inclusione degli studenti storicamente sottorappresentati nell'educazione

internazionale.

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Engaging in this PhD work has been an amazing and life-changing journey. The entire endeavor was only possible because of the network of people who surround me, each of whom I thank for their persistent encouragement, support, and friendship. I have always stressed throughout my career that the most important element of international education and/or international work of any kind is the relationship-building skills we develop and the resulting relationships that become part of who we are. This dissertation process has been no different – it is the people and the relationships built that have made it possible.

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Their voices were a light in my darkness during the COVID pandemic when we all struggled to make human connections. Without them, nothing would have been learned.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the U.S., 41% of all undergraduates study in community college (AACC, 2022). Globally, 33% of all undergraduates study in a community college or global equivalent institution (UNESCO-UIS, 2020). For many U.S. community college students and those students at similar institutions globally, community college is the best choice option for their education and for many, it is the only choice. Despite this large proportion of the world population being educated at community colleges and like institutions, participation in planned intercultural educational experiences by these populations and the stories that result from that participation are often not studied nor understood. For example, despite close to half of U.S. undergraduates choosing to enroll in community colleges, only 1.7 percent of U.S. undergraduates who study abroad are enrolled at a community college (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2021).

Community colleges enroll students who are more likely to possess diverse and marginalized identities such as low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural among other typical disadvantaged identities. Although marginalized and diverse identities are prevalent in community college student populations, unfortunately their intercultural educational experiences are not being comprehensively studied, heard, and understood by policy-makers in a meaningful way. This lack of understanding is due in part to a lack of data on student participation and therefore lack of critical analysis. Due to this gap in understanding this population, I am compelled to write this dissertation with the purpose of exploring the interculturality of this understudied population, their personal stories, and their professional journeys. This frequently overlooked group of students reflects a large segment of our society that is poised to derive great reward for both themselves and the greater society from participation in intercultural

experiences. Their story is the one to be told here and framed in the exploration of the process endeavored upon during the intercultural experience itself, that of interculturality.

Intercultural experiences are experiences included in the formal curriculum such as study abroad or virtual exchange where students engage with people from other cultures. Interculturality is the process students undergo while participating in intercultural experiences. Put simply, the intercultural experience is the event itself and interculturality is the process an individual undergoes as they engage in the experience. This dissertation explores interculturality specifically because of the desire to better understand the LIFTR population of students at community colleges and how their engagement in interculturality impacts their personal and professional lives.

Interculturality, as defined by the Council of Europe, is the set of processes and outcomes through which relations between different cultures are devised based on equity and mutual respect (Leclerq, 2003). Within the construct of the internationalization of higher education, interculturality exists and is experienced by students in a learner-centered environment wherein education accompanies the phenomenon of interculturality, both the processes and the outcomes. According to UNESCO (2013), interculturality supports those whose cultures are not valued by the powerful centers. Interculturality is chosen as the exploration for this research in order to support the cultures and richly diverse experiences of U.S. community college students, often undervalued in the higher education research literature.

This dissertation examines interculturality in four groups of students who are typically underrepresented among the populations engaging in interculturality: low-income students, first-generation students, technical or Career Technical Education (CTE) students, and rural students. I created the acronym, LIFTR (low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural), to simplify the

discussion of these four target groups. U.S. community colleges provide an ideal setting to study LIFTR populations where they enroll in proportionally larger numbers. The LIFTR student population and LIFTR stories are the focus of this research. This research avoids the norm in international education research to-date with its usual focus on measuring intercultural competence as an individual trait to be gained. Instead, this research has a different target by intentionally shifting focus to the population of LIFTRs themselves, who they are, how they experience interculturality, and their stories of rich intercultural impact.

In the field of higher education internationalization, community colleges in the U.S. and similar institutions around the world appear to lag behind their four-year counterparts in comprehensive internationalization efforts and student access to intercultural experiences. As institutions, community colleges have allocated less resources to internationalization than their four year university partners who serve a more elite population overall (Raby, 2008). This institutional phenomenon has sometimes been falsely passed on to community college students themselves. This premise that community college students have a "lesser than" or "lagging behind" participation level in intercultural experiences is often explained in the literature through a deficit narrative suggesting that community college students do not possess the resources and/or interest in intercultural experiences. The deficit narrative continues to be challenged (Ardoin, 2018a; Malveaux & Raby, 2019; Quaye et al., 2015) and data has concluded that the modern generation of community college students do in fact have an affinity and interest in intercultural experiences (Amani & Kim, 2018) and that the availability and participation in these experiences contribute to student success (Raby & Rhodes, 2018). This dissertation will follow suit with an anti-deficit approach supporting the idea that internationalization for all not

only includes community college students but rather that community colleges and community college students represent the ideal setting and participants for engaging in interculturality.

Because of this challenge to the deficit narrative and a more asset-based approach to higher education, it is timely and relevant to conduct this research examining the profile of community college students. This research will analyze community college students who participate in planned intercultural educational experiences and those who do not in an effort to better understand the holistic experiences of LIFTR community college students and explore their engagement in interculturality. The purpose of this research is to provide insight into these students' voices, stories, motivations, challenges, and experiences. These student voices are shared in the findings of this study and will serve to guide and inform prioritization of resources dedicated to intercultural experiences at community colleges in the future.

The objectives of this study are to examine the profile of community college students who engage or do not engage in intercultural experiences, analyze their backgrounds and characteristics, hear their voice regarding their participation in intercultural experiences, and analyze the themes that result regarding their engagement in interculturality. Intercultural experiences considered will include study abroad experiences as well as Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences such as virtual exchange and in-class structured intercultural exchanges.

The exploration of interculturality among community college students challenges two common claims found in internationalization higher education literature. The first claim is that internationalization emphasizes a neoliberal and market-driven agenda over social responsibility and the holistic education of humankind (Kim, 2009; Stein, 2021). Some suggest that internationalization agendas need a realignment or shift to facilitate internationalization becoming more impactful globally and locally through social and intercultural engagement

(Jones et al., 2021). This study challenges this first claim by determining that the driver for U.S. community college internationalization is the common good (Godwin & de Wit, 2020) that serves local communities (Wood & Raby, 2022). U.S. community college internationalization serves as an appropriate example for shifting and realigning toward the betterment of society.

The second claim is that interculturality occurs primarily among the elite at elite institutions that send 1000 or more students abroad enrolling students whose profiles are largely from wealthy urban populations (Baer, 2019). The stereotype that non-elite populations do not heavily participate in internationalization fosters research primarily involving elite institutions and therefore elite students. This study unequivocally confirms that non-elite institutions such as community colleges do indeed advance interculturality and thereby include broader non-elite populations such as low-income, first-generation, rural, technical, and other marginalized categories typically classified as non-elite.

Community colleges serve their local communities and have local needs in their mission and value statements. The concept of ensuring global topics and global learning is included within the local community and environment is endemic to community colleges where they serve students located within a local radius and naturally have embedded ties to local communities (Topper & Powers, 2013). Raby & Valeau (2016) show how the local and global are intertwined due to the imprint of globalization. Local context, when connected to interculturality, can provide more evidence that internationalization efforts can and do impact community college student populations (Wood & Raby, 2022a) and their local communities. As international educators who aspire for internationalization for all, community colleges are the ideal setting to impact a larger and wider population that includes the non-elite, the diverse and those pursuing social mobility that can be derived from intercultural experiences.

This dissertation addresses the need for a more in-depth analysis of the community college setting by addressing four research questions. Research Question 1 (RQ1) is the over-arching question followed by three more specific questions (RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4).

1. What are the experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural U.S. community college students who engage in interculturality through participation in educational intercultural experiences? (RQ1)

2. What is the profile of U.S. community college students who participate in educational intercultural experiences compared to those who do not? (RQ2)

3. How do educational intercultural experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and technical U.S. community college students both in the short and long term? (RQ3)

4. How do study abroad experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and technical U.S. community college students compared to the impact from planned Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences or no planned educational intercultural experience? (RQ4)

The chapters that follow this introduction will delve into each of these four research questions. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review of relevant literature and research related to community college internationalization, intercultural experiences, and interculturality. Chapter 3 proceeds with a presentation of the theoretical framework guiding this research including anti-deficit theoretical perspectives and the concept of interculturality. Chapter 4 provides institutional background to the context of the case study institution, Kirkwood Community College, in order to better present a holistic picture of the environs of the study.

Chapter 5 presents the complex mixed methods design utilized to achieve a complete picture of LIFTR community college students engaging in interculturality. Chapter 6, 7, and 8 present the extensive quantitative and qualitative findings told by the data analysis, survey instrument, and personal interviews. Finally, Chapter 9 presents poignant discussion topics related to LIFTR community college student interculturality exploration. Discussion is focused on student identities, the role community colleges play in the movement toward social justice, and the call to debunk the deficit narrative as it currently pervades the intercultural experience conversation. This dissertation concludes with implications for international education leaders and administrators to direct their work toward LIFTRs and toward community colleges with a more intentional and inclusive strategy. Through a social justice and equity lens, international educators have an opportunity to optimize intercultural experiences and bring a critical consciousness of interculturality to the forefront for all students.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, a comprehensive literature review is presented to address the research topic: exploring interculturality through the experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTR) U.S. community college students. The chapter begins by describing the overall literature review methodology. Following the methodology, several topics are reviewed in depth that add perspective to this study including globalization and higher education internationalization, inclusive internationalization, intercultural experiences, intercultural competence, interculturality, context of the U.S. community college, and finally the topic of access and equity as it pertains to higher education.

Literature Review Methodology

The methodology of the literature review focuses on a synthesis of the extant literature and identification of gaps in knowledge that this study will address. To find relevant journal articles, books, reports and resources, I searched within higher education journal databases including Education Research Complete (EBSCO) and Google Scholar. My search centered on published research in the field of community college internationalization and on higher education internationalization in general. Additionally, topics related to stratification of higher education and access and equity of intercultural experiences were searched in relevant higher education journals and publications including the *Journal of Studies in International Education, Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education, Community College Journal of Research and Practice, and Journal of Higher Education.*

In the search process, I first used search terms including "interculturality", "intercultural experiences", "intercultural competence", and "internationalization of higher education"

connected with "community colleges" to find relevant studies to answer my research questions. I began by conducting searches of the most recent articles published in the field. As recent articles were found, a snowball approach was utilized to find additional reading from the reference list of those key articles. Upon finding a publication, I looked at the title and then read the abstract for relevance, limiting those that I read entirely to the ones that pertained directly to internationalization of community colleges and the impact of intercultural experiences on diverse populations, especially LIFTRs.

In the literature review presented in this chapter, I choose to nestle the topic of interculturality within the field of higher education internationalization and globalization as a whole. This background and context sets the stage for where internationalization of higher education has been and is called upon to go. In the present day, concurrent with the fallout from the global pandemic, calls for social justice and renewed interest in global mobility, international educators are asked to take a proactive role in making intercultural opportunities available for all (Brandenburg et al., 2019; Jones, 2019; Jones et al., 2021).

The literature review is comprised of six sections beginning with a broad-based summary of literature and concepts about globalization, internationalization of higher education, and inclusive internationalization. The second section addresses intercultural experiences including study abroad and Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities, especially among community college students. This section on intercultural experiences speaks to the research on community college students' participation in intercultural experiences as well as the impact of the intercultural experience on diverse community college students.

The third and fourth sections of the literature review explore two central concepts that are utilized to study the impact of intercultural experiences on students' personal and professional

lives. The first of these two concepts is intercultural competence and the second is interculturality. The norm in the internationalization of higher education research and studies is to focus on intercultural competence as an outcome or personal attribute gained through intercultural experience. Therefore, this literature review presents a short overview and critique of intercultural competence as a concept. The literature review then widens the lens to review the construct of interculturality holistically, tying together how interculturality as a concept is directly relevant to community college internationalization and therefore relevant to this study.

The fifth section of the literature review provides a closer look at the context of the U.S. community college as it relates to internationalization and intercultural experience. This section is important because the U.S. community college is a unique sector of higher education globally that requires explanation and context. Its diversity of students, industry/workforce linkages, local focus, low cost, open-access mission are all elements of the community college context that makeup the setting for this study.

The final section reviews literature related to access and equity in higher education utilizing a social justice lens and discusses how study abroad and intercultural experiences impact diverse community college student populations. This final topic of access and equity to intercultural experiences is framed in the context of democratizing intercultural experiences expanding access to more groups of students in order to create a better society.

Globalization and Higher Education Internationalization

This dissertation is focused on globalization and higher education internationalization in the broad sense and specifically how these phenomenon impact community colleges and the diverse populations they serve. In this section of the literature review, globalization will be introduced first, followed by a review of higher education internationalization, specifically

pointing to research on inclusive internationalization as it relates to diverse populations and access.

Globalization

Globalization, as a phenomenon, is commonly viewed as the interconnected context and academic trends that are part of today's reality (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Globalization is not a new phenomenon but rather something that has always been with us. In the present day, globalization is inevitable in our society and within higher education. Globalization often becomes a polarizing concept especially when viewed from the differing perspectives of the Global North and the Global South in terms of who benefits from a free market global economy and free trade. The global interconnectivity that exists due to globalization is often associated with economic possibilities, but is also underpinned by moral, intercultural, and ethical concerns (Rizvi, 2004).

Global knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes gained through intercultural educational experiences are essential for higher education graduates seeking to be productive global citizens (Twombly et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2013). As our world continues to become increasingly global and will inevitably continue to be global (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Rumbley et al., 2012), studies indicate that students of all backgrounds, including community college students, participating in global academic opportunities value and view intercultural experiences as integral to their educational experience and subsequent futures (Alexiadou et al., 2021; Petzold & Peter, 2015).

Higher Education Internationalization

Internationalization is often criticized as a concept within higher education lacking a consistent definition. Within the literature, one can discover many definitions and many critiques

about the lack of a clear definition of internationalization (de Wit et al., 2017; Knight & de Wit,

2018). One current commonly referenced definition of internationalization of higher education is

> the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension
>
> into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance
>
> the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful
>
> contribution to society (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29).

This definition establishes internationalization as a strategy that institutions of higher education

should strive toward with the goal of internationalizing their campuses, internationalizing their

faculty, and internationalizing their students and communities through these purposeful efforts

and strategies.

While internationalization is indeed an increasingly visible strategic priority among

higher education institutions, there is also a body of literature that indicates that

internationalization practices can actually be practices that engender inequality (Buckner &

Stein, 2019; George Mwangi & Yao, 2021). As internationalization of higher education

continues to be present in higher education, the concept of inclusive internationalization has

emerged as a response to the concerns about inequity of opportunity.

Inclusive Internationalization

As a response to the nature of the general internationalization literature focusing on

international mobility and the associated social selectivity that accompanies it, several articles

refer to inclusive internationalization as an ideal for providing access and equity to intercultural

experiences (de Wit, 2019; de Wit & Jones, 2018). This approach to expand internationalization

suggests a more inclusive approach and intentional strategy addressing how internationalization

practices and strategies can result in further inequities especially in terms of social status

inequities (de Wit & Jones, 2018; Van Mol & Perez-Encinas, 2022). Within the community college internationalization literature, research has also investigated how inclusive policies and practices exist to provide accessible intercultural experiences (Whatley & Raby, 2020).

Educators in today's society face challenges to provide equitable access to intercultural experiences to diverse students of all backgrounds. Literature regarding internationalization of higher education has addressed concerns of post-colonialism and a re-assessment of the ethics of internationalization in terms of access, inequity and impact (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Ballatore & Stayrou, 2017; Knight, 2015; Stein, 2016). In the words of Fanta Aw (Aw, 2017, p. xxii),

> If we are vested in internationalization work that reflects more equitable policies and practices and translates into relevant and sustainable models, we must have the courage and duty of care to ask and seek answers to important questions relating to the broad domains of knowledge, access, and relevance.

This is a valiant goal to challenge internationalization to be more equitable as well as relevant to all students. It is critical to note that the challenge is not only quantity of intercultural experiences available, but also quality or relevance to all students. Marginson (2016) writes about the social stratification in higher education and how high-participation or massification of higher education is not necessarily of high value. In other words, by increasing the number of participants in a given educational activity (i.e. study abroad, IaH, etc.), international educators are not necessarily increasing the educational and/or the impact of the educational activity on society. This dissertation intentionally widens the range of types of participants from a wider range of social statuses and identities, LIFTRs. Through this widened lens, international educators can increase the high-value social outcomes by intentionally designing programs that are relevant to LIFTRs.

Internationalization strategies and activities are held up as an ideal that facilitates common good (Godwin & de Wit, 2020; Jon & Fry, 2021). The concept of Internationalization of Higher Education for Society (IHES) elaborates upon international education's social responsibility to make a meaningful impact on local communities and the common good (Brandenburg et al., 2019; Jones, 2019; Jones et al., 2021). When higher education prioritizes intercultural experiences and interculturality, the stage is set for a more understanding and equitable society, thus connecting the ideals of international education to the ideals of social justice (Berger, 2020). This study's research question exploring the experiences of interculturality of LIFTRs relates directly to these ideals.

Among international educators, there is a shared aspirational goal of higher education internationalization that education should provide intercultural experiences to all students (de Wit & Jones, 2018). In this way, inclusive internationalization is also sometimes referred to as internationalization for all. Inclusive internationalization assumes that all students need to be equipped to function in a globalized world and that their local communities will be impacted in a way that requires global skills, attitudes, and knowledge. There is an inherent moral or ethical direction implied in the literature indicating that intercultural experiences are important to the overall nature of our society and therefore should be accessible to all students (Brandenburg et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2021; Legusov et al., 2022). There are several examples of research and articles published about how internationalization of higher education is linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) thus making a better and more sustainable world (Legusov et al., 2022; McGrath & Powell, 2016). According to a post in the *University World News*, the goal of internationalization is to create global citizens who both contribute to

the global workforce but also become engaged in creating a more civil society, "creating peace

through compassionate understanding" (Clifford & Haigh, 2018).

In the next section, the two concepts of intercultural experiences and interculturality, that

are a focus of my research, will be explored in more detail. Included in this section are

descriptions of the two types of intercultural experiences of focus in this research, Study Abroad

and Internationalization at Home (IaH). Study abroad is linked to mobility and IaH is not linked

to mobility. IaH is presented in the context of Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC).

Intercultural Experiences

A common goal of higher education internationalization strategies is the provision of

intercultural experiences during the educational experience. An intercultural experience is a

situation or context in which one individual or group of individuals have the opportunity to

engage with individuals of another culture (Paige, 1993). This dissertation will focus on

community college students' intercultural experiences within the community college experience.

Some of these experiences involve mobility and some do not involve mobility. Paige's definition

could be critiqued for its reference to individuals of another culture when the term "culture" is so

broad and difficult to delineate; however, this study embraces the idea that culture is not only

about being a member of a certain nation or region. Culture also encompasses intersectional

identities, is contextual, and recognizes diversity.

Educators have long found educational value in providing intercultural experiences, thus

giving the opportunity for engagement among culturally different individuals. The engagement is

the first step in the intercultural experience. There are several theories and studies on the topic of

intergroup contact theory and integrated threat theory that discuss how exposing groups that are

different from one another results in reducing prejudice and an increase in empathy (Harrison &

Peacock, 2010; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The research in this area also suggests that attitudes toward one another are likely to improve when interactions involve behavioral engagement, such as educational activities (Davies et al., 2011). This research also points to the importance of going beyond the first step of interaction only, going intentionally deeper through critical consciousness and the reflection that enhances the impact of the intercultural experiences. It is not the contact with others that is the critical component. Impact instead is derived from the intentional and well-designed education that surrounds the intergroup contact in terms of critical consciousness and reflection (Deardorff, 2004; Dietz, 2018; Berg et al., 2012).

Study Abroad

Study abroad, also referred to as education abroad, is often the most recognized form of intercultural experience. Study abroad/education abroad is defined by the Forum on Education Abroad Glossary (Forum on Education Abroad, 2018) as education that occurs outside the participant's home country, including study and study through intercultural experiences such as work, volunteering, non-credit internships, and directed travel. Study abroad is also sometimes used to include degree-seeking study abroad (Twombly et al., 2012). This dissertation does not include degree-seeking mobility because degree-seeking mobility does not reflect the interaction and relationship between the intercultural experience abroad and the home study experience as well.

This dissertation focuses primarily on short-term credit-seeking study abroad. To be considered study abroad, the program must be driven to a significant degree by learning goals and defined student learning outcomes. According to the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowhip Program (2005), "Promoting and democratizing undergraduate study

abroad is the next step in the evolution of American higher education. Making study abroad the norm and not the exception can position this and future generations of Americans for success in the world" (p. v).

Study abroad is the most common example of intercultural experience, and therefore the most researched. According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) Open Doors Report (2021), in the most recent academic year, only 7,856 students from community colleges participated in study abroad programs. In fact, students enrolled in the community college sector make up only about 1.7% of students studying abroad, even though they comprise 30% of total U.S. higher education enrollment.

Low participation at community colleges may be attributed to the low percentage of community colleges who actually report their study abroad enrollment to IIE, however this low reporting phenomenon is only one factor impacting the low number. Low reporting by community colleges is attributed to low staff support and lack of centralization of study abroad efforts at most community colleges. Only 11.5% of all community colleges offered education abroad according to Open Doors reporting so there are many community colleges who do not house a study abroad or international education office (Malveaux & Raby, 2019).

Community college students are choosing to study abroad each year, in small numbers, with the majority selecting short-term faculty led programs for their study abroad experience. Prior to the arrival of the COVID pandemic which put study abroad on hold for two to three years, it did appear that community college study abroad participation was on the rise. This small uptick in global experiences at community colleges was creating a growing awareness by administration that study abroad and global learning are essential. With the COVID pandemic beginning to subside enough to allow for global travel on a larger scale, this increase will likely

once again occur. As a result, an increasing number of community colleges will likely be seeking

to expand and improve study abroad programming on their campuses once again.

Studying abroad at a community college and at most institutions is explicitly an opt-in

type of participation for students which typically requires extra fees for participation. An opt-in

experience is an experience in which students must make an intentional decision to participate.

Because of the opt-in nature of study abroad, more research is needed about motivations among

community college students to engage and/or not engage in study abroad. Some findings of

previous research at community colleges have found that community college students tend to

make decisions about studying abroad more often based on family input (Robertson, 2016) and

on the fact that this may be the one-time opportunity for them to have an intercultural experience

(Amani & Kim, 2018).

Several studies have used the college choice model as a way to interpret how students are

motivated to make choices to study abroad (Amani & Kim, 2018; Brux & Fry, 2010; Salisbury et

al., 2009). The integrated college choice model originally developed by Perna (2006) examines

the range of factors that affect student decisions about opportunities in higher education. Perna's

model has proven to be effective in analyzing the impact of financial, human, social, and cultural

capital on students' decision to study abroad. Factors such as socio-economic status are also

introduced as related to this decision process. Regarding participation in study abroad, some

studies have delved more closely into institutions as a whole, rather than student-level

participation and found that the community college sector as an institution type might be a space

where some underrepresented student groups are more able to participate in intercultural

experiences, including study abroad (Whatley, 2018a).

This review of study abroad literature reveals a broad base of study abroad literature both at the university and community college levels. The topic of this dissertation, LIFTR interculturality, however, is missing. This dissertation will fill a gap by examining LIFTR study abroad students and exploring their engagement with interculturality.

Internationalization at Home (IaH) and of the Curriculum (IoC)

While study abroad is one option, in general for a small portion of students due to its reliance on mobility, this study compares the student study abroad experience with students who are involved in Internationalization at Home experiences, another important dimension of the internationalization strategies for higher education institutions. Internationalization at Home (IaH) is most commonly defined as the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments. (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de Wit & Leask, 2017; Leask & Carroll, 2011). IaH grew out of a need to turn the focus of internationalization away from exclusively mobility programs and instead focus on non-mobility. This study's IaH experiences include on-campus internationalized courses that are part of a student's normal course of study.

Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC) is the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study (Leask, 2015, p.9). IaH overlaps quite substantially with Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC). The main distinction between the two is that IaH does not include mobility, while IoC can include that option.

Curriculum can be a complicated concept to grasp. Leask (2015) explains in her book, *Internationalization of the Curriculum*, that curriculum includes both formal and informal

curriculum. Formal curriculum is the planned schedule of experiences laid out in a course

syllabus that students must undertake and be assessed on in order to complete a course. This

study defines an intercultural experience, as a formally planned curriculum event that involves an

intercultural component, and has defined student learning outcomes. This study focuses then on

those students engaged in the formal curriculum including study abroad and formally planned

Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities.

This dissertation explores participation in formally planned IaH activities that take place

within the domestic learning environment and do not involve mobility. This research also

recognizes that IaH also occurs in the informal component of domestic learning environments,

notably at the community college where much diversity in backgrounds exists. IaH is a concept

that is adopted by many institutions including community colleges to benefit non-mobile

students in their pursuit of intercultural experiences (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Community

colleges have been engaged in IaH and IoC for decades (Raby & Tarrow, 1996). Of course there

are criticisms of IaH indicating that it is a western concept and that it is not high on the agenda in

Africa or Asia, for example (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

Internationalization at Home (IaH) can be viewed as a specific subset of IoC focusing on

the non-mobile dimensions of IoC (Gregersen, 2017). IaH activities that are formally planned

can include on-campus international activities such as virtual exchange, collaborative online

learning, multicultural teams in the classroom, etc. Research about IaH activities have been

shown to contribute to the development of intercultural competence (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de

Wit & Leask, 2017; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Riley et al., 2016) and have been shown to increase

employability skills among participants (de Wit & Jones, 2022; Jones, 2013).

Less research is found on IaH intercultural experiences and impact than one can find on study abroad intercultural experiences. Even less IaH research focuses on experiences of students at community colleges. Some studies do exist that show that IaH impact is significant and a growing area of interest in the higher education internationalization field. Custer & Tuominen (2017) published results of an IaH community college intercultural activity between U.S. community college students and Japanese students. There are also studies that focus specifically on virtual exchange pedagogy and the design of effective virtual exchange (Dorroll et al., 2019) as well as exploring the impact of virtual learning on participants (Liu & Shirley, 2021, Prieto-Flores et al., 2016). During the COVID pandemic, many institutions including community colleges pivoted intercultural experiences to virtual and have been subsequently gathering data to support continuing virtual experiences as one method to democratize access to students who may not be able to participate in mobility programs (Fischer & Whatley, 2022; Liu & Shirley, 2021; Whatley et al., 2022).

The literature provides evidence that IaH has the potential to broaden intercultural experience participation across more diverse populations. The gap in the IaH literature is the lack of studies specifically about LIFTR students' engagement in interculturality and subsequent understanding of the impact of the experience given their identities. The gap also exists in a comparison directly between experiences of LIFTR students that experience study abroad compared to those that experience IaH and then those who do not. This study provides some additional insight into community college students' stories about their participation in study abroad, their participation in formally planned Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities such as virtual exchange or other intercultural experiences, and their non-participation in planned international activities. These three groups' stories and engagement interculturality will add to

the body of knowledge about those students who do or do not participate in planned intercultural experiences.

Intercultural Competence

This dissertation explores interculturality. Interculturality is a broad term that encompasses all that is intercultural including the much-researched term, intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is a common concept used in international education and frequently cited as a desired student learning outcome of intercultural experiences and/or as a desired graduation attribute within higher education institutions. This study does not specifically attempt to measure intercultural competence as an outcome or attribute; however, it is important to review the literature on intercultural competence, understand its history, development as a concept over time, and its critiques. This review will set the stage to build on what is known of intercultural competence and build on its insights as it relates to the exploration of interculturality, the focus of this research.

Intercultural Competence Overview

Intercultural competence is not a new concept. The *Sage Book of Intercultural Competence*, authored by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), provides a comprehensive research review of intercultural competence and its long history, including a summary of the origin of terms such as intercultural competence, intercultural effectiveness, and others as originating back in the 1970s and 1980s. Spitzeberg and Changnon (2009) define intercultural competence as "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world" (p.7). Intercultural competence has also been defined as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in

intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2004, p.194).

Within the field of international education, it is accepted that student participation in intercultural experiences often involves an intense and transformational experience; however, the experience alone is not necessarily enough to develop intercultural competence. Mere contact is not sufficient (Deardorff, 2009; Paige, 1993). To develop intercultural competence, there must be an intentional structuring of the intercultural content and an opportunity for critical reflection.

Several theories have been used to determine what type of intercultural experience and/or intercultural contacts are the most likely to lead to increase levels of intercultural competence (Allport, 1954; King et al., 2015; Pettigrew, 1998; Riley et al., 2016; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Intercultural competence theories and models are comprehensively summarized in Spitzburg and Changon's Chapter 1 (2009) of the *Sage Book of Intercultural Competence* where intercultural competence models are classified as compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal process models. Several frameworks have been established to allow for the assessment of intercultural development in study abroad. These include Byram's Intercultural Competence Model (1997), Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (2003), Hammer's Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) (2012) and Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2004, 2006), to name a few. These models are very different in nature and refer to different views on intercultural competence contributing to the complexity of the concept. In the next section of the literature review, I choose to focus on one common model, Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence, as a good example, and one that is frequently utilized among international educators.

Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence

In this section, Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence is described in more detail. For a visual overview of Deardorff's model, see Figure 1.

Figure 1

Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence
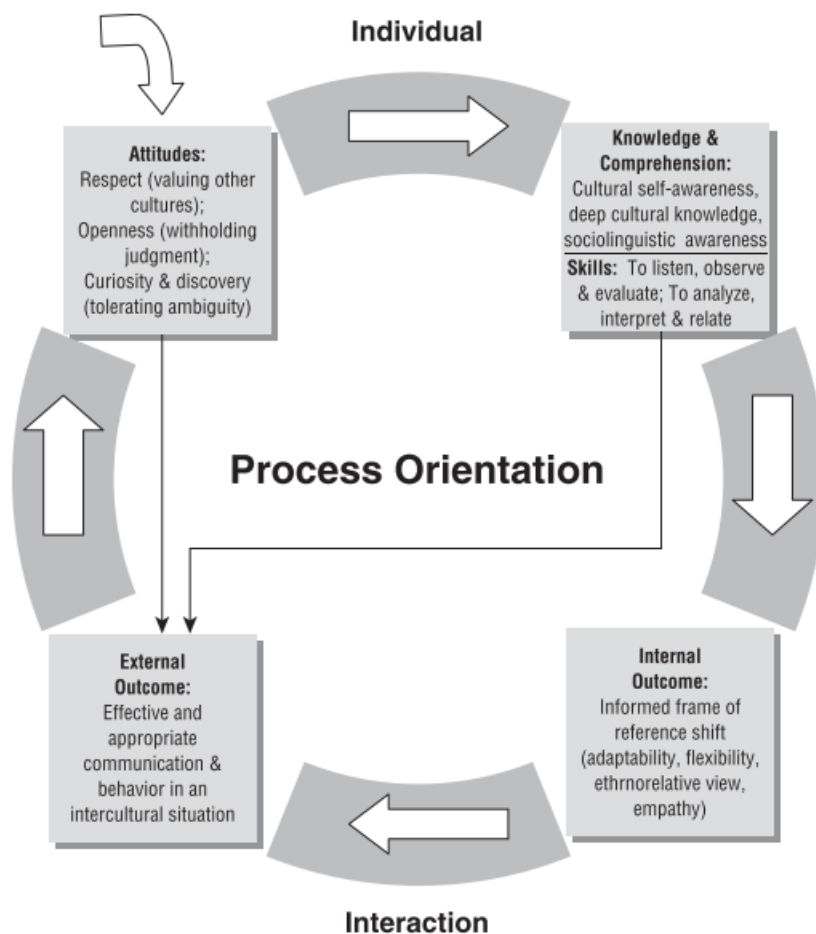
Note. Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills achieved. Source: Deardorff (2006).

In this study, I choose to borrow selected concepts from Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence for two reasons. The first reason is that it is a very common accepted

model utilized in international education publications and research. The second reason is that the

concepts included in the Deardorff model are helpful to the methods for this study that will be

presented in Chapter 5 including student survey questions and interview protocols. For example,

Deardorff's attitudinal concepts of curiosity, openness, and respect (Deardorff, 2017) are used to

develop some of the questions in the survey and interview protocol. In addition, concepts of

empathy, flexibility, communication, and self-awareness are also used to direct the open-ended

semi-structured interviews and reflection by students on their experience. All of these concepts

can be seen in the process model visual in Figure 1.

Intercultural Competence Critiques

There are many critiques of intercultural competence as a useful and/or modern method

for analyzing intercultural experiences and their impact. The first critique is that of the

complexity of the term "culture". Rathje (2010) criticizes intercultural competence as an

outdated paradigm and attempts to revise the understanding of culture in a way that de-

individualizes it and allows for a more pluralist or collective perspective. Criticisms also include

a recognition that culture itself is not stagnant. Culture is not something that people have or

possess. Culture is instead something that is constructed and made relevant (Jackson, 2018;

Dervin, 2015).

A common criticism levied upon intercultural competence is the tendency of the concept

and the typical models of intercultural competence to have a Global North dominance. Along

this same argument, another critique is that the focus is on the individual and the individual's

personal gain rather than focusing on the group or the impact on society as a whole. Along with

the Global North perspective as an influencer, there is also a critique of the strong influence of

business and management as the primary field where many of the intercultural competence

literature originates (Alolio-Näcke, 2014, Koester & Lustig, 2015).

Intercultural competence is critiqued for ignoring power differentials and inequities that

exist and are unavoidable in human interactions. Rathje (2007) provides a comprehensive

critique of intercultural competence pointing specifically to the idea that intercultural

competence implies some ideal state of being that ignores power factors and situational

conditions that may be present for individuals who possess less power in a given intercultural

encounter. Because this study involves LIFTR community college students who are typically not

in a power status and are indeed members of the non-elite student group, this criticism is relevant

to this study.

In Gregersen-Hermans (2021b), intercultural competence is labeled as a complex

construct that is psychological, interactive, and contextual. Intercultural competence is discussed

as something that is co-constructed by all participants involved in the intercultural engagement.

With this co-construction, it is clear that the individuals themselves and their identities are

integrally involved in the creation of the intercultural competence. This complexity adds to the

difficulty of measurement and overall any type of consistency in measurement given the vast

individual differences involved. Intercultural competence is a concept lacking clarity and has

been referred to as a psychological construct that is interactive and contextual in nature

(Gregersen-Hermans & Lauridsen, 2021). Context and interaction are also key components in the

construct of interculturality; however, interculturality is not an attempt to measure, but rather an

exploration of the process through which individuals engage different individuals.

Intercultural competence as a student learning outcome and graduation outcome is a

common objective among higher education institutions (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021b). The

criticism of this objective is the incredibly challenging task of assessment and measurement. Those authors in the field of intercultural competence agree that this difficulty of assessment is likely linked to the overall lack of clarity around the concept of intercultural competence itself (Blair, 2017; Dervin, 2016; Rathje, 2010; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). There have been multiple diverse and independent methods by which researchers have attempted to measure intercultural competence at all types of institutions including community colleges (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Wood, 2018). Intercultural competence assessment is complicated and most international educators agree that single methods of measuring and assessing always remain insufficient (Blair, 2017).

Several studies attempt to measure intercultural competence through the use of self-reporting methods where students themselves report out through the use of a standardized assessment their own perception of their growth or change in knowledge, attitudes, or skills that parallel those found in intercultural competence models. This self-reporting often is utilized using student satisfaction surveys or a type of standard assessment such as the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA), etc. to assess outcomes and attempt to measure intercultural competence. These standard assessments were not necessarily designed for use as a study abroad measure but nonetheless are often used by international education practitioners as well as researchers. Some studies have also applied these measures of intercultural competence specifically to student demographics (Haskollar & Kohli Bagwe, 2023). Surveys and self-reporting tools have met challenges in their ability to measure intercultural competence (Koester & Lustig, 2015).

It is because of these critiques and the recognized complexity of measurement that this study has switched course from a focus on measurement of intercultural competence as a personal trait to a more intentional discovery of this study's unique population and their co-constructed realities as they engage in intercultural experiences. At the beginning of the study, I began designing the methods, interview protocol, and survey questions with an expectation that Deardorff's model of intercultural competence would be the best model to measure impact and used many of the concepts in the development of the methods. As the depth and color of the qualitative responses emerged and responses were analyzed and coded for themes, I recognized that a measure of an attribute, such as intercultural competence, would not be as significant to this study as would be the sharing of the stories or the processes through which students experienced intercultural experiences from a LIFTR perspective. As the results of the study were analyzed, I began to see that the results were more linked to process than to the measurement of an individual attribute and shifted from a goal of measuring intercultural competence to exploring the phenomenon of interculturality itself, which will be described in the next section.

Interculturality

Upon the review of intercultural competence presented in the previous section and its associated critiques, it is noted that researchers and international educators alike experience many struggles identifying an appropriate way to measure intercultural competence as an outcome. Based on this realization, I made the conscious decision to turn the focus of my research from an intercultural competence measure as a personal attribute or outcome to an exploration of the process of interculturality itself. The research focuses on the process that diverse LIFTR students experience when they encounter people who are different from them.

In this literature review on interculturality, the first section reviews the many definitions and understandings of interculturality in the literature summarizing research that has focused on interculturality. Following the overview, various critiques of interculturality are presented concluding with a shared definition for the purpose of this research.

Understanding Interculturality

In the literature, interculturality has been considered as an umbrella term for all things intercultural, including cultural encounters, intercultural education and trainings, the intercultural coping abilities of people, intercultural competence, and the reflection on the intercultural encounters (Allolio- Näcke, 2014). Intercultural competence, as reviewed in the prior section, fits under the umbrella of interculturality as well as an attribute or outcome. One accepted definition by the Council of Europe defines interculturality as the set of processes through which relations between different cultures are constructed (Leclercq, 2003). Another definition from the literature is that interculturality is the process that happens when two individuals from different backgrounds meet (Jackson, 2018). In Dervin & Jacobson (2016), they define interculturality as a phenomenon that is occurring between cultures and/or people, in a processual manner. All of these definitions indicate that interculturality is complex and contextual, involves understanding multiple identities, and involves relationships among the people interacting. Exploring interculturality then is an exploration of people's experiences, identities, and relationships.

Interculturality itself aims for equity and mutual respect according to the Council of Europe's report entitled *Facets of Interculturality* (Leclerq, 2003). In Kumar & Welikala (2021), they indicate that "Interculturality can be seen as a pathway towards creating a more peaceful and genuinely interconnected future, both locally and globally" (p. 6). In a broad sense, interculturality is defined as the process that occurs when there is interaction between any

cultural groups. Interculturality is complex and recognizes that the process of interculturality

changes all participants, not just one side or the other (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt, 2013; Wood &

Raby, 2022b).

Dervin (2015) explains that interculturality requires an awareness of the context in which

interculturality occurs. Interculturality also requires a cognizant recognition of the existence of

power relations, multiple identities, and the intersectionality of multiple and overlapping

identities. Interculturality is political and ideological because it pays attention to the context,

recognizing power relations that exist between people of different identities (Jackson, 2018).

The concept of diverse and overlapping identities within the context of power relations is

a concept that is often couched in a conversation about intersectionality. Intersectionality was

first articulated by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her work in the legal field noting that multiple

social identities make up diverse people's lived experiences and their subsequent treatment as

members of society. In this study, identities of low-income, first-generation, technical and rural

students on their own and as they overlap are investigated. Intersectionality is the idea that

individuals have multiple identities beyond the national (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Cho et al.,

2013; Dervin & Jacobsson, 2016; Montgomery, 2020). Intersectionality as a concept, in its

recognition of the multiplicity of identities, fits in well with the nature of the community college

students in this study who identify as low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students.

Each of these four identities is often labeled as marginalized groups and it is some combination

of those identity markers that may impact their experience as students.

Jackson (2018) addresses the relationship of interculturality and international education

stating that "Interculturality translates a process and something in the making when two

individuals from different backgrounds meet" (p. 5). The importance of intersectionality or the

idea of multiple identities beyond the national are central to this perspective (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Jackson, 2018). Interculturality also recognizes that we cannot only associate international education and its intercultural encounters as occurring between nations when so much diversity exists within nations. It is not possible to ignore the diversity within nations (Jackson, 2018).

The literature also refers in some publications to the concept of interculturalization. There are perspectives advocating that interculturalization may be a better concept than internationalization and that interculturalization also lends a new perspective on exactly what goals international education is trying to accomplish. Jones (2019) discusses how "the term 'interculturalization' might create a better way to view the new agenda that creates the potential for students to question their own assumptions, acknowledge alternative viewpoints and to cross cultural boundaries, extending their knowledge and understanding by respecting and valuing diversity as essential for living and learning in a changing society" (p.3). Interculturalization and interculturality seem related given these comments although also very different in that interculturalization is described as something that is referencing individual gain and individual understanding whereas interculturality is about the process and relationships that occur within the intercultural learning experience. Interculturality is a communication process within the interaction itself, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional identities.

As has been evidenced here, there is a lot of discussion, essays, and papers written about the concept of interculturality; however concrete research studies rooted in the concept of interculturality are not easy to find. Jackson (2018) and Dervin (2015) write a great deal about the concept as a phenomenon but actual research related to how interculturality is experienced by

diverse population is not readily available, thereby adding to the unique nature of this

dissertation.

In Gregersen-Hermans (2021b), a study is conducted in which students share narratives

and relate their experience with interculturality to their sense of belonging. The findings of this

publication indicate that in order for interculturality to be realized, the ethos of the institution in

which it is occurring needs to support the participants and act with equity and respect.

The concept of interculturality lends itself well to the diverse nature of the community

college population. Rather than focusing on how intercultural experiences illustrate differences

between countries, the experiences of community college students in this study focus more on

the similarities as well as the differences detected during intercultural experiences. Due to the

intersectional identities present among community college students, the diversity of the

community college context is ripe for interculturality to occur in many forms.

Interculturality Critique

Along with the multiple definitions presented about interculturality in the section above,

interculturality also receives some criticism (Alolio-Näcke, 2014). The main criticism is about

the lack of agreement on what culture itself means (Alolio-Näcke, 2014; Dervin, 2015). What is

culture? There is a lack of agreement on defining culture as a unique standard that distinguishes

it from all other cultures. Indeed, cultures are not homogenous and stable entities and cultures are

not synonymous with nation-states (Dervin, 2015). Finally, Jackson (2018) points out that the

construct of interculturality is complicated and there are many differing opinions about how or

even whether it should even be assessed as an outcome, indicating that the process itself may be

more valuable to researchers than the outcome.

Interculturality in this Dissertation

In this dissertation, I define interculturality as a process, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional identities. This definition of interculturality parallels Jackson's (2018) above and others (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021a) but also emphasizes the intersectionality of identities that individuals experiencing interculturality may possess and how those diverse and overlapping identities impact the experience. This definition also allows space to have a broader perspective on intercultural relations rather than limiting to culture or nationality.

Interculturality acknowledges that there are relations that exist within society between diverse majority and minority populations defined not only in terms of culture or nationality but also defined by other group identities. Interculturality emphasizes intergroup relations within a society as well as across societies. This study focuses on specific group identities including low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTR) community college students and analyzes their experiences through the lens of equity, difference, and diversity as does the notion of interculturality. Interculturality is a continuous process of being and becoming wherein individuals are able to communicate across cultures with equity and respect (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021a).

In Chapter 3, where the theoretical framework of this study is outlined, interculturality will be further presented in terms of the theoretical lens through which this study is framed. In the following section of the literature review, we will shift to focus on the context of the U.S. community college as the setting for this study.

Context of the U.S. Community College

This section's purpose is to provide an overview of the context of the U.S. community college as it relates to this study. This study purports that the context of the U.S. community

college is ideal for the study of diverse student experiences and this section will lay out some of the reasons for that assertion including its history, structure, and characteristics.

Community colleges are a specific subset of U.S. higher education institutions typically delivering two-year associate degree programs serving approximately ten million students per year (Community College Research Center [CCRC], 2021). Community colleges provide academic coursework for transfer, vocational training, and continuing education courses. Because of their open-access admission policies, low tuition, and direct links to industry/workforce needs, community colleges are often considered essential agents of democracy, providing local access to higher education for traditionally underserved populations (Bailey et al., 2015; Topper & Powers, 2013).

Community colleges today serve a diverse range of students in terms of age, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic background, providing an important pathway to many (Ma & Baum, 2016). Community colleges play an integral role in helping students from low-income backgrounds move into middle- or upper-income levels, making community colleges a facilitator of upward mobility (CCRC, 2021). Among all U.S. undergraduates, 41% are community college students. Community college demographics indicate that 36% of community college students in the U.S. are among the first generation of their family to attend college. First-generation students are more likely to choose community college than a four-year university. The Center for First-Generation Student Success (2016) indicates the 64% of public 2-year community colleges are first-generation overall and 47% of public 4-year community college students are first-generation.

Among community college students, there are high concentrations of other marginalized students with unique challenges such as 17 % who are single parents, and 7 % who are non-U.S.

citizens and 4% who are veterans. It is noteworthy that 12 % of students at community colleges are considered students with disabilities and the average age of community colleges students is 28 years old, about 2 years older than the average four-year public university student. In terms of enrollment status, 63 % are part-time students with many working one full-time and/or multiple part time jobs while attending school (AACC, 2022). According to the Community College Research Center (2021), about 81% of part-time and 47% of full-time community college students work while enrolled. In contrast, four-year institutions in the Fall of 2020 semester had only 27% part-time students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). In 2018, 41% of students enrolled in community colleges were Black or Hispanic, compared to 30% of students enrolled in four-year institutions (CCRC, 2021).

Community colleges' founding principles assert that education be available and accessible for every individual, regardless of location, economic status, and background. Community college founders believed that this accessibility would result in the betterment of society (Vaughan, 1982). The core values that were present during the foundation of U.S. community colleges still pervade community college organizational culture and mission: "Egalitarianism is a hallmark for the community college philosophy. Indeed, the community college's open door has often provided the only access to higher education for millions of Americans." (Vaughan, 1982, p.2). Even with these ideals of egalitarianism, there is of course still stratification and some researchers have documented limitations or specific areas where access is not always as open as intended. In these cases, policies and practices can be exclusionary, including those of study abroad programming (Whatley & Raby, 2020).

An increasing number of publications and research studies focus on internationalization efforts at community colleges (Green & Siaya, 2005; Levin et al., 2017; Malkan & Pisani, 2011;

Raby & Valeau, 2007, 2016; Romano, 2002). Of the over 1200 community colleges in the U.S,

about 420 have documented international programs. This amounts to about 36% of all

community colleges (Raby, 2018). According to a report by the American Council on Education

(ACE), associate degree granting institutions have seen a good amount of progress in

internationalization (Helms et al., 2017). These factors in the ACE report include increases in

articulated institutional commitment, leadership, curriculum, faculty, student mobility, and

partnerships.

The goal of providing intercultural experiences at the community college, similar to the

goal at other higher education institutions, is to produce graduates with global perspective and

global competence who will be effective in a multicultural society and contribute to the global

workforce (Green & Siaya, 2005). In the context of community colleges, all stakeholders must

emphasize that global learning is an integral part of preparation for work and for citizenship

(Green, 2016). The overall higher education internationalization literature recognizes clearly that

one of the challenges of today's international educators is to emphasize the global and the local

(de Wit et al., 2017; Raby & Valeau, 2016). Despite this recognition of the importance of the

local in our internationalization strategies, much of the current reading and research about

internationalization omits community colleges as a context (Proctor & Rumbley, 2018). Omitting

community colleges seems counter-intuitive to the idea of impacting local communities through

internationalization. Community colleges are by their nature local.

A critical review of the internationalization strategies at community colleges found that

the focus on local needs can sometimes result in fragmented internationalization strategies and

lack of cohesion (Unangst & Barone, 2019). This fragmentation is not necessarily negative but

indicates a distinctive feature of community colleges and a different perspective on how

internationalization can impact the local communities and stakeholders (Bissonette & Woodin, 2013; Custer & Tuominen, 2017).

Some literature has supported the idea that community colleges are indeed the ideal locale for internationalization due to both their local impact and their tie to local needs. For example, Treat and Hagedorn (2013) state that the community colleges have a charge to produce globally competent students: "The community college is uniquely situated to pivot as a key global partner for the democratization and development of a global workforce" (p. 6). Raby (2014) states that community colleges emerged as a response to local needs and that local needs cannot be ignored. In fact, as globalization grows, local needs become more strong and clear.

Community colleges possess distinct attributes contributing to their unique positioning exemplifying local needs. These attributes include diversity of students, students early in their education, industry/workforce linkages, local focus, low cost, and open-access mission. Each of these attributes of the community college context is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Diversity of Students

Community colleges have offered international education opportunities to a greater percentage of low-income and minority students than other types of institutions (Raby & Valeau, 2007). Community college models offer an alternative path and often second chance at education to students not bound for university (Raby & Valeau, 2009). Students at community colleges are more likely to originate from diverse populations including a higher percentage of students from the following diverse groups: lower socioeconomic class/low-income students, underrepresented minority students, first-generation students, non-traditional students, single parents, part-time students, working-class students, technical students enrolled in applied science fields of study,

students over age 25, and rural students (AACC, 2022; Ma & Baum, 2016; Raby & Valeau,

2009). The global economy demands that students of all backgrounds and academic disciplines

including technical areas will require global skills and mindsets that intercultural experiences

provide. Higher education institutions should encourage students of all backgrounds to study

abroad (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017) and/or engage in on-campus intercultural experiences.

Students Early in their Education

Students attending community colleges, by the nature of a two-year institution, are early

in their educational pursuits, allowing for earlier impact of intercultural experiences (Farrugia &

Sanger, 2017). A white paper published jointly by Institute of International Education and

American Institute for Foreign Study (2018), made conclusions that the educational benefits of

study abroad should start earlier in students' college education to allow students to be more

intentional about selecting a program that matches their desired learning and employment

outcomes (American Institute for Foreign Study [AIFS] Foundation and Institute of International

Education [IIE], 2018). Community colleges provide the first two years of a bachelor's degree or

technical degree for over 41% of U.S. undergraduates. This recommendation, then, about how

study abroad education and recruitment should start earlier, is relevant directly to the population

of community college students and a call to action to community college leaders preparing

students for transfer and/or workforce. Note here that this notion of "early in their education" is

not necessarily linked to students' biological age but rather to the stage in which they are in their

educational pursuits.

Industry/Workforce Linkages

Community colleges are linked to the local workforce needs in their communities and

curriculum is directly tied to local industry workforce needs (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017).

Community colleges partner with local employers toward the goal of a globally competent

workforce and are able to nimbly and directly apply these learning outcomes to the curriculum.

Community colleges exist to prepare students for local employment, but that employment is in

the context of a global economy (Raby & Valeau, 2009). Many relevant publications establish a

link between study abroad and workforce readiness illustrating how study abroad contributes to

the development of work-related skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, self-awareness,

interpersonal skills, and leadership skills (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Harder, 2011). In 2017,

Farrugia and Sanger (2017) show that study abroad has a direct impact on the skills needed for

career success, regardless of student degree level. Whether a student is pursuing a vocational,

technical, science or arts degree, career skills are gained. In addition to study abroad,

intercultural experiences integrated in the community college curriculum, such as virtual

exchange, have also been shown to enhance intercultural competency skills desired by the work

force (Custer & Tuominen, 2017).

Local Focus

Internationalization efforts at community colleges are an opportunity to connect the

global and the local (Helms et al., 2017; Raby, 2014; Raby & Valeau, 2009, 2016; Unangst &

Barone, 2019). The literature on comprehensive internationalization calls for such a connection

between global and local, as is evidenced by several quotes including a university example from

Jones (2017) "Internationalization thus has both global and more local intercultural interests at

its heart" (p. 21) and a community college example from Treat and Hagedorn (2013) "Providing

global opportunity with local impact is thus the challenge before all community colleges." (p. 8)

Community colleges are by their nature local in their institutional location, in their

accessibility to community members, and in their industry/workforce development focus. Indeed,

community colleges possess many distinct attributes that serve to identify them as an ideal
locale/educational sector for certain local segments of the population to access intercultural
experiences.

Community colleges make the commitment to internationalize typically in an effort to
serve local communities/industries rather than as an external choice linked to reputation,
economic gain and positioning the institution for competition (Raby & Valeau, 2016; Shields,
2013). This is true even though community colleges are often drastically underfunded and there
is a need to justify spending and/or attempt to make a profit to make ends meet. Community
needs that serve as precursors to internationalization include the jobs in the local community that
require international skills such as import/export skills, knowledge of global economy, diversity
awareness, empathy, customer service, and provision of services to local multicultural
communities.

Low Cost and Open-Access Mission

Community colleges maintain low costs of tuition for students and foster an open-access
mission, evidenced in specific policies and in the overall organizational culture. In this way,
community colleges provide opportunities to students who may otherwise not have access to an
intercultural experience due to institutional barriers to admission and cost. The open-access
mission of community colleges is demonstrated by extremely open admissions policies which are
much easier to navigate than four-year university admissions policies. This ease of admission
accompanied by low and/or free tuition provides access to large numbers of low-income, first-
generation, single-parent, part-time, rural students, and students from other underrepresented
minorities. By providing access to internationalization efforts to diverse groups of students,
community colleges become a key global partner for the democratization and development of a

global workforce comprised of global citizenry (Barone, 2021; Green, 2007; Lynch, 2020; Treat & Hagedorn, 2013; Unangst & Barone, 2019; Whatley & Raby, 2020).

Challenges for Community Colleges

Community colleges face several challenges related to internationalization. Instead of recognizing the intersection of local and global, there is often a perceived priority by community college administrators and constituents placed on the local over the global. Resources spent on global initiatives and internationalization may be perceived by various constituents and stakeholders as taking away from those resources directed toward local needs. It is only those community colleges who have recognized that global initiatives and education contribute to the local impact that have made strides in internationalizing.

The research has clearly shown that one major challenge for community colleges is that internationalization at community colleges can only be successful with strong leadership support and advocacy at the top executive level. Several research studies and dissertations have focused on findings related to the critical nature institutional leadership of community colleges including both Presidential and Board of Trustees support and advocacy (Bissonette & Woodin, 2013; Brennan, 2017; Harder, 2011; McRaven, 2015; Raby & Valeau, 2016; Samaan, 2005) for internationalization. Other research literature has stressed that in addition to high level executive support, community colleges must also have the support and advocacy of mid- and senior level administrators (Cruz et al., 2020; Raby et al., 2023).

Community colleges face unique challenges related to the implementation of intercultural experiences in the formal as well as the informal curriculum. For many students, the community college offers a unique opportunity to engage in intercultural experiences that build intercultural competence, therefore the need to integrate the experience on campus in the classroom is critical.

Faculty development related to concepts of intercultural competence and internationalization is important. The overall research has indicated that community college faculty have positive attitudes toward internationalization and the importance of intercultural experiences; however, there is often a faculty perception or reality of lack of institutional support and resources (Bista, 2016).

Challenges implementing and scaling participation in study abroad programs has been evident at community colleges. In the most current report, only 1.7% of all students who study abroad in the US are community college students (IIE, 2021). This 1.7% figure is dramatically low given that 41% of all US undergraduates are students at community college (AACC, 2022). The typically cited barriers to community college student participation include financial, family and work obligations and/or lack of interest. Some would argue that more predominant and perhaps controllable challenges include institutional challenges about resources committed to programming, visibility of programs and/or availability (Raby, 2007) as well as institutional stratification (Whatley, 2018b).

Access and Equity

Access and equity to intercultural experiences is a challenge. In reviewing the literature on access and equity of intercultural experiences, there are two levels of literature to review. The first level is the access and equity of intercultural experiences at the institutional level comparing access and equity in the community college sector of higher education to the four-year university sector. The second level is to discuss access and equity of intercultural experiences according to individual student groups' accessibility based on the categories of students, such as those in this study who are more likely to attend community colleges: low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students (LIFTRs).

Institutional Level

Focusing in on the institutional level of access and equity, there is indeed a great deal of literature that focuses on community college internationalization (Gilbert, 2013; Manns, 2014; Raby, 2014; Unangst, 2019). Community college internationalization, where and when it occurs, provides a deep and lasting impact on a specific subset of U.S. society, the non-elite, who do not easily access intercultural experiences.

It is posited in some of the literature reviewed that the field of international education as a whole may have once developed from the altruistic goals of improving equitable access for all (Deardorff et al., 2012); however, new intensifying global as well as institutional pressures have left the field focusing more on revenue, profits, research dollars, and offshore programs and less on altruism (Knutson, 2018; Proctor & Rumbley, 2018). Several researchers have postured that internationalization itself is actually contributing to elitism and an increased stratification of higher education institutions rather than providing equity for all in terms of learning experiences (Ballatore & Stayrou, 2017; Knight, 2015; Stein, 2016; Whatley, 2018b). Higher education stratification points to the reproduction of social inequality by the types of institutions students attend and the resources those institutions have (Doob, 2013; Marginson, 2016; Whatley, 2018b).

The idea of the "democratization of study abroad" appears in multiple publications (Proctor & Rumbley, 2018; Treat & Hagedorn, 2013; Whatley, 2018a). Democratization as defined in the Oxford dictionary is "the action of making something accessible to everyone" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2022). It is clear from the nature of the community college as an institution and the students that are served that many of the students who engage in intercultural experiences at community colleges would otherwise not have that access if community colleges

were not available and providing intercultural experiences (Amani & Kim, 2018; Raby &

Valeau, 2007).

Individual Level

The second level of this review on access and equity is focused on individual students

and the characteristics of students who have access and equity to intercultural experiences.

Community college students are complex in their multiple identities; many community college

students are also first-generation college students, low-income students, technical students,

students of color, immigrants, non-traditional, rural, and infinite combinations of all of these

identity groups. Each of these characteristics adds a unique dimension to their identity that

affects who they are and how they might engage in intercultural experiences.

These multiple identities do not exist in isolation. Intersectionality recognizes that

multiple identities overlap to create who a person is and the way in which they experience

difference (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Cho et al., 2013; Dervin & Jacobsson, 2016; Montgomery,

2020). Intersectionality was originally coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her analysis of

the intersection between race and sex as identity markers and has since been applied to the

intersection of a multitude of identity markers. Intersectionality as a concept aligns with the

nature of the community college students in this study who identify with multiple marginalized

identities including low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural, among others such as

immigrant, minority, non-traditional, single parent, and more. Intersectionality of identities is

commonly cited as an area of needed investigation to determine how an individual's intersecting

identities rather than only one identity element impact their intercultural experience.

In the literature of sociology, this interweaving of individual backgrounds of class and

socio-economic status are often explained as a person's "habitus" or ingrained habits and

dispositions that form a perception of the social world around them and how they interact with it (Bourdieu, 1977). Literature about intercultural experiences investigates this sense of habitus and how it may or may not play a role in student motivations to participate in intercultural experiences (Raby et al., 2021; Salisbury et al., 2009; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). In the theoretical framework chapter of this dissertation, more will be discussed on this topic as it relates to the students in this study.

Access and equity student issues are actually researched frequently in the literature but often focus on divergences in student motivations to study abroad pointing to a lack of motivation or deficit as a problem. Salisbury's study (2009) about understanding the choice process of studying abroad concluded that there was a lack of social and cultural capital or deficit that contributed to certain types of student participation. The study in its final comments also concluded that if the ultimate goal is to enhance global awareness and increase intercultural skills in the greater non-elite population, perhaps an investment in increasing study abroad participation among community college students would be the most efficient use of resources (Salisbury et al., 2009). The same study concluded that initiatives to increase and democratize study abroad would be facilitated by crafting more opportunities for community college students to engage in diverse interactions and co-curricular experiences on campus or in the local community so that is could be better understood.

Several studies have explored how intercultural experiences impact students from diverse groups although many of them were not focused only on these groups specifically at community colleges (Andriano, 2010; Brux & Fry, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2004; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Thomas, 2013; Walpole, 2003). The conclusions from these studies of diverse student groups, mostly at universities, confirm that diverse student groups do not participate in intercultural

experiences proportional to their population sizes. The most consistent finding from these studies

is that lower socio-economic status students are under-represented. Findings indicated that

causes for this disproportionality were varied but often were not attributed to the lack of finances

alone, as one may assume. Attributable causes instead included the lack of program "fit" or

design to attract lower income and diverse students' needs along with relevance to their career

choices. Institutional factors and decisions about program "fit", marketing, program topics, etc.

played a major role in the reasons for the under-representation. The studies also directly

recommend that international educators focus and customize strategies within institutions that

serve diverse students. This study takes this recommendation by housing the study at a

community college where diverse students are more prevalent.

My motivation for this research study is to focus in on these types of diverse student

groups who are more prevalent at community colleges where studies are lacking: low-income,

first-generation, technical, and rural. In the following sections, literature regarding several sub-

group classifications will be summarized beginning with race/ethnicity because it is one that

does receive a great deal of research focus, and then followed by each of the lesser known

LIFTR categories of interest in this study: low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural.

Race and Ethnicity

Despite the overall lack of sub-group examination in the intercultural experiences

literature, there are several publications and dissertations investigating race/ethnicity as a sub-

group in study abroad (BaileyShea, 2009; Haskoller & Kohli Bagwe, 2022; Luo & Jamieson-

Drake, 2014; Salisbury et al., 2011; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Thomas, 2013; Willis, 2016).

Published data from IIE Open Doors 2017 compares community colleges and 4-year institutions

in the single category of race/ethnicity. This race/ethnicity data shows that the percentage of non-

White students participating at the undergraduate level overall is 29.2%. Interestingly, the

percentage of non-White students participating at community colleges is substantially higher at

39.3%. This comparison of white to non-white is only one category of underrepresentation. The

IIE data does not contain other categories of underrepresentation such as low-income status,

first-generation, rural, or technical which are of specific interest to this research study.

Some critiques argue that race/ethnicity is not the main access differentiator but that

socio-economic status and class are stronger factors at play in the study abroad equity issue

(Ballatore & Stayrou, 2017; Thomas, 2013). There have been several dissertations and articles

that have investigated race and ethnicity as a factor in study abroad participation specifically

(Barone, 2021; Fischer, 2021; Willis, 2012) and have presented results about participation and

impact. This study does provide some data on race participation; however, the focus for this

dissertation is to intentionally direct the research toward four discrete individual, although

overlapping, identity markers other than race: low-income, first-generation, technical and rural

(LIFTR). These four identity markers are intentionally chosen as a focus in this study due to the

high percentage of enrollment of community college students and the general lack of research

focusing on these populations.

The four LIFTR identities are also chosen with the intent to highlight intersectionality of

these identities that may also include race as another influencing component. In the following

four sections, literature is summarized for each of the four LIFTR categories so as to understand

each in its own discrete way, while remaining cognizant of the realities of intersectionality.

Low-income Status

Low-income status is the first of the LIFTR categories and is consistently recognized as a

factor in participation in intercultural experiences, often as a barrier. There have been several

studies that focus directly on how intercultural experiences are accessible or inaccessible to low-income students (Kezar et al., 2015; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Walpole, 2003; Whatley & Clayton, 2020). Researchers and international education professionals often attribute lack of finances to pay for an intercultural experience as a barrier to participation, especially among underrepresented students like those identified in this dissertation (Brux & Fry, 2010; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014).

Van Mol & Perez-Encina (2022) explore the concept of inclusive internationalization as it relates to students from lower socioeconomic status. Their findings emphasize the importance of acknowledging diversity of income status when designing internationalization activities and the importance of identifying internationalization activities that low-income students are actually choosing to participate in. Van Mol & Perez-Encina conclude that "If inclusive internationalization strategies are to be truly inclusive, it is essential to first identify the internationalization activities that different social groups of students are interested in, by asking them instead of sailing blindly" (p. 2536).

One study found that although low-income status may be a barrier, access to need-based financial aid may actually increase participation by low-income students when the focus is put directly on that population (Whatley & Clayton, 2020). The significance of this study is that instead of looking at the entire population of higher education students and concluding that low-income status is a barrier, the study looked only at low-income students and found that need-based financial aid was actually a motivator for participation. The finding showed that low-income students took advantage of the opportunity when presented one and capitalized on the chance for participation. This dissertation seeks to similarly narrow the exploration of interculturality to the underrepresented groups themselves at the institutions, rather than focusing

on the barriers. In this way, a greater understanding can be derived about the institutions that tend to enroll more low-income students and what those institutions can due to enhance participation in intercultural activities.

First-generation College Students

First-generation college students have been the focus of a growing body of overall research and publications related to student success and overall experience in higher education (Ezarik, 2022; Pascarella et al., 2004). First-generation students and their participation in intercultural experiences has also been researched in the overall literature in a few cases (Andriano, 2010; Soria & Troisi, 2014). Research on first-generation college students has clearly focused on the varied challenges they encounter in higher education (Wick et al., 2019), rather than what happens when they do experience interculturality. In this way, anti-deficit literature on education abroad among first-generation students is rare.

It is interesting to note that the research I found related to students of first-generation status and intercultural experiences is focused most often on first-generation students enrolled at four-year U.S. universities and not specifically on the experiences of first-generation community college students, where a higher density of first-generation students enroll. National level data indicates that community college students are more apt to be of first-generation status and therefore community colleges would be a natural setting for a study on the impact of intercultural experiences (Whatley & Raby, 2020). This research study then fills a gap by focusing specifically on the interculturality of first-generation students at community colleges.

Technical

This dissertation will use the simplified term "technical" to refer to students who are at community college studying in Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE is also known

globally as TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and plays a critical role in

furthering internationalization of higher education due to its diverse student demographics

(Green, 2007). The CTE and TVET sectors offer one- to two-year pathways to careers with

curricula that align to local needs, such as agriculture, technicians, plumbing, etc., focusing on

skill building for new and emerging jobs as well as career retraining. In the United States, 41%

of undergraduate students study in community colleges (AACC, 2021). Of the total group of

community college students, 38% study in CTE programs. CTE educational pathways are

typically more accessible to rural populations, and attract a more diverse segment of society

including lower income, racially diverse, rural and/or immigrant/refugee backgrounds.

      CTE and TVET institutions have a commitment to open-access admission policies

enabling non-traditional students to access opportunities for personal and professional

development and social mobility (Malveaux & Raby, 2019; McGrath et al., 2020; McGrath &

Powell, 2016; Raby & Valeau, 2018). CTE-focused careers are necessary to local sustainability

and important in the global economy. CTE is a critical sector of higher education and deserving

of more study about how interculturality impact is realized through intercultural experiences

being offered.

      Technical and CTE institutions do offer international education programming including

student mobility programs as well as IaH programs. Research on international education within

U.S. community colleges, specifically CTE (Laanan et al., 2006), and on their TVET global

equivalents exists (Legusov et al., 2022; Raby & Valeau, 2007). Research focusing on the

intercultural experiences of vocational or technical students have been found in a select few

publications as well (Tran & Dempsey, 2017; Tran, 2016; Wood & Raby, 2022a). Vocational

schools in Holland (Gulikers et al., 2019), European vocational and technical schools as well as

vocational schools in Finland and Scotland (Cornelius & Stevenson, 2019) have been noted in the literature with studies related to intercultural competency development through engagement in intercultural experiences. Wood & Raby (2022a) show that CTE/TVET internationalization is an effective vehicle for impact and inclusivity of historically underrepresented students in international education and emphasize that in our current context of global pandemic and intensified global calls for social justice, the spotlighted societal inequities pertinent to students attending CTE/TVET institutions is deserving of more study.

Rural

The final and fourth category of LIFTR is rural. Rural students are a newer phenomenon in the research literature with many higher education institutions only recently recognizing the unique identity of rural students (Ardoin, 2018a, 2018b; Byun et al., 2012; Crain, 2018; Schultz, 2004) and very little, if any research specifically on rural students and intercultural experiences. The SARiHE project in South Africa (Liebowitz, 2017) provides a rare example of a study about rurality and education. Liebowitz (2017) notes how rurality is interestingly not a strong focus in education even though there are countries such as the U.S. where 50% of all school districts are classified as rural. Existing research on rurality is primarily on rurality in general rather than on rurality related to higher education and even less can found on rurality and international education. Liebowitz (2017) goes on to assert that "rurality is not only a useful construct for investigating life or education in rural areas, but a case in point for larger issues, of local-ness or difference." (p. 4)

Studies in the U.S. show that rural populations attend two-year institutions at a greater rate than four-year universities (Ardoin, 2018a; Hu, 2002; Koricich et al., 2018; McDonough et al., 2010). This has been attributed by deficit-based literature to a lack of choice that pushes

these students to attend community colleges. Koricich et al. (2018) described these deficits as lack of transportation, lack of family support, and other life situations that serve as obstacles or perceived lesser than status.

Although many rural-serving and rural community colleges do not offer intercultural experiences to their students, there are indeed several rural-serving and rural community colleges that do offer opportunities. The gap exists in the research. Those rural-serving and rural community colleges where experiences with interculturality are occurring are under-studied with only a few examples in the literature (Raby, 2018; Whatley et al., 2022; Wood & Whatley, 2020). If indeed internationalization is an educational benefit of higher education in general and should therefore be accessible to all who access higher education, then the sphere of internationalization needs to expand to include rural students at community colleges. This study seeks to gather more perspective and stories from this segment of the population who do engage in intercultural experiences so that their engagement in interculturality can be better understood.

Conclusion

This literature review presents pertinent research and literature on the context of the U.S. community college as it relates to the field of international education as a whole and specifically to exploring interculturality among diverse community college students. Internationalization at the community college is a growing phenomenon and one that soundly links globalization and its impact on local communities. Global impact and local impact go hand-in-hand through the intertwining of interculturality in education. I have defined interculturality as a process, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional identities.

The literature review presents an overview of how access and equity among a specific group of students, referred to in this dissertation as LIFTR students, is relevant and topical in our current reality. It also emphasizes how the field of international education has loudly pronounced its lofty aspirations of democratizing intercultural experiences and providing internationalization for all for a better society. With this loud proclamation, the field must now link research to the community college context. The community college mission and the aspirations of the international education field are inextricably linked providing rationale for the research that follows in the remainder of this dissertation. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework of this study including a closer understanding of the anti-deficit perspective and the concept of interculturality.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Introduction and Rationale

Community colleges provide a unique and relevant setting to analyze equity and access to intercultural experiences. This study's research questions seek to better understand the participation of diverse community college students in intercultural experiences as well as the impact derived from such experiences. The theoretical framework chosen for this study is chosen intentionally to spotlight equity and broaden the perspective on what intercultural experiences mean for community college students when opportunities are availed to them. The three theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter are deficit theories, anti-deficit theories, and theories of interculturality.

Research question two (RQ2) asks about the profile of community college students who participate in intercultural experiences compared to the profile of those who do not. Deficit and anti-deficit theoretical perspectives are chosen to frame this discussion because many of the community college student profile characteristics of interest are consistently labelled as deficit. Bourdieu's human capital theory and the stratification of higher education theory are discussed in the section of this chapter highlighting the deficit theoretical approach. Critical race theory (CRT), Yosso's community cultural wealth theory, and the capabilities theory are then highlighted as the anti-deficit theoretical framework employed in this study.

Indeed, the focus of this study's research questions lies squarely on students who possess the following four deficit labels: low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTRs). By applying deficit and anti-deficit theories to these specific community college student population categories, it is possible to more deeply examine how and why certain characteristics of students either do or do not participate. Deficit and anti-deficit theories also directly address the research questions three and four (RQ3 & RQ4) focused on the impact of intercultural experiences on

low-income, first-generation, rural, and technical community college students. These theories apply an equity lens and call into question the age-old perspective that community college students are not motivated, not interested, or simply not engaged in intercultural experiences due to their social or economic condition, challenging the notion that intercultural experiences are elitist activities.

The third theoretical concept framing this study is the concept of interculturality. Interculturality provides a foundation for exploring research questions three and four. These two research questions seek to gauge the impact of intercultural experiences on community college students through a qualitative analysis of community college student voices. Interculturality is chosen to allow for a broad exploration of intercultural experiences as a process engaged in by diverse groups, not limiting the term intercultural to include only interactions between individuals who originate from different nations or cultures but rather interactions between unique individuals from backgrounds that may be similar in some ways and different in other ways.

Deficit Theories

Deficit theories examine elements that inherently prevent students from being successful and/or choosing to participate in certain activities, such as intercultural experiences. Deficit theories assert that students with certain characteristics such as low-income, first-generation, rural, racially diverse, among others are less likely to participate in intercultural experiences due to certain deficits they possess, such as lack of interest, lack of family connections, lack of finances, lack of resources or a myriad of other items they may lack. Perpetuating stereotypes, deficit thinking is defined as the process of holding students from historically oppressed populations responsible for the challenges and inequalities they face.

Deficit theories have existed for decades in higher education literature around the globe often addressing the concept of student achievement gaps and so-called challenges of diversity by attributing student inadequacies as to blame for their lack of success and/or lack of making appropriate choices for their education. Deficit theories are applied regularly in the study abroad literature as well. Several study abroad research studies apply a deficit approach to explain why certain groups of marginalized students, the same marginalized groups who tend to enroll in community college, do not participate (Brux & Fry, 2010; Doyle, 2009; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014; Salisbury et al., 2009; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012).

In addition to the over-arching deficit theory, there are two additional theories that are placed within the deficit construct that can inform this study about intercultural experiences and the community college student population. These include Bourdieu's human capital theory and the stratification of higher education theory.

Human Capital Theory

Within the context of social inequality, Pierre Bourdieu posed the human capital theory describing that academic and social outcomes are not achieved because certain sociological groups lack the habitus or social and cultural capital necessary to achieve high outcomes. Habitus is a concept that goes beyond social class alone to include attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of the world in which one inhabits. Habitus is described as the economic and social position people occupy in society (Bourdieu, 1986; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). Social capital indicates a person's network of relationships among people, their support network, or access to knowledgeable person that can improve one's opportunities. Bourdieu describes cultural capital as previous exposure to beliefs or experiences or the general cultural background, knowledge, experiences, disposition and skills that are passed from generation to generation

(Bourdieu, 1986; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). The deficit theory assumes then that certain groups are lacking or disadvantaged, lacking the necessary knowledge, social skills, abilities and cultural capital necessary to achieve the desired outcomes, such as social mobility (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu's (1986) human capital theory asserts that some individuals and/or groups are culturally wealthy while others have deficits, resulting in a lack of skills and/or assets needed to obtain social and cultural capital. This deficit label is often applied to community college students who, when compared to university students, are positioned as lacking cultural, social, and economic capital (Raby & Valeau, 2022). Deficit labels, such as "non-university" are ascribed to students who choose a path other than university and have never been relevant to use as a predictor of success (Raby & Valeau, 2018). Hegemonic categorizations, dividing students categorically into university and community college students, perpetuates a myth that certain groups of students who attend certain types of higher education institutions cannot succeed (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2018).

As a result of this deficit perspective, higher education institutions often work from this assumption in structuring methods to help students labeled as disadvantaged because of their category. The same happens in study abroad, where study abroad advisors and/or community college administrators take on a deficit perspective leading to an assumption that community college students are disadvantaged and therefore not the type of student who should or could participate in a structured intercultural experience. Deficit literature claims that low-income, rural, first-generation populations like those attending community colleges, are less interested and/or able to study abroad due to deficit (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad, 2005). When applying Bourdieu's theories to intercultural experiences, research has been

conducted, particularly in the area of participation and motivations to study abroad, finding that

some students do not attain intercultural experiences because they do not possess the "habitus" or

social/cultural capital to access and/or participate in intercultural experiences (Brux & Fry, 2010;

Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014; Salisbury et al., 2009, 2011; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012).

Stratification of Higher Education Theory

The higher education stratification theory purports that higher education institutions are

clearly ordered by prestige and resources in what is termed a vertical stratification based on

access to resources. Higher education is seen to be a socially good commodity; however, starting

positions for those who access higher education in terms of socio-economic status and other

factors are unequal (Marginson, 2016). Highly resourced elite institutions offer more

opportunities for elite students, who tend to enroll at higher rates at these institutions, to gain

additional cultural and economic capital gained from intercultural experiences, while community

colleges with less resources tend to offer less opportunities for non-elite students, continuing a

cycle where community college students are not able to experience social mobility (Bloch &

Mitterle, 2021; Hearn, 1991; Trow, 1983).

Community colleges are seen to serve a non-elite class of students and therefore are

perceived to be less likely to provide the same level of opportunities to students and also

perceived to be less likely to nurture a "culture" of providing intercultural experiences as a

fundamental component of educating students (Whatley, 2018b). This perception has no teeth or

data to support. In fact, the case study provided here of Kirkwood Community College, provides

an example of close to 200 community college students studying abroad per year, which out-

paces many master's level institutions in the IIE Open Doors data of similar size (IIE, 2021). In

Raby (2019), it is noted that community colleges have a history of students participating who are

members of groups that have historically not had an opportunity to study abroad. In fact, the analysis of study abroad enrollment in this chapter by Raby (2019) shows that for some racial groups, the proportion who are studying abroad at community colleges is often exceeding the national averages for that racial group. This research will fill a gap by researching other identity groups besides race to see if similar likelihoods of greater representation are possible among LIFTRs at Kirkwood where study abroad programs are offered.

Stratification of higher education in terms of resources and opportunities clearly impacts access to intercultural experiences (Ballatore & Stayrou, 2017; Smit, 2012; Whatley, 2018b). The stratification of higher education in this context contributes to the inequity evidenced in community college student participation in intercultural experiences (Whatley, 2018b). For example, we see that a far lesser percentage of community college students study abroad as compared to their four-year counterparts from more elite institutions (Education, 2021). Stratification of higher education implies that institutions are fundamentally different in terms of the opportunities they provide to students as well as the establishment and nurturing of a "culture" of intercultural experiences on their campuses. At Kirkwood, I see the opposite, in my own experience. It seems at Kirkwood there is a "culture" of intercultural opportunities on campus and therefore Kirkwood is a ripe setting for this research.

Anti-Deficit Theories

This study is framed in a way that counters the deficit perspective and supports an anti-deficit perspective. There are several anti-deficit models that have emerged in recent literature including critical race theory, community cultural wealth theory as well as human theory which has supported a capabilities narrative or assets-based approach over the deficit approach. These anti-deficit theories attribute student challenges not to the students themselves but rather to

systemic oppression or institutional structures. Anti-deficit theory shows that low-income

students, for example, possess multiple forms of capital that contribute to their positive

experiences in college (Yosso, 2005). Other study abroad studies illustrate that social networks

such as family (Perkins, 2020) also play a role. In this section, three anti-deficit theories are

presented including critical race theory, community cultural wealth theory, and the capabilities

theory approach.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

The first anti-deficit theory to explore is that of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT seeks

to identify, analyze, and transform aspects of education that maintain subordinate or dominant

positions due to race. CRT has shifted the lens away from this deficit view of certain subgroups,

such as race, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills,

abilities and contacts/community possessed by socially marginalized groups (Cho et al., 2013;

Yosso, 2005). CRT highlights the importance of other capital toward student success such as

those capitals that more marginalized students are more likely to possess. This type of capital can

include navigational capital which is the ability to learn how to work the system or familial

capital which is the ability to get support from family (Yosso, 2005).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were the first to introduce CRT in education as a

framework to understand educational inequity due to race in the education system. CRT offers a

framework to understand and analyze how race, culture or other identifiers serve to marginalize

students. Although CRT was developed as a way to understand race specifically, the concept of

intersectionality expands that to theorize about the relationship between different social groups

such as low-income, first-generation, rural, or others. All of these groups identify as

marginalized groups.

Community Cultural Wealth Theory

The next anti-deficit theory for discussion is the community cultural wealth theory. Community cultural wealth theory is used to understand how community college students leverage alternative forms of capital to access intercultural experiences. As a response to Bourdieu's theory on social and cultural capital and the way the capital model described students from non-traditional backgrounds from a deficit lens, Yosso's community cultural wealth model focuses on "the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). Community cultural wealth theory originated from race and ethnic identities but has also been applied to other dimensions, such as class identity, rural or other non-traditional student groups (Ardoin, 2018b).

The community cultural wealth theory is anti-deficit, emphasizing an asset-based perspective that can be used as a way for community college students normally placed in a deficit perspective to link positive meaning to certain dimensions of their identity, such as low-income, first-generation, technical, or rural. For example, community cultural wealth theory suggests that students from a low-income background possess a certain resiliency dimension that is an asset to their pursuit of education or in the case of immigrants, already have an intercultural background that gives them bilingual skills, or transition experience that make them capable of success.

Yosso's community cultural wealth theory applied to education abroad stresses the alternative forms of capital that are leveraged by non-traditional students. Three types of capital that are relevant to this study include familial, aspirational, and social capital.

Familial capital represents the forms of knowledge students gain from interactions with family and community (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital is an alternative form of capital that low-income students or students of rural backgrounds possess that are influential in their decisions to study abroad (Perkins, 2020; Yosso, 2005).

Aspirational capital is an individual's capacity to be optimistic in the presence of many obstacles including structural inequity (Yosso, 2005). Often, aspirational capital is evidenced in how students from these groups have aspirational dreams that take them to a new realm of possibilities outside of their present circumstances.

Social capital is the network of people and resources that serve as support to help students navigate academic settings. Social capital also holds reciprocity in its ability to not only see how students obtain resources and contact in the community but also provide information and resource that they learn back to the community (Yosso, 2005).

This study seeks to apply the community cultural wealth theory to the way that community college students experience and derive impact from intercultural experiences. The study seeks to provide anti-deficit perspective on the impact that LIFTR students gain from intercultural experiences. In this way the idea that students from these categories are somehow lacking or at a deficit can be debunked.

Capabilities Theory Approach

The third anti-deficit theoretical concept for this study is the capabilities theory approach. The capability approach was first developed during the 1980s by Nobel Laureate economist and philosopher, Amartya Sen (Sen, 1985). Sen's approach is known for his critique of resources- and utility-bases assessment of human well-being and disadvantage (Gale & Molla, 2015).

The capabilities theory approach offers a broader conception of well-being, individual choice, and freedom that frames education in the context of human welfare and social justice (Sen, 1997). The capabilities theory approach distinguishes itself starkly from Bourdieu's social and cultural capital theory and other means-based perspectives on human well-being and success. Where social and cultural capital theory validate only the existing cultural knowledge of dominant cultural groups, capabilities theory instead honors the culture and perspective of all community members, whether they are privileged or not privileged. The capabilities theory approach focuses on "what are people actually able to do and to be" (Nussbaum, 2009, p. 211) and counters the deficit theories that focus on what people do or do not have access to. The capabilities theory approach is a focus on the human being directly instead of on the access that each human being possesses.

From a broader perspective, comparing the capabilities theory to the human capital theory in the discussion and applying it to the context of higher education, one can see that access to education as a form of human capital is not unilaterally creating successful humans and solving the problems of inequality and poverty (Tikly, 2013). In other words, by giving a person access to education and increasing their human capital, the positive outcome of student success is not guaranteed. Pushing this example even further into an educational context, merely focusing on enrollment or how many seats are filled with students, education as a human capital does not produce the consistent result of successful human beings. The capabilities approach, on the other hand, supports "the development of a range of capabilities that are conceived as opportunities to develop functioning's that individuals, their communities, and society at large have reason to value – a good for human development itself" (Tikly, 2013, p. 4). The focus of the capabilities approach is on the human being themselves rather than on the good (i.e. education) that can be

bestowed upon them. Indeed, it proposes a departure from concentrating on the means of living

and instead concentrating on the opportunities of living (Sen, 2009).

Capabilities theory is not a theory of social justice and does not attempt to explain why

injustice exists. Instead it offers a framework to think about individual well-being and assess

what is available in terms of capabilities or opportunities. The focus is on the freedoms people

have to achieve what they value in life (Gale & Molla, 2015; Sen, 2009). Gale and Molla (2015)

assert that Sen's capability approach is a useful tool for analyzing the perspective of individuals

and individual agency. This fits with this study's purpose of understanding the individual impact

on diverse types of individuals engaged in intercultural experiences. Fakunle (2021) provides a

relevant example of a study that explores the theoretical framework of Sen's capability approach

in examining how graduate students engaging in intercultural experiences do so for their intrinsic

value as well as their instrumental rationality. Fakunle (2021) looks carefully at student rationale

for participating in study abroad establishing a distinct tie between intercultural experiences and

capabilities theory. This study seeks to further that connection between student mobility and the

capabilities approach by investigating the intrinsic value to society of expanding access to

intercultural experiences among community college students. This study explores the impact of

community college students' access and agency to participate in intercultural experiences on

their personal and professional lives which also impact society as a whole..

In the context of the community college, there are many students who identify with

subgroups lacking access to social and cultural capital compared to student subgroups at a four-

year institution, as Bourdieu suggests. Because of this lack of access to human capital, the

capabilities theory approach provides a clearer and more optimistic lens from which to study

intercultural experiences of community college students. This study focuses on one specific

population of community college students, specifically low-income, first-generation, technical,

and rural students at community colleges and what happens when they. are provided the freedom

and agency to participate in intercultural experiences relevant to them. Diversity and

membership in LIFTR identity groups are not viewed through the lens of deficit, but rather

through the lens of capability and agency.

Interculturality

The third overall theoretical construct framing this study is that of interculturality. In the

literature review in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I provide an overview of interculturality and its

many definitions eventually coming to a definition of interculturality that I will use for this

research: Interculturality is a process, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making

sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional

identities. This definition of interculturality parallels Jackson's (2018) presented in Chapter 2

and others (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021a) but also emphasizes the intersectionality of identities

that individuals experiencing interculturality may possess and how those diverse and overlapping

identities impact the experience. In this section, I will first discuss interculturality and how it

frames this research followed by a discussion of how the concept of intersectionality is an

integral component of interculturality and its relevance.

Interculturality Frame

Interculturality is the theoretical lens through which this study is framed. The overall

research question for this study (RQ1) is supported by this theoretical perspective as the study

navigates intercultural experiences through the local impact of global experiences on students

who have intersecting identities of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural community

college students (LIFTRs).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2013) explanation of interculturality, interculturality enables cultures that are not recognized in the world to be heard and recognized. Interculturality, therefore, supports those whose cultures are not valued by the powerful cultures. LIFTR students fit this category. Interculturality gives voice to underrepresented groups such as LIFTRs. This study seeks to hear the voices of those students participating in intercultural experiences who have not had the power of voice because they are not from the elite class of education.

Chapter 2 presented the literature regarding intercultural competence and the many studies that have been conducted that attempt to measure it as a personal gain. Although there is debate about the effectiveness of measuring intercultural competence, research presented in Chapter 2 did show that many studies have indeed measured a gain in the personal attributes related to intercultural competence. In general, the literature indicates that intercultural experiences facilitated with best practices in international education result in students gaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with intercultural competence such as openness, cultural self-awareness, effective communication behavior, adaptability, flexibility, and empathy (Deardorff, 2006) as detailed in Chapter 2 section on intercultural competence.

As a researcher, I trust these studies that indicate gains in these personal attributes. The lens through which I choose to explore LIFTR experiences is not one of measurement or of assessing intercultural competence as an outcome or personal gain. Instead, I am choosing to apply the theoretical concept of interculturality to explore the process through which diverse LIFTRs make sense out of their intercultural experiences provided at the community college. Interculturality allows the opportunity to be cognizant of power differentials that may be impacting the intercultural interaction.

Intersectionality

Based on my findings, I emphasize identity exploration within the definition of interculturality because of the way interculturality is applied in this study through the focus on a specific set of identities: LIFTR identities. Many of the studies that involve interculturality show that identity has taken over and surpassed the concept of culture in order to more critically question access, difference, inclusion, equity, and social justice (Jackson, 2018). This study seeks to amplify student voices who possess unique and diverse identities (LIFTRs) as they engage in intercultural experiences with culturally diverse individuals.

As suggested by Dervin (2016), interculturality calls on us to pay attention to interaction, context, the recognition of power relations, as well as intersectionality. Intersectionality is the idea that different identities beyond the normally thought of race, ethnicity, and nationality contribute to and assist in the development of interculturality. In this study, these intersecting identities include low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural identities. With interculturality's open notion of a broader context to intercultural experiences, it is possible to develop a more comprehensive picture of the community college students and the impact that intercultural experiences have on them by focusing on these identities, acknowledging the power relations in intercultural encounters and the complex diversity within. In this way, we can challenge ideologies of interculturality that assume a Western-centric or elite approach through engaging with a population of students that is typically not engaged within higher education research.

Conclusion

The theoretical grounding of this study allows for an equity lens to be applied to unique diverse community college students' intercultural experiences. This study gathers and listens to

diverse voices from LIFTR backgrounds experiencing interculturality in diverse ways. An understanding is gained of the impact derived when diverse individuals engage in intercultural experiences. Perspective is gained on the process that occurs when intercultural experiences are provided as opportunities for all, rather than just the elite few. With this theoretical grounding, I am emphasizing a positive asset-based approach to exploring interculturality, debunking the deficit narrative, and acknowledging that all students have the capability and agency to engage in interculturality. By applying the three theoretical constructs of deficit theories, anti-deficit theories and interculturality to this study, a broad perspective is achieved in the interest of equity and social justice.

CHAPTER 4: KIRKWOOD INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction and Significance

Kirkwood Community College is chosen as the case study institution for this study due to its unique context, diverse student population, and high level of participation in internationalization activities. This chapter will provide a basic understanding of the college's vision, mission, and priorities along with its initiatives and commitment to internationalization as a component of learner success. It is significant to note that Kirkwood is fundamentally similar to other community colleges in the U.S. in its academic programming, its mission to serve community needs, and its typical enrollment of underrepresented groups including a high number of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students. Kirkwood's uniqueness lies in its strong commitment to internationalization and high student participation rates in internationalization activities. This commitment provides an ideal setting to explore diverse students' intercultural experiences and apply the results to the broader U.S. community college context.

In this chapter, an overview of Kirkwood's vision, mission, and internationalization priorities is summarized followed by a description of the college dataset of relevance to this study's quantitative analysis. Within the dataset description, Kirkwood study abroad and IaH programming details are shared. Finally, a summary of Kirkwood's role in serving the four student subgroups targeted in this study is presented including low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students (LIFTRs).

Overview, Vision, and Mission

Kirkwood Community College is an urban community college located in Eastern Iowa. Kirkwood's enrollment at the commencement of this study in the beginning of the

academic year 2019/2020 is 14,182 students. In the range of two-year institutions by size as classified by the Carnegie classifications, Kirkwood is considered a "very large" community college due to its enrollment data indicating FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students *(The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*, n.d.). Kirkwood was founded in 1966 and has 14 locations across 7 counties in Eastern Iowa. According to its web page *(Kirkwood Community College*, n.d.), "Kirkwood is the area's leading provider of accessible, affordable and exceptional education and training." Kirkwood's vision is to "be the community college leader in regional, national and global education" (*Kirkwood Community College*, n.d.). The mission statement is "Kirkwood Community college identifies community needs; provides accessible, quality education and training, and promotes opportunities for lifelong learning" (*Kirkwood Community College*, n.d.).

In addition to Kirkwood's vision and mission statement, another indicator of Kirkwood's commitment to learner success is noted by its participation in the Guided Pathways framework. Guided Pathways (Bailey et al., 2015) is an integrated framework focused on improving college outcomes and improving college completion rates. The framework holds student success at the center and defines clear and coherent pathways for degree completion. Methods such as one-on-one advising and revamped support to ensure students build the necessary relationships and follow a structured map or pathway for their successful college journey are critical to the framework

The guided pathways framework has four main tenets including mapping pathways to student goals, helping student choose and enter a program pathway, keeping students on the path, and ensuring learning for students (Bailey et al., 2015). Kirkwood's commitment to guided pathways includes the recognition that placement of intercultural experiences on their

map is critical to planning and to degree completion. Intercultural experiences such as study abroad are clearly placed on a student's guided pathways program map so that the global opportunities are integrated into their overall Kirkwood student experience and seen as critical toward their path to degree completion.

Internationalization Efforts

Kirkwood's institutional long-term commitment to internationalization and intercultural experiences is a tribute to the college's leadership, vision, and long-term thinking. Kirkwood is a long-time leader in the area of campus internationalization, including the 2019 NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Campus Internationalization. NAFSA defines comprehensive campus internationalization as overall excellence in internationalization efforts as evidenced in mission, strategies, programs, and results (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2022). Kirkwood's Global Learning department is tasked with leading comprehensive internationalization through its mission that all Kirkwood faculty, staff and students engage in intercultural experiences as part of their Kirkwood educational experience. Intercultural experiences include both mobility and non-mobility experiences, including Internationalization at Home (IaH) and Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC) in other forms as well.

Evidence of the college's provision of intercultural experiences is also noted. Kirkwood has consistently been listed as a Benjamin Gilman award high-producer by the Department of State with specific mention for diversity of participation. Kirkwood also achieves rankings in the top five community colleges by the Institute of International Education for number of students studying abroad at a two-year institution (IIE, 2021).

Kirkwood has a long history of study abroad programming dating back many decades resulting from strong Presidential and Board commitment since the early 1970s. This

commitment includes financial commitment of scholarships for students in the amounts of

$1,000 - $2,000 per student to support study abroad and a centralized International Programs

department that manages both inbound and outbound mobility, globalized curriculum efforts,

international partnerships and grants, as well as internationally-focused faculty professional

development. This centralized organizational and fiscal structure for internationalization

activities is special to the community college context and shows a commitment by Kirkwood

governance to internationalization being central to the college's mission and vision.

Kirkwood engages in Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities included in the formal

curriculum such as virtual exchange and in-classroom cultural exchanges. Growing organically

from the work of faculty leading study abroad programs and in the spirit of equity of access to

global learning experiences, Kirkwood has infused formal IaH curricular opportunities for

students to engage in intercultural experiences that do not require mobility. These intercultural

activities have been included in courses that are either required or elective credit opportunities.

IaH activities are designed to engage students in on-campus intercultural experiences that

involve interaction with international partners and/or immigrants on the campus. The interaction

that results is an expanded opportunity for more Kirkwood students to engage in interculturality.

These formal IaH activities are utilized in this study and labelled as IaH activities.

Kirkwood's International Programs department has as its vision "that every faculty,

staff and student engage in an intercultural experience as part of their Kirkwood experience"

(*Kirkwood Community College*, n.d.). This emphasis on the "every" in the vision statement

means that the International Programs department employs specific methods of outreach and

program delivery for diverse student groups to establish equitable access to study abroad

opportunities. This vision is aligned with the overall institutional vision "to be the community

college leader in regional, national, and global education" (*Kirkwood Community College*, n.d.).

In this spirit of internationalization for all, Kirkwood's International Programs department intentionally engages in international collaboration with academic deans and faculty across disciplines in both Career and Technical Education (CTE) and the Arts, Sciences and Humanities (ASH). Engagement with academic deans and faculty is essential to reaching "all" students. This unique structural engagement of the Kirkwood international department with all academic units and leaders serves this study in that data is available about students across the institution from diverse academic areas, including both CTE and ASH.

College Dataset

The dataset for the initial quantitative analysis of the college's enrollment data includes 62,022 student records comprised of all students who have attended the college within the last nine years (2010-2019). The timespan of nine years (2010-2019) is chosen because of the accurate detailed study abroad participation data that has been collected over that time period. The quantitative study took place in 2019, thus the end date of 2019. The dataset is a comprehensive enrollment dataset comprised of student demographic characteristics and enrollment records. The comprehensive dataset allows for a deep longitudinal dive into the long-term impact on intercultural experience alumni from up to ten many ago. The dataset provides comparisons across many distinct categories of data.

This study specifically analyzes two different categories of students at the case study institution, first by demographics and then by type of intercultural experience. Each category area will be described below including definitions.

Demographic Categories

Demographic categories of interest to this study consist of the four LIFTR subgroups (low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural) which are important because of their unique prevalence among community college students, the sector of focus to this study. See Table 1 below for LIFTR definitions.

LIFTR categories are chosen because of this study's focus on equity and access to intercultural experiences. Students representing one or more of these four categories represent a population that is not significantly represented in the intercultural experience participation rates found in higher education as a whole; however, they do make up a significant proportion of enrollment at Kirkwood.

Table 1

LIFTR Definitions

LIFTR Category	Definition
Low-income	Low-income status is defined as students eligible for a Federal Pell Grant. Federal Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduate US students who display exceptional financial need. (Federal Student Aid: An Office of the U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)
First-generation	First-generation students are the first in their family to attend college as self-reported on their application for admission or self-identified during the course of this study. (Center for First-Generation Success, 2017)
Technical / CTE	CTE is defined as a type of education to "prepare individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations. Programs include competency-based applied learning, which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, and occupational-specific skills." (Iowa Department of Education, 2022).
Rural	Rural is defined as a student who originates from a non-metro location high school corresponding to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifications of non-metro (United States Department of Agriculture, n.d.).

According to Kirkwood's Office of Institutional Research, 27% of all students enrolled in the Fall term of 2019 are economically disadvantaged as indicated by their Pell Grant eligibility. There are likely significantly more who would self-identify as low-income students if asked the question directly. Approximately 25% of students identify as first-generation students, or first in their family to attend college. This percentage of first-generation students would likely also be higher if self-reported data were included.

Kirkwood's Fall 2019 enrollment data indicates that Career Technical Education (CTE) enrollment is approximately 37% of total degree-seeking enrollment while 63% of students are classified as Arts, Sciences and Humanities (ASH) students. CTE disciplines at Kirkwood include agricultural sciences, industrial technology, nursing, business, information technology, and allied health. CTE fields are considered a pipeline for students to join their respective work field. Arts, Sciences, and Humanities (ASH) disciplines include English, social sciences, math/science, and arts and humanities and are typically focused on transfer to four-year institutions. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, about 47% of the total associate degrees awarded at U.S. community colleges in 2014-15 were in CTE programs (AACC, 2017). By focusing on this large population of CTE students and their participation in intercultural experiences, the results of this study are not only important for Kirkwood itself, but also have potentially important implications for access to intercultural experiences at other community colleges. Colleges serving a large number of students in CTE, fields not traditionally associated with internationalization efforts, will benefit from the results and perspectives gained. The CTE focus adds generalizability to the study.

The exact designation of a rural community college in the US varies based on who is making the determination (Rush-Marlowe, 2021). Kirkwood is actually classified as an urban

community college; however, Kirkwood does enroll a large number of rural students, defined in this research as students who attended high school in a non-metro area. Located in the eastern portion of Iowa, Kirkwood serves many students who originate from very small towns, grew up on farms, and/or attended small non-urban high schools. According to the state of Iowa's State Data Center (2020), 35.7% of the Iowa population is classified as rural.

Intercultural Experience Categories

The second category is intercultural experience participation (study abroad, IaH, and non-participant). Table 4 delineates the three participation categories found in the dataset and their significance in this study. Next to each participation category is the Kirkwood definition of that type of participation.

Table 2

Intercultural Experience Participation – Kirkwood Definitions

Intercultural Experience Participation Type	Definition
Study Abroad Participation	Kirkwood has offered over 141 faculty-led study abroad programs over the course of the 10 years represented in the dataset to 30 different countries. Study abroad is an intercultural experience that gives an opportunity for students to engage in an international mobility experience as part of an academic course. For a list of Kirkwood study abroad programs, see Table 3 and Table 4. The majority of programs are short-term 2-3-week faculty led study abroad programs.
Internationalization at Home (IaH) Participation	Internationalization at Home at Kirkwood is primarily virtual exchange. For this study, virtual exchange is being used as the sole type of IaH participation. Virtual exchange is internet technology-enabled intercultural experience led by faculty and integrated in an academic course or co-curricular activity. Kirkwood faculty partner with global faculty to engage students of different cultural backgrounds, often on a collaborative project. Kirkwood IaH Virtual Exchanges are listed in Table 5.

| Non-participation or no planned intercultural activities | Non-participation includes Kirkwood students who did not participate in a study abroad or planned IaH experience. TRIO advisors and academic advisors at Kirkwood assisted with identifying TRIO students who fit this category. The Federal TRIO program is a Federal outreach and student services program designed to provide services for students who are low-income, first-generation and/or individuals with disabilities to progress academically through college (United States Department of Education, n.d.). |

Study Abroad

Kirkwood offers a wide variety of study abroad programs to students from all disciplines at the college. There is a high level of diversity in types of study abroad programs offered in terms of both destination and topic. Particular attention is given to ensuring CTE students have opportunities for study abroad that directly relate to their career.

Programs Offered. Table 3 provides an overview of faculty-led study abroad programs offered at Kirkwood over the time period of 2010-2019 by discipline. Table 3 shows that over 75 out of the total of 143, or 52.4% of the faculty-led study abroad programs offered over the ten-year period are either led by a CTE faculty and/or targeted to students interested in CTE programs. An example of a CTE-focused program is the study abroad program in construction management, led by a CTE faculty member who teaches construction management. Students in this program travel to Germany with the faculty member for three weeks to experience training in Passivhaus, a uniquely German construction method. Table 4 dives deeper into the CTE study abroad programming detailing the diverse Kirkwood CTE areas of study, countries, and number of programs focused on a particular CTE area over the past 10 years.

In addition to those programs directly targeting CTE students and content surrounding their CTE area of study, several programs are offered by non-CTE faculty as well but serve to attract CTE

students. There are also a handful of programs that utilize an interdisciplinary approach to attract

diverse groups of participants from both the CTE and ASH areas of study. In this way, there is

ample opportunity for all Kirkwood students to find a program that is of interest to them.

Table 3

Kirkwood Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

Program Type by Discipline	Unique Programs	Total from 2010-2019
Arts Sciences Humanities (ASH)	27	56
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	29	75
ASH and CTE Interdisciplinary	3	12
TOTAL	59	143

Table 4

CTE Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs by Major and Country

CTE Area	Countries	Number of Programs
Agricultural Sciences	Brazil and South Africa	8
Interior Design	Australia and Italy	2
Business	Denmark, England, Australia, Vietnam, Ireland, Brazil	25
Construction Management	Germany, Denmark	5
Culinary Arts/Hospitality	Italy, Spain, Cuba, Vietnam, Japan	9
Nursing	Ecuador, Costa Rica, Belize	4
Other (including Automotive Technology, Early Childhood Education, Youth Services Hospitality, Information Technology, etc.)	Singapore, Australia	21

Student Participation. Of the 62,022 student records in the college dataset, 891 students

were flagged as linked to participation in a study abroad activity during the time period of 2010-

2019. It should be noted that study abroad participation, in the case of Kirkwood, is a voluntary

choice meaning that Kirkwood students make a conscious choice to study abroad. It is not

required but is heavily promoted to students as an opportunity. This voluntary choice is not

necessarily the same for the IaH participation, where the student does not necessarily choose

participation but instead have IaH as part of their program curriculum.

Internationalization at Home (IaH)

Internationalization at Home (IaH), as it is applied at Kirkwood, includes many types of

intercultural experiences including virtual exchange, in-classroom exchanges, curriculum

internationalization, on-campus activities, and many other initiatives. IaH experiences include

the opportunity to engage virtually or in person with students who are from other cultures on a

classroom project.

Programs Offered. Kirkwood offers several types of IaH intercultural experiences for

students. There are both experiences included in the formal curriculum and the informal

curriculum. Those IaH experiences tracked in the Kirkwood dataset are those that are tied to an

academic course and therefore part of the formal curriculum. These academic exchanges are

typically virtual exchanges with Kirkwood's international partners or in-classroom exchange

with English Language Learners (ELLs) who are part of the domestic learning environment.

Courses that embed IaH activities are flagged in the student information system so that students

who enroll in those courses can be tracked effectively as having participated in an IaH

intercultural experience. Students enrolled in an IaH flagged course are included in this study.

Virtual exchange is defined by Kirkwood as a technology-enabled intercultural

experience led by faculty and integrated in an academic course or co-curricular activity.

Kirkwood faculty members are partnered with global faculty to engage students of different

cultural backgrounds, often on a collaborative project. Collaborative projects are those projects that involve interaction of students from both cultures to achieve a certain goal. These virtual exchange IaH activities range from a 2-week experience to a 16-week full semester experience and involve interaction and collaboration of students from different cultures on a given project.

In-classroom exchanges at Kirkwood are defined as an opportunity for English language students who are typically refugees and immigrants to meet with non-English language learning students in the classroom. Structured intercultural experiences are designed by the two faculty from the courses with the goal of intercultural exchange and collaboration while meeting both of the course students learning outcomes.

As noted above, IaH participation is not necessarily a voluntary choice meaning that students most likely would not have made a conscious choice to participate. Instead the IaH experience is embedded in an academic course they chose or an academic course that is embedded in their program curriculum and therefore required for their major. IaH participants may or may not be aware of the intercultural experience opportunity prior to enrolling for the course. It is important to note that the choice is involuntary when we analyze students' motivations and the reasons why students choose to participate.

Student Participation. Of the 62,022 student records, 304 students were flagged as linked to participation in a planned IaH experience during the time period of 2014-2019. Note that this time period is not congruent with the study abroad participation because IaH data was not tracked until 2014. These 304 students do not represent all IaH student activities at the college, but rather those student activities where a faculty member voluntarily chose to participate in this study. Faculty members were recruited for participation by email. Emails were sent to twenty faculty known to facilitate planned IaH experiences in their classroom. Ten

replied agreeing to participate. The participating faculty and students represent both CTE and

ASH classes. See list of IaH areas of study and frequencies of students in Table 5. The table

shows that of the classes selected, there is a good balance between CTE and ASH students.

Table 5

Kirkwood IaH Courses by CTE/ASH and Number of Students Participating

IaH Course Area of Study	CTE or ASH	Number of Participants
Electronics	CTE	7
English	ASH	117
Honors	CTE and ASH	13
Business	CTE	104
Physics	CTE	15

Non-participation

In the college dataset, the majority of students were not flagged as a study abroad

participant or an IaH participant. For the sake of this study, this majority of the Kirkwood

population are labelled non-participants. Being a non-participant could be seen as voluntary

and/or involuntary in that they have chosen not to participate in study abroad and they also did

not have the opportunity for IaH in their Kirkwood experience. These students are considered to

be non-participants meaning that they did not participate in a planned intercultural experience

while at Kirkwood. These non-participants are important to this study as a comparison point or a

control group to the students who did participate in study abroad and IaH and also provide a

baseline of information about LIFTRs who attend Kirkwood without participating in study

abroad or IaH.

Conclusion

Kirkwood Community College's institutional context serves as an ideal setting for this study's research questions addressing both the profile of community college students and the exploration of student stories surrounding intercultural experiences. Kirkwood's large population of students that align with the demographic profile of this study allows for an in-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data that contribute to a greater understanding of their untold experience. With this institutional context, this study serves to amplify the unheard voices of this population to shed light on the need and urgency of making intercultural opportunities possible, rather than assuming a deficit mindset.

CHAPTER 5: METHODS

Introduction

This chapter lays out the detailed and complex methods used to conduct this study examining community college student intercultural experiences and interculturality. The chapter will begin by presenting the purpose, research questions, and a basic overview of the research design and philosophy. As the chapter progresses, each component of the mixed methods design will be presented in detail utilizing a visual model to clarify the relationships among the various pieces of the methods.

Purpose Statement and Research Aim

This study uses a mixed methods explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to collect participation data and unpack intercultural experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural community college students. This study first gathers and analyzes detailed descriptive data about intercultural experience participation at the case study institution to build a demographic profile of community college students participating in internationalization programs. Qualitative data from individual participants portrays participant voices elaborating on the impact of the study abroad, IaH and non-participation over time.

The aim of this dissertation is to study the experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural community college students who are too often overlooked in mainstream international education literature. This issue of omission of the community college context has been brought to light in various articles (Amani & Kim, 2018; Malveaux & Raby, 2019). Low-income first-generation technical and rural students deserve this study's focus because they make up an integral segment of college enrollment globally. At Kirkwood, low-income, first-generation, technical, and/or rural students do participate in intercultural experiences, both study

abroad and IaH, providing an ideal setting for this research and an opportunity to provide visibility to their experiences.

The purpose of the quantitative portion of the mixed method study is to explore the overall Kirkwood enrollment data relative to intercultural experience participation overall and then by subgroup. This quantitative analysis utilizes descriptive statistics and regression analysis to answer RQ2, providing a deeper understanding of the make-up and profile of Kirkwood's enrollment vis a vis intercultural experience participation. This deeper understanding has the potential of reversing the deficit narrative that currently exists surrounding study abroad participation.

The purpose of the qualitative portion of the study is to delve more deeply into these targeted groups of students' experiences, to hear their unheard voices related to access to experiences, motivations, challenges and impact on their subsequent personal, educational, and professional lives. These voices will enliven the need for internationalization for all and provide actual stories of impact justifying the necessity of internationalization to community college administrators and decision-makers. This qualitative knowledge documenting the process of interculturality in community college students helps to answer RQ1, RQ3, and RQ4 about impact and student experience. As a practitioner in this field, I have experienced firsthand the profound impact that intercultural experience data, both quantitative and qualitative, can have on faculty, administrators, board members, presidents, and other decision-makers.

Research Questions

This study aims to collect quantitative and qualitative data to answer one overarching research question and three sub-questions addressing the impact of intercultural experiences on specific types of community college students. The overarching research question (RQ1) is:

1. What are the experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural U.S.

   community college students who have the opportunity to engage in interculturality?

The following additional questions contribute to the understanding of RQ1:

2. What is the profile of U.S. community college students who participate in intercultural

   experiences compared to those who do not? (RQ2)

3. How do intercultural experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and

   technical U.S. community college students both in the short and long term? (RQ3)

4. How do study abroad experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and

   technical U.S. community college students compared to the impact from planned

   Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences or no planned intercultural experience?

   (RQ4)

Mixed Methods Research Design

This section outlines the study's mixed method research design, the rationale for

choosing this specific design, and the overall philosophical worldview guiding the design.

Following the explanation of the rationale and philosophical worldview, the section concludes

with a visual representation of the mixed method research design procedures in this study. This

visual representation will be repeated throughout this chapter to visually guide the understanding

of how the pieces of this study coalesce.

Rationale

For the overall design of this study, I chose to employ an explanatory sequential design

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2015), the explanatory

sequential mixed method is "one in which the researcher first conducts quantitative research,

analyzes the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative

research" (p. 15). This method best serves this study because it allows for quantitative data to illustrate how the deficit narrative is not at play at this institution followed by a more in detail explanation of the results through first-hand student voices.

The research questions drive the choice of a mixed method research design. RQ2 asks about a concrete profile of community college students' participation: What is the profile of U.S. community college students who participate in intercultural experiences compared to those who have not? This question demands a quantitative analysis of the group membership and demographics of students at community college. The remaining research questions ask more probing qualitative questions about interculturality, student experiences, and impact. The reason for mixing both kinds of data is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient alone to explain the details of the situation. Together they complement each other and allow for a more thorough and robust analysis. In addition, the sequential design allows the first part of the study, the quantitative to inform the qualitative process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Philosophical World View

In this study, the mixed method design choice allows for a pragmatic approach viewing reality from both a post-positivist and social constructivist approach at the same time (Subedi, 2016). A post-positivist worldview asserts that concrete data and evidence shape knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a complement to this, the social constructivist worldview asserts that a complexity of views to any situation being studied depends on the participants themselves and the potential subgroups to which they belong (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The constructivist world view brings with it the importance of understanding the cultural and historical settings of the participants in the study. Subedi (2016) best describes the pragmatic

approach of explanatory sequential mixed methods by saying "Epistemologically, pragmatism embraces both objective and subjective perspectives in order to answer research questions with value free inquiry" (p.576).

The literature about the mixed methods explanatory sequential design indicates that one of the strengths of this design is the usefulness when unexpected results are found in the quantitative study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). The explanatory sequential design allows for a very practical and applied research philosophy (Subedi, 2016) that fits with the philosophical pragmatic approach implored including both post-positivism and constructivism.

The application of the post-positive worldview is evidenced in this research's analysis of enrollment data and participation data addressing RQ2 in the investigation the profile of community college students. The extensive dataset being utilized allows for some very interesting comparisons within the community college student profile, particularly about Career and Technical Education (CTE) students. The participation profile that emerges is concrete data that establishes a tangible truth about who is being impacted and studied. The constructivist approach is then applied by addressing group identity in multiple forms through the qualitative methods implored and attempting to find meaning in group identity. This post-positivist and constructivist pairing then logically leads to the mixed methods approach as the suitable selection of methodology for this research.

Definitions

In this section, a list of terms and definitions are presented to ensure a common understanding of important terms used in this study.

Study Abroad

Study Abroad is an international mobility experiences that gives students the opportunity to engage in an intercultural experience as part of an academic course that counts as academic credit at the home institution.

Internationalization at Home

Internationalization at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments. (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de Wit & Leask, 2017; Leask & Carroll, 2011). Internationalization at Home (IaH) includes many types of intercultural experiences including virtual exchange, in-classroom exchanges, curriculum internationalization and many other initiatives. IaH experiences include the opportunity to engage virtually or in person with students who are from other cultures on a classroom project.

LIFTR

LIFTR is an acronym I created to represent the demographic target of this study. LIFTR represents a student who identifies with one or more of the following identities: low-income, first-generation, technical (CTE), or rural. CTE is Career and Technical Education and often represents a vocational 2-year program that results in employment immediately following completion of the associate degree.

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Visual Model

To illustrate this study's explanatory sequential design, a methodology visual representation allows for an illustration of how the various phases of the research and procedures in each phase fit together and complement each other. A graphical representation of the mixed-methods procedure helps to visualize the sequence for data collection, and the connecting points in the study (Ivankova et al., 2006). Figure 2 presents the visual model of the methodology steps

and procedures implemented in this study. The methods include four specific components,

beginning with the quantitative analysis, a survey informed by the quantitative results, a series of

interviews of select groups of Kirkwood participants, and finally interculturality assessment.

This figure is referred to frequently throughout this chapter to reinforce the structure of the

methodology.

Figure 2

Methodology Visual
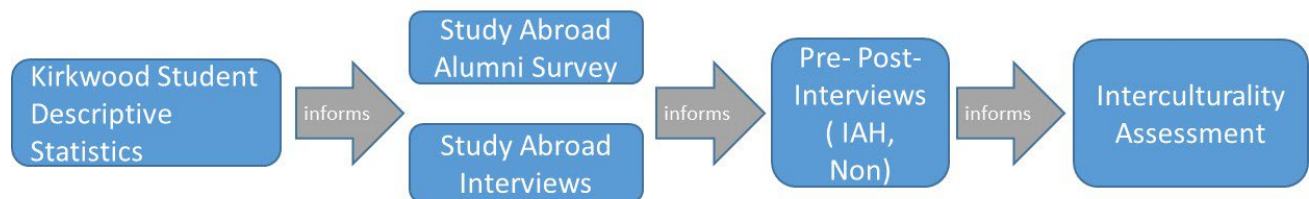
The Kirkwood Case Study

The case study institution in this study is Kirkwood Community College. The detailed

context of Kirkwood is discussed in Chapter 4, Kirkwood Institutional Context. A case study is a

design of inquiry where there is an in-depth analysis of one specific case bounded by time and

activity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Kirkwood is the case study community college of focus in

this study bound by the ten-year time period of 2010-2019 and focused on the activity of

intercultural experiences.

Because of the relative shallow and incomplete nature of research and data available

related to the LIFTR subgroups of interest in this research, a case study provides a valuable

contribution in several ways (Punch, 2014). Although case studies are often not generalizable,

this particular case study suggests some concepts or propositions for testing the offerings at other

institutions and looking for similar impact (Punch, 2014). Kirkwood is a case study where

LIFTR students do participate in intercultural experiences frequently and do provide a learning example. This type of case study is considered an intrinsic case study, meaning that it provides something distinctive from other community colleges in the area of offering intercultural experiences.

Target Populations

This case study explores student intercultural experience participation at Kirkwood Community College by collecting both detailed quantitative and rich qualitative data comparing three different student groups at the college: those who study abroad, those who participate in IaH, and those who do not participate in planned intercultural experiences. See Figure 2. A comparison of these three groups' experiences and stories provides greater insight into the demographic make-up of each group as well as the process through which students engaged in intercultural experiences.

Among these three comparison groups (study abroad participant, IaH participant, and non-participant), specific interest is taken in the experiences of the students who possess the four characteristics of interest to the research questions: low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students. For the sake of this study, I have created a unique acronym to encompass students with any of these four characteristics: "LIFTR". A LIFTR is a student with any one or more of the four characteristics of interest. The letters stand for the characteristics as following: **L**ow-**I**ncome, **F**irst-generation, **T**echnical, and **R**ural. The term LIFTR is a new term, self-created for the purposes of this research, to simplify the conversation. The LIFTR term also signifies a bit of the extra "lifting" that these underrepresented groups sometimes need to take on in their quest for equitable access to intercultural experiences that will facilitate their success. The emphasis on

LIFTR will benefit this study to highlight categories that are typically more present in community college populations than the four-year university.

Theoretical Framework

The methodology for this study is guided by a theoretical focus in two different areas: the concept of deficit/anti-deficit theories that apply to the populations being studied and theories of interculturality that provide a foundation for understanding the lived experiences of the students who participated in intercultural experiences.

Deficit and Anti-Deficit Narratives

The research process and analysis uses the lens of deficit-and anti-deficit thinking. Deficit-thinking indicates that certain subgroups of students have problems or deficits that hold them responsible for the challenges and inequities that they face (Bourdieu, 1986). This study chooses to oppose the deficit thinking approach and instead utilize anti-deficit perspectives that focus on overcoming deficit-thinking in education such as critical race theory (CRT), community cultural wealth theory (Yosso, 2005) and the capabilities approach (Sen, 1997, 2009; Tikly, 2013). These theories guide the inquiry about the participation of certain community college student subgroups in intercultural experiences, specifically low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTR) student categories.

Anti-deficit narratives indicate that outside structural systemic factors are a primary factor in lower participation rates rather than the categorical affiliation of the students themselves. The data analysis performed in the first phase of this mixed methods study examines the participation rates of students from these groups in an effort to debunk the deficit approach, which assumes that community college students and specifically LIFTRs do not participate in intercultural experiences.

Intentionally designed questions in the surveys and interviews focus on probing more deeply into students' identification with the LIFTR categories and how they experience intercultural experiences as a member of one of these groups. Study abroad survey questions are found in Appendix A. Many of the questions ask direct questions about the students' impact on knowledge, attitudes, and outcomes of the experience, thus linking to the theoretical underpinning of Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Appendix C outlines the survey questions and attributes a source to each of the questions. Some of the questions are derived directly from previously administered surveys that have served to survey retrospective study abroad students.

Interview protocols and questions for study abroad, IaH and non-participants are found in Appendices D, E, and F respectively. Qualitative interviews and survey questions asked students open-ended questions asking them to share their story in their own words regarding their study abroad experience. In the interview questions, students are asked directly to share the story of their identity and how it linked to their experience with interculturality. In the final section of the Interview Protocol, the final two questions in the intercultural impact section directly ask participants about intercultural competence and empathy as markers of change.

Open-ended questions allowed students to reflect on their LIFTR identity markers as they relate to their personal motivations, challenges, and overall impact of the experience. The purpose is to hear the voices of the students themselves painting a picture of whether or not the deficit narrative applies to their decision-making as well as the experience itself.

Students in this study are asked questions that illicit references to the types of capital that are tenets of the community cultural wealth theory including aspirational capital and resistance

capital among others (Yosso, 2005). The responses to these questions are directly relevant to this study's research questions.

Interculturality

The theoretical focus of the study is also guided by principles of interculturality. Chapter 3 provides an overview of interculturality, defining it as a process, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional identities. Through qualitative inquiry of surveys and interviews, student responses are analyzed for a better understanding of the process through which students engaged in intercultural experiences. This process of interculturality is used to gauge the impact of the overall experience and provide comparisons among those who did or did not participate in study abroad or IaH activities. Methods for collecting data from students including interviews and surveys are designed to directly address students' intersecting identities.

The primary research question for this study (RQ1) seeks to understand the intercultural experiences of LIFTR community college students who engage in interculturality. By collecting and analyzing students' responses to both the survey questions and interview questions, responses will be inductively coded, and categorized to construct themes in the findings that illustrate interculturality and paint a picture of how community college students experience interculturality.

Ethics

Ethical considerations related to participants were approved by Kirkwood's Institutional Review Board. All participant data was protected and stored behind an institutional firewall protected by a password accessible only to me. During the data collection process, student survey respondents signed individual consent forms outlining transparently the way that the data would

be utilized. At the start of each interview, verbal confirmation was given by each respondent

allowing video capture of the interview and understanding of the confidentiality of the data.

Actual names of participants were not included in any publishing of the data including in this

document. Survey respondents are identified by their anonymized number and interview

respondents by their pseudonyms.

Research Positionality

In the process of conducting research, it is important to recognize that bias is inevitable.

Qualitative research is interpretive research and the researcher is typically involved in the

research process along with the participants. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). There are several

components of my own person that could be recognized as a bias including my personal history

as well as my current professional position as the Dean of Global Learning at Kirkwood.

Positionality is not a limitation (Bourke, 2014). It is instead a recognition of who I am and how

the research in which I am engaged is shaped by who I am.

Reflecting on my own view, positions, and background, it is clear that my personal

history as a white farmer's daughter from Iowa is familiar and similar to many of the population

characteristics of interest in this study. There is a genuine likeness between myself and the

participants. I grew up on a farm in Iowa and attended college as a first-generation student, in a

household with a relatively low-income level. My own personal profile characteristics match

those of the participants in this study in three of the four categories: rural, first-generation, and

low-income. My direct experience as a member of these subgroups undeniably influences the

way I perceive their experiences. For this reason, I took a reflexive approach to the interviews,

taking notes, and writing summaries and memos throughout the process in order to acknowledge

my part in the research. That reflexivity is important to gain an awareness of how my own values

may change over time (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Being aware of this bias and potential for

projection is important throughout the process in order to ensure the findings and interviews are

as objective as possible. This shared background is also a positive factor in the analysis and in

the ability to connect with participants. Sharing characteristics and background stories with the

interviewees allows for common ground that may illicit deeper responses to the questions.

My position as Dean of International Programs at Kirkwood places me in a role that may

be perceived as a power role. Research participants are likely to consider me a leader or teacher

at Kirkwood responsible for structuring and supervising their learning and opportunities. In an

interview setting, I imagine that participants may view me as a professional and as a curious

person deeply interested in their intercultural experiences. This perception will be illustrated in

my practicing of active listening techniques, leaning in often and/or paraphrasing/repeating to

ensure I have the meaning of what is being said. I am a white female, 50 years old, wear

professional clothes, and wear glasses to read indicating that I have some life experience and am

of a privileged position. These physical characteristics may also cause participants to view me as

an authority figure or as someone who might be considered intimidating. The goal is to provide

an open environment and establish a comfortable setting to minimize any power distance and

encourage open and honest sharing. There may also be benefits to this perception of power in the

sense that participants will take the interview seriously and give thought to their responses.

However, the opportunity for peer level communication could be hindered due to this difference

in status.

Agency is the ability to act or the way we interact with our environment and relate to it

(Darwin Holmes, 2020). My agency as the Dean of Global Learning also plays a role because as

I uncover opportunities in interview, I may feel the urge to use my agency to react to perceptions

by making decisions for change. I remain cognizant of my role as a researcher throughout the study, observing, collecting data, and making recommendations and reserve my agency for after the study has concluded.

My role as Dean is intricately connected to Kirkwood's mission, vision and goals and commitment to intercultural experiences for all students. As an international education practitioner having dedicated my career to providing opportunities for internationalization to community colleges, I recognize that I have a bias toward the premise that study abroad and IaH are "good" experiences and desirable for all students. My own experience studying and working abroad throughout my life also influence this bias. My knowledge of international educational leadership guided data analysis, influenced data interpretation, and provided a unique insight to the study, that of an insider to the institution and the population being studied. As an insider, it is important throughout the study to keep the positionality present and also give value to the perspective provided as a researcher (Darwin Holmes, 2020; Spradley, 1979).

Methodology

Kirkwood Student Profile Quantitative Data

In the explanatory sequential mixed method design illustrated in Figure 3 and repeated from earlier in this chapter, the first research methods to employ in this study is the quantitative analysis of student profile data using Kirkwood student descriptive statistics. RQ2 asks about the profile of community college students who participate in intercultural experiences compared to those who have not. The quantitative methods employed through descriptive statistics to answer RQ2 will group data by three subsets: 1) community college students who participate in study abroad, 2) community college students who participate in IaH, and 3) community college students who do not participate in planned intercultural experiences.

Figure 3

Methodology Visual

The quantitative aspect of the study addresses RQ2 directly and includes a statistical and regression analysis of intercultural experience participation data at Kirkwood. Due to my employment at the selected institution, I have unique access to detailed participation profiles of Kirkwood students, including those who have participated in intercultural experiences and those who have not. The quantitative research is focused first on descriptive statistics and then on the relationships of certain variables within the dataset by running chi-squared tests and a regression model.

Statistical Procedures

Statistical procedures provide an understanding of the participation profile of Kirkwood students participating in intercultural experiences. Descriptive statistical methods and inferential statistical models and tests both describe the data found in the Kirkwood dataset and subsequently predict the profile of community college student likely to participate in intercultural experiences. The procedures include the use of frequency charts, chi-squared test models and regression models and analysis. Frequency distribution tables in excel spreadsheets and pivot tables describe the participation profiles. Inferential models are performed on the dataset utilizing the SPSS software at Kirkwood.

Descriptive Statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the dataset in any study (Lund Research, 2020). The use of descriptive statistics is important to allow for an intentional organization of the data about intercultural experience participation by LIFTR variable of interest (Lund Research, 2020). Data is presented in frequency distribution tables showing the percentage of the total population that meet certain demographic characteristics. A frequency distribution is a table that shows each possible characteristic along with the number of times that characteristic occurred in the data. The frequency table allows for a comparison of how frequent a certain variable appears in the total population compared to how frequent a variable appears for a given category.

In the case of this study, the frequency table shows the frequency of students self-selecting intercultural experiences (i.e. study abroad) in comparison to the frequency of students participating in intercultural experiences on campus (i.e. IaH) and those who did not participate. This statistical comparison explores whether those with membership in one of the targeted LIFTR subgroups show a statistically significant difference in participation in either of these categories. In this analysis, it is also important to recall that study abroad participation is a choice or opt-in for students. IaH participants may or may not be aware at the time of enrollment in a given IaH course that they are choosing a planned intercultural experience.

Data from CTE, low-income, first-generation and rural students is particularly relevant to community college student populations and is not present in a meaningful way in the research literature (Wood & Raby, 2021; Wood & Whatley, 2020). This research project's intent is to place a spotlight on these sub-populations and compare against the broader community college population. The current higher education internationalization research literature, specifically from 4-year universities, typically documents the overall higher education population rather than

focusing on those from disadvantaged groups in these categories. This study's frequency table highlighting LIFTR characteristics is a ground-breaking method to spotlight disadvantaged subgroups participating in intercultural experiences. Data from these groups has not been analyzed prior. This new lens provides the opportunity to expose how intercultural experiences engage and impact those who identify with non-elite categories.

This method of analysis also provides a link to Internationalization of Higher Education for Society (IHES), a recent concept in the higher education internationalization literature (Brandenburg et al., 2019), asserting that higher education internationalization is compelled to focus on societal benefits reaped from intercultural experiences and that our world can be improved through internationalizing higher education. In order to improve our world, IHES calls on educators to recognize that internationalization can and should impact and involve a diverse set of world citizens, such as those focused on by this study: low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students who attend community colleges. This study's methods seek to first identify and then highlight the impact on those non-elite participants.

Chi-squared. A Chi-squared analysis is a method used to find relationships in categorical data (Field, 2016, p. 434). Because the goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of the participation rates of students who possess one or more of the four independent variables, it is important to also analyze the relationship between the four variables themselves. For example, there may be a tendency to think that first-generation students may be more likely to be low-income status or studying a technical degree (Pascarella et al., 2004). This study tests this and similar assumptions about the correlation of these variables.

The Chi-squared tests are conducted first on major area, then rurality, then low-income status, then first-generation status. Crosstab tables are generated out of SPSS illustrating the

difference between the expected and observed rates of participation in study abroad and IaH.

Chi-squared tests include Pearson Chi-Square, continuity correction, likelihood ration, and

Fisher's exact test.

Chi-squared testing is also performed to determine if there is a significantly different

result for students who possess the characteristics of all of the four independent variables versus

those that did not possess any of the target variables. Various Chi-squared tests are run to

determine which of the variables present a risk of collinearity and to what extent.

Regression. A regression analysis is also performed on the Kirkwood dataset in order to

ascertain any significant relationship between two or more of the variables of interest in this

study (Field, 2016). The reason for choosing regression analysis is that regression is a reliable

method of identifying which variables have an impact on the dependent variable of intercultural

experience participation as well as how these variables influence each other (Lund Research,

2020). By conducting both a chi-squared and regression analysis, there is a greater reliability of

results and an opportunity for triangulation.

The results of a regression analysis show how well certain variables can predict

participation. The expectation is that the regression analysis will be able to help predict what

types of community college students are more or less likely to participate in intercultural

experiences. This type of regression analysis has been used to analyze community college and

other study abroad participation data in past studies (Whatley, 2018b; Whatley & González

Canché, 2021; Wood & Whatley, 2020).

With assistance from Kirkwood's Institutional Effectiveness office, I use an SPSS tool to

perform regression analysis on the Kirkwood dataset. Multiple logistic regression tests are run on

the Kirkwood dataset. Because the intercultural experience participation itself is binary (either

participated in intercultural experience or did not participate in intercultural experience), a binary

regression approach is used. In addition to the binary regression approach, a Principal

Component Analysis (PCA) regression is also performed to better understand the relationships of

the variables. For each test, tables are provided and explained with a goal of finding a model that

is considered a good fit and that will explain some of the variability in study abroad participation

among low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students.

Qualitative Data Collection

Figure 4

Methodology Visual

In the mixed methods explanatory sequential design, the quantitative data is used to

inform the qualitative methods employed in the next segment of the methods (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). The quantitative methods outlined in the previous section

of this chapter assert that Kirkwood LIFTRS (low-income, first-generation, technical, or rural

students) are indeed very likely to participate in intercultural experiences at Kirkwood.

Quantitative findings to this end will be presented in Chapter 6. Because of this unique

demographic makeup and high level of LIFTR participation at Kirkwood, the next step in this

mixed methods process is to build upon the quantitative profile findings and survey findings. I

will use this quantitative data analysis to inform the collection of additional qualitative data to

support and/or contradict the participation data. This sequence of data collection allows a better

understanding of LIFTR participation and impact, relative to the remaining research questions of

this study. The goal is to hear the LIFTR voices and stories about their intercultural experiences

through a more qualitative lens utilizing open-ended survey questions and semi-structured

interviews. The qualitative analysis of this study includes two separate qualitative data collection

processes briefly described as follows:

1. Study Abroad Retrospective Survey - Survey of past LIFTRS from the quantitative

   dataset

2. Interviews – Interviews from those retrospective study abroad participants as well as pre-

   and post- experience from present day IaH and non-participants.

It is important to note here the difference in timeline. The study abroad retrospective survey is

administered to alumni who participated in study abroad 2-10 years in the past. The study abroad

alumni interviews are also reflecting on their intercultural experience from 2-10 years in the past.

The IaH and non-participants are current students who are currently experiencing IaH or not

participating in the current semester. This has implications for the findings due to the difference

in timeframe. Study abroad alumni provide a more longitudinal reflection than can the IaH or

non-participants. This timeline differential will be addressed in the findings.

Study Abroad Retrospective Survey

The use of the word "survey" has many meanings and can be used to study relationships

between variables (Punch, 2014). According to Creswell & Creswell (2019), survey research

provides a "description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of

the population" (p. 12). Punch (2014) goes on to say that surveys "tests for associations among

variables of the populations" (p. 216). The purpose of this study's study abroad retrospective

survey is to gather student alumni data from students who studied abroad at Kirkwood over the

ten-year period of 2010-2019 to gain more detailed information about their motivations,

challenges, interculturality, and impact over time on their personal and professional lives. The

survey collects some quantitative data regarding the student experience but also includes many

open-ended questions that contribute to the qualitative analysis. According to Creswell &

Creswell (2018), survey research provides a description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a

given population by studying a sample of that same population. The intent then is to generalize

from a sample to a larger population (Fowler, 2008). Criticisms of survey research are that the

respondents are almost always self-selected in the sense that not all participants who receive the

survey actually respond. It is difficult to generalize to the larger population from a set of self-

selected respondents. This is a limitation of the survey method.

Surveys in Internationalization Literature

A variety of surveys of students who have studied abroad and/or participated in IaH have

been conducted in the current body of internationalization research for both universities and

community colleges. Retrospective survey studies have also been done, although not as many,

for longitudinal perspectives. This section reviews some of these survey examples and

experience in study abroad, in IaH, and also specifically the use of retrospective survey design

for perspective on the use of survey in this study.

Study Abroad Surveys. There are many studies involving surveys in study abroad,

including pre- post- design, instruments, and many other formats. Some of these instruments are

not necessarily designed explicitly for study abroad, but rather to measure the effect of any

intervention that is relevant to the measure. The instruments listed here are though often used for

the purpose of measuring the impact of study abroad. Such iIstruments include studies that use

the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003) and other standardized

measures of impact (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Riley et al., 2016). Instruments are primarily

designed for a one-size-fits-all implementation across different type of educational institutions and organizations rather than designed with a tailored community college focus. Amani & Kim (2018) do focus on community college specifically in their pre- post- study abroad survey to gauge community college study abroad impact. Seeing the variety of instruments and surveys used in the past for measuring the impact of study abroad, it is clear that there is not one generally accepted survey that meets the needs or is considered an industry standard to measure the impact of study abroad.

IaH Surveys. Studies utilizing surveys to assess the impact of IaH have also been found in the research literature. For example, in Soria & Troisi (2014), students were surveyed about their global, international, and intercultural (GII) competencies. Another example includes the use of a pre- and post- survey of an online exchange between US and Japanese students by Custer & Tuominen (2017) incorporating the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI) (GPI, 2015). Again, these surveys are primarily designed as a universal format rather than being tailored to an institutional type. They were not designed specifically for community college student populations but rather for broad use in assessment. Here again there is not one generally accepted survey or industry standard that is accepted to measure the impact of IaH. This becomes problematic when trying to measure impact in a way that is meaningful.

Retrospective Survey Design. The term retrospective survey refers to surveys focuses on longitudinal study, collecting data about alumni reflections on an experience that happened several years in the past. The literature includes several examples of retrospective survey research (AIFS Foundation & IIE, 2018; Paige et al., 2009; Raby et al., 2014; Robertson, 2016). The California Community College Student Outcomes Abroad Research project (CCC SOAR) is the largest project of its kind specifically focused on community college students finding that

many positive outcomes result from study abroad participation (Raby et al., 2014). Some of these retrospective survey designs were specifically focused on community colleges while others were not.

Retrospective Survey Instrument

The retrospective survey instrument utilized in this study asks past study abroad participants about the long-term impact of their intercultural experiences. The purpose of the survey is to gather their reflections over time about their study abroad experience and the impact study abroad has had on them personally and professionally over the long-term. Open-ended questions and rating questions were posed to allow students to write about the impact as well as self-rate themselves on some of the common growth areas of study abroad including knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The survey instrument can be viewed in full in Appendix A. The survey instrument was disseminated to participants via the software program, Qualtrics. By using Qualtrics, survey responses were linked by unique anonymized ID to the SPSS data collected in the quantitative phase. In this way, student demographic data from Kirkwood's student information system can be tied directly to the results of the survey and comparisons can be made by demographic attribute.

Because the students' demographic and variables of interest are already contained in the quantitative results, the survey instrument is designed to build upon the quantitative data as well as gather more qualitative data through the use of both Likert scale questions as well as several open-ended questions that are transcribed and coded for impact. The survey questions chosen for the instrument are carefully designed based on previous surveys created for the purpose of post-study abroad research (AIFS Foundation and IIE, 2018; R.L. Raby et al., 2014; Robertson,

2016). Both SOAR and Robertson's research were specifically focused on community college

students and community college research. The AIFS Foundation and IIE study had a sample that

included a wider group of undergraduate students, mostly from 4-year institutions. The questions

chosen for the instrument are mapped directly to this study's research questions to ensure the

direct applicability of the survey instrument to this study's research questions. Table 6 lists all of

the survey questions and their pertinence to each research question. The research questions

utilized for the purpose of the survey development were mapped directly to the four research

questions. The research questions are based largely on the theoretical underpinnings of theories

of intercultural competence, primarily Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence,

including a focus on knowledge, attitudes, and outcomes of the experience. The research

questions have changed over time throughout the research process. The majority of the questions

were designed to address RQ3 which directly questions the impact of intercultural experiences

over time.

Table 6

Kirkwood Study Abroad Retrospective Survey Instrument Questions

Question	Survey Question	Response Type	Research Question
1	When you were at Kirkwood, did you consider yourself (check all that apply)	Low Income - Eligible for Pell grant and/or total family income below $50,000, First Generation - first in your family to attend college, From a rural community or small town under 20,000 people in population	RQ2
2	Did you study abroad at Kirkwood?	Yes No	RQ1
3	What were your motivations/reasons for studying abroad	Open Text	RQ1

4	Had you traveled abroad prior to your Kirkwood study abroad program?	Yes No and then Elaborate (With a family on trips or vacations, for work, for military service, with a school group, gap year after high school, while in college, short-term study abroad, semester study abroad program, other	RQ1
5	My desire to study abroad influenced my selection of undergraduate college.	1-5 (Not at all, slightly, moderately, very much, extremely)	RQ1
6	Since studying abroad, I have (check all that apply)	traveled abroad for work, traveled abroad for pleasure, worked abroad on a cultural exchange program (such as BUNAC, USIT, au pair, teaching English, etc.), worked abroad for an American or foreign company or organization, worked in the US for a foreign company or organization volunteered abroad on a short-term basis (1 month or less), volunteered abroad on a long-term basic (more than one month), not traveled outside the US	RQ3
7	Highest level of education you currently hold	Some college, associate, bachelor, master, doctorate	RQ3
8	What is your current job?	Open Text	RQ3
9	Does your current career require you to interact across cultures?	Not at all, very little, to some degree, to a large degree, please elaborate	RQ3
10	To what degree did your study abroad experience help your career and/or your career direction?	Not at all, very little, to some degree, to a large degree, please elaborate	RQ3
11	Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact on you personally?	Open Text	RQ3
12	Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact on you professionally in your everyday work or on your professional plans?	Open Text	RQ3
13	Do you recommend study abroad to others?	Yes No	RQ1

My participation in Kirkwood study abroad contributed to:

14	My knowledge about another culture	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
15	Developing my awareness of political, economic or social events around the world	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
16	My desire for more diverse friendships and social networks	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
17	My desire to further my education	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
18	A better understanding of myself and my values	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
19	My sense of confidence in new situation or when meeting new people	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
20	My ability to be more flexible and open-minded	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
21	My tolerance of ambiguity in a variety of situations	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
22	My ability to be independent	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
23	Influenced me to be more active in my local community	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
24	My choice of college major	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
25	My choice of field of employment	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
26	My ability to formulate my career goals and clarify my professional aspirations	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
27	Developing skills and intercultural competencies which contributed to obtaining my first job	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3

28	The importance I place on working in a field that I find interesting	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
29	My ability to adapt in diverse workplace environments	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3
30	Overall, Kirkwood Study Abroad was the most meaningful experience of my community college education.	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	RQ3, RQ1
31	Please use this space to write about or add and reflections and/or comments you have	Open Text	RQ3, RQ1

The survey utilized a variety of types of questions including multiple choice, open-ended, and rating questions to allow participants to elaborate on their experience and share more personal and detailed information both in quantitative and qualitative formats (Punch, 2014). The questions in the survey were modeled after surveys that had been conducted in previous studies (SOAR, AIFS Foundation & IIE, etc.) and then augmented with additional questions addressing the research questions. See Appendix C: Source of Survey Questions. Appendix C includes a table illustrating the source of the ideas for each of the survey questions.

The first question in the survey referred to whether the participants identify with one of the four variables of interest. The first question was "When you were a student at Kirkwood, did you consider yourself (check all that apply) low-income, first-generation, from a rural or small town community?" This question was strategically placed first in the survey to ensure students recognize their group affiliation before answering the other questions. The response to this question is used to analyze differences in responses from those who self-identified and/or were classified in a category in Kirkwood's enrollment data related to one or more of the four LIFTR variables of interest.

Following the category question, the next was an open-ended question about motivations

for participation in study abroad: "What were your motivations/reasons for studying abroad?"

allowing students to elaborate on motivations. The next questions were about past travel before

they chose to study abroad. Questions about former travel are asked to target real data about the

international experience levels of community college students. These questions include "Had you

traveled abroad prior to your Kirkwood study abroad program?" to find out if this was the

student's first time abroad. This question is followed with the opportunity to elaborate in an

open-ended format. Another question asks about travel since studying abroad "Since studying

abroad, I have…" where the respondent is asked to check all that apply: traveled for work,

worked abroad, volunteered abroad, etc.

Open-ended questions utilizing encouraging phrases such as "Elaborate on your

response" encourage participants to elaborate on their experience and share more about their

personal study abroad story. These open-ended questions allowed the survey respondents to

reflect on the "why" of their choice.

The next set of questions delved more into the impact of the experience on their current

professional and personal lives. Several of the next questions asked participants details about

their job and career and how study abroad may have impacted them. Following each of these

questions, open-ended boxes for comments were placed under the question and survey

respondents were asked to elaborate on their answer. The box stated "Please elaborate on your

answer to the previous question." This positive open-ended wording was formulated to

encourage reflective open-ended qualitative responses.

These general career-related questions were then followed by two open-ended questions.

"Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact on your

personally?" and "Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact

on you professionally in your everyday work or on your professional plans?" These two

questions target the idea of impact and encourage respondents to write freely about the impact.

Following these open-ended questions, the next survey section included several responses

to the leading phrase "My participation in Kirkwood Study Abroad contributed to. . ." Survey

respondents then indicate to what extent they agreed with each category on a Likert scale of 1-5

from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree".

The final questions included an open-ended box where there was room for any additional

reflections/comments about the impact of the experience. The reason for this open-ended box

was to encourage even more responses and deeper reflections from participants to better tell their

story. Respondents were also asked whether they would like to participate in a follow up

interview to go into more depth about their study abroad story.

Retrospective Survey Sample Size

The survey was distributed to a total of 891 students from the complete Kirkwood dataset

who studied abroad from 2010-2019. Email addresses were obtained from student records and

from the study abroad database in order to send the survey email invitation to the full population

of Kirkwood study abroad alumni. Using a comprehensive selection method (Farrugia, 2019),

the survey was administered to all 891 in the dataset who studied abroad in order to gather

longitudinal data about those who had experienced study abroad in the past nine years and how

that experience impacted their current personal and professional life. Of the 891 who received

the survey, 190 responded to the survey, for a 21.32% response rate. The random sampling

method resulted in a sample of 190 study abroad alumni who responded to the survey out of the

total 891 study abroad population at Kirkwood. Testing the sample against the population showed a 95% confidence rate with a 6.31% margin of error.

It is not uncommon in today's research world that students web survey return a result of less than 10% response rate (Van Mol, 2017). Given this, a 21.32% response rate is considered a good result, especially given the 10-year-old nature of some of the contact information in the dataset. There is a potential for nonresponse bias given that 78.68% of the population of study abroad alumni did not respond. This nonresponse bias is a potential concern, however there is also research that indicates that nonresponse bias is not a significant factor given the nature of survey respondents and collection (Hendra & Hill, 2019).

The survey target population included only study abroad participants. The survey therefore does not provide any insight into the other subsets of data from the dataset, that of the IaH students or the non-participants. The decision to not survey IaH students was primarily made because there has not been time for longitudinal impact since the IaH flagging mechanism in the dataset is a recent phenomenon. This study's dataset includes 256 IaH records in total with most of those being quite recent experiences within the past three years. Because of the recent nature of the experiences, long-term impact would not be possible to measure among those IaH participants in a meaningful way.

Recruitment of Survey Participants

Efforts were made to ensure a good response rate through the use of email reminders. Giving credence to the importance of reminders when administering web-based surveys, three reminders were sent to those who did not respond over a period of three weeks to gather as many responses as possible (Van Mol, 2017). See Appendix B for the email reminder text and Appendix A for the preview of the survey instrument.

Retrospective Survey Data Analysis

The survey data collected included responses to multiple choice questions, numeric data measured on Likert scale as well as open-ended response data. With the multiple types of questions and responses, the results of the survey are analyzed in multiple ways utilizing two different analytical systems for analysis: SPSS and Dedoose.

SPSS descriptive statistics. Responses from the Qualtrics survey were input into the IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) software that linked student's demographic data to their survey response, resulting in a comprehensive spreadsheet complete with all collected demographic data from the Kirkwood dataset as well as all responses to survey questions. Data is linked to individual participants by a unique ID. For those quantitative or multiple-choice questions, a survey report is generated out of Qualtrics. Survey response data can be linked directly to student demographic information and reports generated for comparison based on LIFTR characteristics. By applying this quantitative question analysis and separating the groups of interest by low-income, first-generation, technical and rural attributes for analysis, it is possible to describe patterns of experiences for specific groups of students (Stage, 2007).

Coding analysis. Open-ended responses in the survey were coded using a data analysis coding process that occurred in two phases. The first phase involved a mixed method analysis software and the second phase involved a spreadsheet of codes, categories, and quotes. Utilizing Creswell and Creswell's method of the data analysis process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, 193-195), the steps in coding analysis include organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading all of the data, coding all of the data, generating categories and themes, and then representing the themes in the qualitative findings.

The organizing process started by loading the survey raw data from Qualtrics into the Dedoose software, a mixed-method analysis software that has a good reputation of qualitative mixed methods study in the social sciences (Salmona et al., 2019; Taylor & Treacy, 2013). To organize and prepare the alumni survey data, Dedoose organizes the survey data and creates a descriptor row for each participant. Each participant has a unique ID and the survey data is linked to their demographic data by this unique ID. In this way, the data can be organized and disaggregated by demographic criteria.

The next step was to read all of the open-ended survey responses from beginning to end and then by LIFTR group. The Dedoose software allowed organization of the data by LIFTR group so that I could read each of the four LIFTR category responses separately.

Using an inductive approach, I read the full transcripts of the survey responses, and then began labelling relevant words, phrases and sections that were deemed important by adding in vivo tags in Dedoose that were relevant to the study's research questions including links to identity marker, motivations, obstacles, and impact. In vivo coding is the method of coding employed to ensure that the exact wording of participants and the voice of those surveyed would be understood in a more in-depth way (Saldaña, 2016). From the in vivo codes, some natural categories and themes emerged to create the findings of this study.

To reduce bias, codes and themes were shared with colleague researchers also studying the experiences of study abroad on college students. Peer conversations were held on a weekly basis comparing our coding schemes and themes. Codes and themes were also discussed with my thesis supervisors to ensure there was additional input, other than my own, into the grouping of codes and themes. These multiple peer-debriefing sessions served to build reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

In addition to utilizing Dedoose for the coding and analysis, a secondary method of coding was completed using a spreadsheet to code responses by listing all of the in vivo codes from the surveys and categorizing them in sets of categories, then counting the frequency of the codes to gain an understanding of which words and phrases were appearing more often. This spreadsheet method of coding is then compared to the Dedoose coding, comparing differences and similarities, and eventually coming to one list of codes that is organized into broader themes for comparison. Throughout the coding, a separate list of excerpts was saved in a separate tab on the spreadsheet.

Finally, I identified key excerpts of the student responses to produce rich description of community college students' experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As common themes arose from both the categories and the rich quotations from participants, a clearer picture developed of the students' intercultural experiences, motivations, challenges, and impact.

Interviews

This section will present first an introduction of the merits of the interview method to this study and how the survey and data presented in the previous section inform the interviews and are complemented by the interview process. The methods utilized for the study abroad retrospective interviews will be first explained followed by the methods used for IaH and non-participant interviews.

In the previous section, I discussed how the survey method collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Much of the quantitative data collected and analyzed addressed research question two about demographic profile and allowed for comparisons. The qualitative data from the survey also pertained to RQ1, 3 & 4 about the impact of the experiences and the process of interculturality. The qualitative results from the survey informed the interview protocol and

question selection, as shown in Figure 5. The interview phase was chosen to deepen the level of

understanding gained from the study abroad participants as well as to collect data from the

comparison groups, IaH and non-participants, addressing RQ 4.

Figure 5

Methodology Visual

In qualitative research, interviews are often selected as the method of choice for the

purpose of accessing student perceptions, meaning, definitions of situation and various

constructions of reality (Punch, 2014). Interviews are structured to utilize a narrative approach

allowing interview conversations (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p.27) with the participants. Riesman

(1993) pointed out that "We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and

interpret" and in this way narratives are "co-constructed" (pp. 8, 31). Interviewees are

encouraged to tell their study abroad story of interculturality and discuss the impact of their

experience. Follow up questions by the interviewer are structured in a way to encourage more

open-ended responses such as utilizing phrases like "tell me more about…" or "share and

example of what you were talking about…"

By engaging in qualitative inquiry, I was able to achieve a deeper perspective on

community college students' experiences and elaborate upon their experiences and personal

stories. The semi-structured, constructive interview approach collected in-depth information

about the participants' experiences, expanding upon the data obtained from the surveys.

Interviews were conducted with three groups. First, the study abroad students who answered the retrospective survey were invited to be interviewed. These students were those who participated in study abroad at Kirkwood over the 2010-2019 timeframe and submitted a survey in the first phase. Utilizing the survey findings, the interview questions themselves were developed to allow for elaboration and a deepening understanding of Research Questions 1 and 3. The second interview group included the Kirkwood students currently participating in IaH intercultural experiences. IaH students were interviewed both pre- and post- intercultural experience. The third group included current Kirkwood students with LIFTR characteristics who were not participating in any planned intercultural experience. This third group was also interviewed two times, both pre- and post-semester at the beginning and end of the Spring semester of 2021.

The goal of the current participant interviews was to gain some personal reflections both pre- and post- experience and review and code transcripts to learn about any changes in terms of intercultural learning and perceptions. Previous studies on the impact of intercultural experiences have utilized this 'pre-' and 'post-' technique to demonstrate a change between the two conditions of global experience versus non-global experience (Haas, 2018). By analyzing the long-term and short-term outcomes and listening to community college student stories, the goal is to gain a more holistic understanding of the community college student population's intercultural experience impact.

Study Abroad Retrospective Interviews

Eighteen study abroad retrospective interviews of approximately 30-45 minutes with LIFTR participants were conducted as teleconference via zoom and recorded for review

purposes. All participants were asked to sign a consent and informed about the recording process and confidentiality of interviews.

Recruitment of Interview Participants. Participants for the retrospective interviews were derived from the full dataset of past Kirkwood enrollment and as follow up to the survey. The survey distributed to past study abroad participants asked participants to indicate if they would be willing to participate in an additional interview about their intercultural experience. The question asked "Would you be willing to participate in a personal interview or student focus group related to your study abroad experience in the future? If you select "yes" you may be contacted at the same email address to which this survey was sent. If you select "no" you will not be contacted." Of the 190 individuals who took the survey, 122 indicated willingness to participate in an interview and are contacted via email to participate resulting in eighteen personal interviews conducted. See Appendix B for the text of the email used to invite students to schedule interviews. Because the goal was to identify students with several LIFTR characteristics, the first round of email invitations was sent to those participants who possessed a minimum of two of the LIFTR characteristics.

In order to gain a larger pool of interviews, the second set of email invitations included participants with a minimum of one of the LIFTR characteristics in their demographic profile. At this point in the research process, after interviewing 18 study abroad alumni, a review of the transcripts and coding revealed that most themes were being repeated and little new information was being added showing that a saturation of research data was achieved and no additional interviews were needed.

Interview Protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D) utilized was based on the reading of the previous retrospective survey responses including a mapping of how

each interview question maps to this study's research questions. It was possible to use the survey

questions to inform the interview because the surveys had several open-ended questions with

lengthy responses that pointed to potentially more in-depth questions. The steps I took to build

the interview from the survey were to first read the open-ended responses of the survey. Results

of the open-ended survey questions were then coded utilizing an in vivo coding method for

initial coding and then categorized for themes. The themes that emerged were then used to

develop targeted questions for the interviews. Many studies have utilized this technique for both

study abroad and IaH interviewing (Alexiadou et al., 2021; Amani & Kim, 2018; Guo et al.,

2021).

Interview length ranged between 20-70 minutes, dependent on the interviewee's

openness to sharing. The interview began with introductory questions such as "Tell me about

how you came to be a student at Kirkwood" to allow for participants to feel comfortable with the

interview setting on Zoom and the interviewer, me, and progressed to more specific questions

delving into students' understandings of the impact the intercultural experience had on them

personally and professionally.

Specific questions in the interview protocol asked participants to reflect on how their

identification with one of the four LIFTR variables of interest may have impacted their

intercultural experience and/or the impact it had on them long-term. Questions included topics

such as their current job and interactions with other cultures as well as their perception on how

their study abroad experience had an impact on these areas.

Utilizing the themes that arose out of the retrospective survey data, specific questions

were directed to interviewees specifically about their motivations, challenges, and the overall

impact of their experience related to their demographic characteristics. Throughout the interview, I was intentional about leaving space for students to tell their story of interculturality.

Interview Coding Analysis. Participant interviews were transcribed via Zoom transcription software to allow for further data analysis. I reviewed and edited each Zoom transcript for any grammatical or understanding errors to ensure accurate transcription. Once Zoom transcripts were saved in a Microsoft Word format and corrected for spelling, etc, member checking was conducted by sending out the complete edited transcripts to each participant by email with the Word transcript document attached for review and verification.

I then reviewed each video and transcript individually taking notes, or memos, to capture initial thoughts and reactions to what each participant shared in their interview (Punch, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). After re-reading the transcript and re-listening to the audio file to immerse myself in the data, I wrote a separate summary of each interview, in my own words, to analyze the content of what the participant said and created a summary document that also included my own interpretations of the conversation (Spradley, 1979) These summaries included some introspections as well as summaries to allow me to take into account personal biases and feelings as well as have a memory of the interview itself in a more personal way.

Using these interview summaries and the transcripts/audio files together, I created a list in an Excel spreadsheet of in vivo codes reflecting both the participants own words, in the form of in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) extracting the in vivo codes into a master list, and my own interpretations of their thoughts. The goal in this method is to get a deeper meaning out of each participant's interview and better reflect the impact of their experiences in a holistic way. Once the list of in vivo codes was complete, emergent themes were identified to categorize the codes into categories similar to those extracted from the surveys.

Each of the full interview transcripts from Zoom were also uploaded into the Dedoose

mixed methods software where text analysis inductive coding was conducted and in vivo

codes/categories could be assigned for producing further analytic reports. A similar process of

coding and analysis that was used in the survey analysis, utilizing both Dedoose and a

spreadsheet method was employed. By utilizing two separate methods of coding, the categories

derived achieved more validity. Inductive coding is used as a research strategy to better

understand the experiences of LIFTR students with interculturality. The process was to collect

data first from the survey, code and analyze the data and then follow up with additional data

from the interviews, code and analyze. This inductive process was used with the purpose of

landing on a better understanding of interculturality among LIFTR students (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018; Punch, 2014).

The resulting emergent themes and codes are then analyzed as a complete dataset for the

group of interviews and then also analyzed as smaller groups that included specific demographic

variables of interests along the LIFTR characteristics. As the text analysis and coding is

completed, comparisons are made among the participants who possessed the LIFTR

demographic characteristics of interest to analyze similarities or differences.

IaH and Non-Participant Interviews

The second qualitative study involves two groups of current Kirkwood students: those

participating in IaH and those students who are non-participants. This study utilizes the data

findings from the quantitative research, the survey findings, and the interviews with study abroad

students to inform interviews. This second study includes pre- and post-program qualitative

design. Pre- and post- interviews are designed to gauge how the experiences are impacting

students over time with the intent of comparing responses pre- to responses post- for changes

(Czerwionka et al., 2015; Haas, 2018). Interviews again are semi-structured as in the case of the retrospective interview above, encouraging a narrative approach.

Current students enrolled and/or not enrolled in intercultural experiences allow for a "now" perspective on motivations, challenges, and intercultural experiences. These students participate in interviews regarding their intercultural experiences and/or non-intercultural experiences in 2021. Initial interviews took place in February 2021 at the start of the IaH experience that coincided with the Spring 2021 semester. Post-interviews took place in April/May 2021 at the conclusion of their IaH experience. The objective was to gain insight from this population of current Kirkwood students and then compare between those students who participated in a study abroad experience in the past. The study uses a purposeful sampling (Farrugia, 2019) method so that all interviewees will possess one or more of the LIFTR characteristics from their demographic profile. Of the IaH participants, 100% participation was achieved. Of the non-participants, three out of the thirteen chose to not participate for a participation rate of 77% for that group despite multiple follow-up attempts to encourage participation.

These two groups are identified as follows:

1. Current IaH: Students who identify with two or more these subgroups (rural, technical, first-generation and low-income) who participated in intercultural experiences (Internationalization at Home (IaH)) in 2021.

2. Current Non-participant: Students from two or more of these subgroups (rural, technical, first-generation, and low-income) who have not participated in any planned intercultural experiences or study abroad experiences at the community college in 2021.

As these two groups are compared to those from the study abroad sample, the three total groups of interviewees were selected to address Research Subquestion #4 directed at the comparison between intercultural experiences: study abroad, IaH and no planned intercultural experience.

Recruitment of Interview Participants. For each of the aforementioned groups, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative data about the impact of their intercultural experience. IaH participants were invited to participate in the interviews at the start of their IaH intercultural experience at the beginning of the semester and informed of the need for both a pre- and post- interview with the pre-interview scheduled for the start of the Spring 2021 semester and the post-interview scheduled for the end of the Spring 2021 semester.

Non-participants were intentionally selected from Kirkwood's TRIO students because TRIO students are highly likely to possess one of the four LIFTR characteristics. TRIO is an organized federally funded grant program at Kirkwood that serves low-income, first-generation students. TRIO participants are an ideal recruitment resource for this research because of this match in LIFTR characteristics. Similar to the IaH interview timeline, the timing for the non-participants begins with pre-interview at the start of the Spring 2021 semester and a post-interview at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester.

Interview Protocol. Interviews follow a semi-structured interview protocol similar to the retrospective interviews. Two interviews are conducted with each IaH and non-participant student, pre-experience and post- in order to allow for a more in-depth understanding of the students' circumstances and to measure change in students' level of intercultural competence pre- and post- experience. Appendix E contains the IaH interview protocol while Appendix F contains the non-participant interview protocol. I designed the protocol for the pre- and post-

interviews similar to other studies that have been conducted in education abroad and IaH

(Alexiadou et al., 2021; Amani & Kim, 2018; Guo et al., 2021).

Interviews were conducted as synchronous videoconference interviews utilizing the

Zoom videoconferencing platform. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions

organized around certain topics aligned with this study's four research questions. See Table 7 for

some examples of interview questions organized by research questions.

Table 7

Example Interview Questions by Research Question

Research Question	Topic	Example Questions
RQ 1,2	Demographics and Story	• Tell me a bit about yourself and your background. • How did you come to be a student at Kirkwood? • How is your semester finishing off for you overall? Going well? • Tell me your story about choosing to participate in this Kirkwood experience . . . What is the experience you are about to undertake and what do you think about it?
RQ1,3,4	Impact / Motivations and Obstacles/Challenges	• Talk about any challenges you have had participating in this intercultural experience so far. Talk about any challenges you foresee. • Do you think your motivations around the experience had anything to do with you being part of the (CTE, rural, low-income, or first-generation) group? Tell me about that.
RQ 1,3,4	Impact	• Talk about what you think the impact of this experience may be on you? How will it impact you personally and/or professionally? • Tell me about your level of empathy- do you think that experience may have impacted your level of empathy? Why or why not? • Tell me your story about your IaH experience (i.e. French virtual exchange, Global Sustainability Challenge, etc.) . . . when did you participate and how did it go? Tell me about how you experienced the program.

As in the case of the previous interviews, the interview questions were designed to be open-ended to facilitate deeper insights into the students' identities and how their identities and background might influence the intercultural experience, the process of interculturality, and the impact of the experience. As the interviewer, I employed techniques of active listening and moments of silence to illicit deeper level information from the students (Spradley, 1979). Questions in the interview were modeled after the survey questions to delve more deeply into the same topics found in the survey.

Interview Coding Analysis. A similar process to that explained in the study abroad interview process was employed using in vivo codes to find emerging themes through inductive coding. I reviewed and edited each interview transcript for spelling/grammar errors and saved transcripts in a Microsoft Word format, and then performed a member check process by emailing each participant the Word document for review and verification making any edits they recommended to their transcript file.

To organize the data for analysis, transcripts were analyzed as well as re-watching of the interview video recordings. As the video was re-watched the video and the transcript compared side-by-side to the watching, in vivo codes were detected and recorded on a spreadsheet. After re-watching each of the interviews and coding the transcripts in the spreadsheet, an analytical memo was written to summarize the interview from the researcher perspective noting specific observations. The spreadsheet was then used to find emergent categories utilizing inductive coding methods.

I then reviewed each video and transcript individually taking notes to capture initial thoughts and reactions to the interview. After re-reading the transcript and re-listening to the audio file to immerse myself in the data, I wrote a separate summary of each interview, in my

own words, to analyze the content of what the participant said and create a summary document that also included my own interpretations that arose from the conversation.

Using these interview summaries and the transcripts/audio files together, I created a list of emergent themes reflecting both the participants own words, in the form of in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) extracting the in vivo codes into a master list, and my own interpretations of their thoughts. The goal in this method is to get a deeper meaning out of each participant's interview and better reflect the impact of their experiences in a more holistic way. Once the list of in vivo codes was complete, emergent themes were identified to categorize the codes in a way that made sense and combined with the earlier coding categories created for the study abroad participants.

Each of the full interview transcripts from Zoom were also uploaded into the Dedoose mixed methods software where text analysis coding was conducted and in vivo codes/categories could be assigned for producing further analytic reports. The resulting emergent themes and codes are then analyzed as a complete dataset for the group of interviews and then also analyzed as smaller groups that included specific demographic variables of interests along the LIFTR characteristics. As the text analysis and coding is completed, comparisons are made among the participants who possessed the demographic characteristics of interest to look for similarities or differences. The interview data analysis mirrored the process used in the earlier interviews for consistency.

Integrating Survey and Interview Coding

The survey and interviews are connected by similar coding and analysis. Codes found in the retrospective survey open-ended questions were also found in the interviews. Analysis of both sets of codes followed a similar procedure, beginning with a listing of in vivo codes and

then gathering like codes together to identify emergent themes. Comparisons of codes and

categories from among the three groups allowed for analysis of repeated themes in each

category. From the analysis of themes in the survey and three sets of interviews, overall themes

emerged as consistent throughout while some themes seemed more prevalent among certain

types of students.

Trustworthiness

In mixed methods research involving both quantitative and qualitative methods, it is

important to outline the trustworthiness and reliability of all of the methods. In this section, I will

outline first the applicability to the quantitative methods and then the qualitative. In quantitative

studies, it is important to establish generalizability, reliability, and validity while in qualitative

studies, it is important to establish trustworthiness as well as transferability of methods and

results.

Generalizability

This study focused on just one community college, Kirkwood, and a very specific

population who identified with the LIFTR identities. Generalizing to other community colleges

may be difficult without further studies that include more diverse sets of colleges and students.

This is a typical criticism of case studies such as this one.

Although case studies are commonly criticized in regards to generalizability (Punch,

2014), this particular case study allowed for an in-depth analysis of intercultural experiences at a

unique and not yet understood institution type, that of the community college. The case study

also allowed for uniqueness in another way, that being the type of student who is unique and not

yet understood – low-income, first-generation, technical and rural students who participate in

intercultural experiences. By analyzing enrollment data and intercultural experience data and

making demographic comparisons, it is possible to generalize the findings to other community college institutions who serve similar demographics in their student populations.

Reliability

I achieved reliability in the survey design and quantitative data analysis by including multiple question types used previously in published surveys. Utilizing the same questions ensures consistency over time or stability in the measurement of responses.

Validity

Validity was achieved through carefully considering the options for following up on the quantitative results in this explanatory sequential design. For the analysis of study abroad participation and follow up on long term impact, it made sense to select the qualitative sample from those who participated in the quantitative sample, maximizing the importance of one phase explaining another. From here the additional qualitative samples were selected to include IaH and non-participants in order to answer RQ4 and add validity to the experiences.

Trustworthiness

I used multiple methods to ensure the trustworthiness of data and consistency of findings. Trustworthiness comes from triangulating statistical, survey and interview data with research memos and member checks to confirm the correctness of the records and to make edits as needed (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In addition, member checking was utilized with the interview transcripts to ensure the credibility of the data and thus data truthfulness. To member check, transcripts of edited interviews were emailed to all participants to ensure the correct meaning was achieved and edits made accordingly. In this way the perspective of both the participants and myself were checked.

Transferability

Transferability of methods and results was achieved through the use of similar questions in the interview protocol for all three groups who were interviewed (study abroad, IaH and non-participants). This duplication of questions ensured question consistency so that comparability of responses could be measured more reliably.

Limitations

This study comes with a certain set of limitations. I chose to focus on a specific subset of community college students at one institution in an attempt to emphasize underrepresented populations in the intercultural experience body of research. Because of this small and defined subgroup of LIFTRs at Kirkwood, generalizability of the results of the study may be difficult to compare to the general population. It will however be useful to other community colleges with significant LIFTR characteristics and even perhaps community colleges who enroll students with other marginalized identities. This usefulness and relevance to other contexts is gained by asking questions to participants that are directly related to their LIFTR characteristics. Targeted questions such as these can perhaps also bring out new biases among the participants related to their demographic characteristics.

Another limitation pointed out in the earlier section of this chapter is my own personal history and current professional position as the Dean of Global Learning. Although I pointed out earlier in this chapter that this connection is not necessarily only a limitation, but also a strength, it is important to note here that my role as Dean is intricately connected to Kirkwood's mission, vision and goals and commitment to intercultural experiences for all students. I also recognize my own bias and opinion that intercultural experiences as part of higher education are inherently "good" experiences.

Another limitation of this study is the fact that the study abroad voices were retrieved from retrospective survey data versus the pre- and post- data that was gathered from current participants of IaH as well as non-participant data. Comparability of the data is therefore not exactly apropos. Study abroad experience data is reported by the students in the sample with a retrospective lens and the benefit of 2-10 years of reflection time to realize impact on their personal and professional lives. IaH and non-participant data is reported by the students in real time as they experience the intercultural experience and engage in interculturality. IaH and non-participants are therefore more focused on the here and now and not equipped with the benefit of time and years of reflection on the experience.

Another factor to be aware of is the timing of this study coinciding with a global pandemic. Due to COVID and the timing of this study's research component occurring in Spring 2021, it was impossible to conduct the personal student interviews in a format other than Zoom. The virtual environment definitely comes with its share of limitations. Zoom interviews have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that students seemed very open to discuss due to the lack of personal interactions with other human beings outside of their COVID bubble during this time. It did cause me to question whether participants were perhaps just talking to talk, because they were so hungry for someone to talk to, or whether they were truly reflecting on their interculturality. Another factor with COVID is that many people in the current COVID environment suffer from Zoom fatigue, or lack of interest in videoconferencing due to the numerous hours of our lives we are required to be on Zoom for work, school, or other factors. For both of these reasons, Zoom may or may not be conducive to achieving "real" results and/or deep thoughts.

Another limitation is that the participants who did participate in the surveys and interviews self-selected their participation and therefore may be more likely to value highly the impact of the experience on themselves. Electing to be part of the study may indicate a greater interest in discussing an experience that is valuable to them. There is conflicting research on this nonresponse bias and how results may be impacted (Hendra & Hill, 2019).

In summary, the limitations included the single institutional data, the comparative nature of the timing of intercultural experiences, COVID, and self-selection. These are all important limitations to consider as the findings and conclusions are presented in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 6: KIRKWOOD STUDENT PROFILE FINDINGS

Findings Introduction

This dissertation explores interculturality in low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students at a U.S. community college. In doing so, it is essential to explore U.S. community college student profiles and identities and how they interact with their experiences of interculturality. Interculturality is a theoretical concept requiring that identity intersectionality be acknowledged where various identities intersect and impact how interculturality is experienced (Dervin & Jacobsson, 2016). These identities are not necessarily of a national or regional origin but can be one of many diverse identities. For example, in this study, intersectional identities take the form of low-income, first-generation, technical, and/or rural students. In this way, the LIFTR acronym itself is a representation of intersectional identities. This chapter answers two of my research questions: what are the identities or profiles of community college students (RQ2) and how those students identify themselves, thus building the frames for interculturality (RQ1).

Findings are organized and presented in three chapters. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 holistically explore how community college students engage in interculturality. See Figure 6 for a visual display illustrating how each set of findings is informed by the previous set. Chapter 6 sketches the holistic picture by outlining who community college students are demographically, focusing on enrollment data from the case study institution, Kirkwood Community College. Quantitative findings analyze the full enrollment dataset at Kirkwood using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to delineate the profile of Kirkwood Community College students (RQ2), and better understand the relationship among the various community college student identities. Chapter 7 continues to provide more details by presenting the findings of a retrospective study abroad survey administered to Kirkwood students who studied abroad over the past ten years to

provide expanded profile data (RQ2) about community college students who studied abroad. The retrospective survey open-ended questions responses provide a longitudinal perspective on how interculturality impacts students' professional and personal lives addressing RQ3 and RQ4. Finally, building on the survey results, Chapter 8 presents enhanced color and texture to the holistic picture adding insights and perspectives shared from student personal interviews to discover more about the impact, RQ3 and RQ4. Impact on personal and professional lives, a difficult concept to measure, is measured through the qualitative research methods of this mixed methods study and the resulting interculturality themes that result from the coding process.

Figure 6

Presentation of Findings Visual

Kirkwood Student Profile Findings *(Ch. 6)* — informs → Study Abroad Retrospective Survey Quantitative Findings and Qualitative Themes *(Ch. 7)* — informs → Study Abroad, IaH and Non-participant Interculturality Themes *(Ch. 8)*
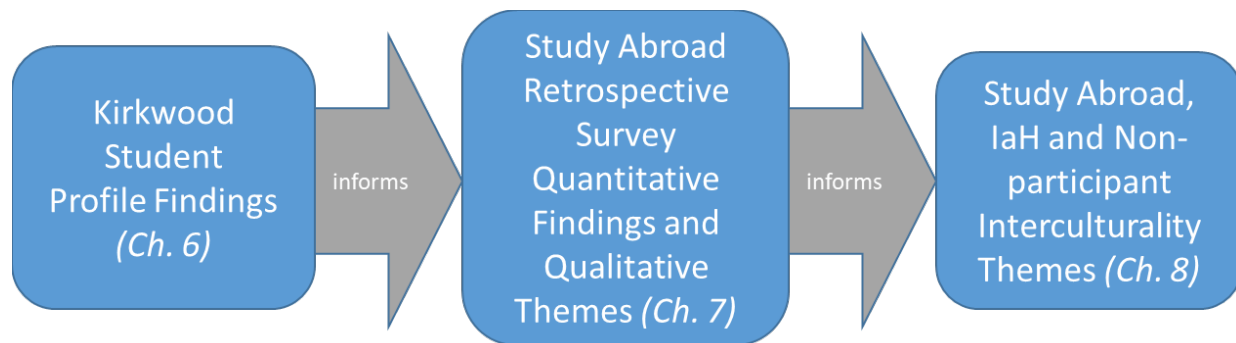
Discovering the Intercultural Community College Student Profile

The community college student profile is important to study because of the relative lack of information about this segment of students and how they are engaged in interculturality. Comprehensive data about community college students exists on a large scale from organizations such as the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) and regional reporting on community college enrollment (AACC, 2022; Varner & Gieseke, 2021). Very little comprehensive data exists about community college students who participate in study abroad (Raby & Rhodes, 2018). As I endeavored upon this search, I found it difficult to find information

on who studies abroad at community colleges. I initially reached out to a variety of community college institutions to ascertain whether I could collect multiple institutional datasets for analysis and comparison. This request of data from other institutions turned out to be much more difficult than I originally anticipated. Several colleges did not collect data, had not been tracking the information, and/or had complicated processes for requesting the data through the IRB process, etc. Therefore, it was very difficult to access broad-based community college study abroad participation data. I found some case study information and only a few studies delving into participant profiles (Raby et al., 2014; Whatley, 2018b, 2021b; Wood & Whatley, 2020). The limits of finding data were real and my goal then transformed into optimizing the data that Kirkwood possesses and delving into it as a unique dataset that contained participation data by major, by identity, and other unique identifiers that make up community college student enrollment.

Data in the Institute for International Education (IIE) publication of Open Doors (IIE, 2021) consists mainly of data from universities who send large numbers, many 1000+, on study abroad programs. Among community colleges, there is a very low reporting rate to the IIE Open Doors census. Because of this, the census contains a high proportion of elite student data in comparison and does not have specific categories for many community college study areas including technical degree areas such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) as well as areas for community college students who enroll in Liberal Arts transfer programs with no clearly defined area of study. Many community college students choose community college because they are undecided about their major. At community college, students can remain undecided for their first two years while they complete general education courses and thus be labeled "Liberal Arts Transfer". This study program, Liberal Arts Transfer, is not an option for tracking in the

data collection process. The other glaring lack of appropriate academic program categorization are those in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, such as Welding, Automotive Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Dental Hygiene, etc. In this analysis, CTE and the technical identity found in the LIFTR term are synonymous. Within the Open Doors data, it is unclear where CTE program areas such as these fit in the categories provided. My experience leading internationalization efforts at Kirkwood is that CTE students are very engaged in study abroad and virtual exchange yet I struggle to find a logical place in the IIE Open Doors data to track them in a meaningful way. This leads me to analyze Kirkwood profile data and share it in this dissertation illustrating how CTE and community college students do study abroad and the experience is relevant to their program area of study.

Hence, all the data analyzed here in Chapter 6 originates from the Kirkwood Community College case study. Kirkwood allows for a unique example because when compared to most community colleges, Kirkwood offers a higher number of study abroad opportunities and IaH opportunities. These opportunities are intentionally designed to include students from all parts of the college so tend to have a diverse student enrollment. Research shows that intentionally designed programming is effective (Blake-Campbell, 2014) and that when programs are relevant and authentic, students will participate. In past research, it has been difficult to determine if this is true for all identities, especially marginalized identities, because so much of the research documents interculturality within an elite student population setting and not from a community college setting where non-elite identities are more prevalent. Gathering quantitative data about students from identities that are not the norm for interculturality breaks new ground and offers the chance to see whether students of diverse identities will participate in interculturality if given the opportunity.

The quantitative analysis of the Kirkwood enrollment dataset provides the opportunity to better understand the community college student identities as well as to better understand each of the subsets of students who engage in interculturality as part of their higher education experience. Descriptive statistics outline a profile of community college students who participate or do not participate in intercultural experiences. The dataset used for this analysis includes the full set of enrolled students at Kirkwood over ten years. The data is divided into three groups: those who selected to participate in study abroad, those who participated in IaH activities through course enrollment, and those who did not participate in planned intercultural activities. In this comparison, the low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural (LIFTR) identity characteristics of interest are analyzed in-depth utilizing multiple statistical tools to determine the frequency and overlap of these variables for those who participated in intercultural experiences versus those that did not (RQ4).

Comprehensive Kirkwood Enrollment Dataset

This research utilizes a comprehensive Kirkwood enrollment dataset. As an administrator at Kirkwood, I have unique access to detailed and comprehensive data about student enrollment. After gaining approval from Kirkwood's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I gained access to a comprehensive institutional enrollment dataset. This large dataset includes demographic as well as enrollment data that is used for analysis to discover more about the student profile at Kirkwood. The Kirkwood comprehensive enrollment dataset includes a total of 62,022 students enrolled from 2010 to 2019. The study abroad subset includes 891 students while the IaH subset includes 256 students. The study abroad subset is substantially larger due to the longer history of study abroad at the college whereas IaH is relatively new and only in the last two years of being tracked in the student information system.

The non-participant subset includes the remainder of the students or 60,884 students who did not participate in a planned intercultural experience such as study abroad or IaH course. In the following sections, the student profile findings related to this dataset are presented based on the dataset analysis using frequency tables, chi-squared tests, and regression analysis. This dataset is important because very little participation data is widely available for this type of analysis on non-elite participants, specifically enrolled at community colleges. Previous work has examined student-level characteristics that predict participation in the four-year student population but only one other quantitative study by Whatley exists that examines participation data from students at community colleges (Whatley, 2018b). Community college student populations represent an opportunity to expand access to interculturality among diverse student populations, thus the need to better understand the profile.

Descriptive Statistics

To start the quantitative analysis of the Kirkwood dataset, descriptive statistics help describe the students' identities in terms of percentages, frequencies, and probabilities. Frequency tables, chi-squared tests, and regression analysis are utilized to better understand who community college students are, what identities they possess, and the likelihood that community college students from a range of different identities engage in interculturality.

In the descriptive statistics, it is important to note the nature of interculturality and that study abroad students selected or opted in to participate in the intercultural experience while IaH student were enrolled unbeknownst in a class that included interculturality. In other words, study abroad is a self-selected opportunity. A common complaint about study abroad research is that a biased cohort may result due to the students themselves opting in to the experience. Including Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences in this study helps lessen the impact of the self-

selection complaint to some extent in that IaH opportunities such as virtual exchange are selected

for the student by virtue of their enrollment in a particular class that happens to be taught by a

faculty who integrates intercultural experiences into their course. Students may or may not

realize at the time of enrollment in the course that an IaH component will be included in the

course. The significance of self-selection is that students essentially "opt-in" to study abroad and

take proactive steps to enroll in study abroad programming, pay for it, etc. In the case of IaH

activities, students do not necessarily opt-in explicitly to participate but rather find that the IaH

activity exists within a class in which they are enrolled. In this case, motivations for participation

may be different between those who self-selected and those who did not.

Although this study's research focus is not explicitly on the motivations for participation

but rather on the impact of the participation, motivations are important to note as they can

ultimately play a role in the outcomes of the interculturality experienced. The experience of

interculturality may differ in the case of a student who did not necessarily volunteer for the

intercultural experience but rather found themselves involved because of their course enrollment.

Frequency Table

A frequency table is a table that lists items and shows the number of times an item occurs

(Field, 2016). An intercultural experience participation frequency table is used here to illustrate

comparisons of participation by a variety of student demographic categories. By organizing the

data in a frequency table, it is possible to compare percentages by type of intercultural

experience. The table shows both the value and the percentage of times that each value occurred

(the frequency). Table 8 displays the frequency of Kirkwood student intercultural experiences

from 2010 to 2019 and indicates the frequency in percentage form for each demographic

category. Table 8 is analyzed as a) side-by-side comparison; b) study abroad to the full dataset;

c) IaH to the full dataset; and d) study abroad to IaH.

Table 8

Kirkwood Intercultural Experience Participation (2010-2019)

	Total KCC Dataset	Study Abroad	IaH	Non-participant
Number of Students	62,022	**891**	**256**	60,884
Percent of Total KCC Dataset	100%	**1.44%**	**0.41%**	98.15%
Location of High School (Rurality) Percentages				
Non-Rural	53.69%	**55.33%**	**58.98%**	53.64%
Rural	21.20%	**31.43%**	**41.02%**	20.96%
Null	24.55%	**13.24%**	**23.83%**	24.71%
Academic Program (CTE or ASH) Percentages				
Career and Technical Education	31.35%	**45.01%**	**52.73%**	31.08%
Arts, Sciences or Humanities	63.41%	**54.99%**	**47.27%**	63.63%
Demographics Percentages				
White	53.81%	**66.78%**	**71.48%**	53.57%
Non-White	22.92%	**9.65%**	**18.75%**	23.14%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	23.28%	**23.57%**	**9.77%**	23.34%
Male	49.30%	**34.46%**	**46.88%**	49.55%
Female	50.70%	**65.54%**	**53.13%**	50.50%
Under 25 Years Old	79.44%	**90.12%**	**77.73%**	79.33%
25 or Older Years Old	20.49%	**9.88%**	**22.27%**	20.65%
In-State Student	85.11%	**91.02%**	**93.75%**	85.03%
Out-of-State Student	10.37%	**7.97%**	**5.08%**	10.43%
International Student	4.51%	**1.01%**	**1.17%**	4.58%
First-generation Student	25.16%	**20.99%**	**30.47%**	25.21%
Academic Characteristics Percentages				
Full-time enrolled	28.06%	**66.11%**	**55.86%**	27.40%
Part-time enrolled	71.94%	**33.89%**	**44.14%**	72.65%
Non-degree Seeking	5.24%	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	5.34%
First-term GPA	2.99	**3.30**	**2.90**	2.97
Financial Aid Percentages				
Received a Loan	40.18%	**51.40%**	**60.16%**	39.95%
Eligible for Pell	38.50%	**43.10%**	**55.08%**	38.38%

Note. There is an overlap of 9 students who participated in both Study Abroad and IaH.

Side-By-Side Comparison

Table 8 shows a side-by-side comparison of the full KCC enrollment dataset, the study abroad, IaH, and non-participant subsets. In the following section, findings will be summarized by three sets of comparisons: first by comparing those who chose to study abroad to the total dataset, then by those who participate in IaH to the full dataset, and finally by comparing those who chose to study abroad to the subset who participated in IaH. The side-by-side comparison illustrates that community college students with diverse identities do participate in international activities and in many cases the frequency table illustrates higher percentages of likelihood to participate than one would expect based on a deficit narrative of students with marginalized identities. Those identities normally perceived as a deficit by others are challenged in these results, breaking down the idea that deficit-labelled students have a problem or that non-participation is their problem. In the sections that follow, I will highlight how each of the subsets of data (study abroad and IaH) will compare to the full dataset.

Compare Study Abroad to Full Kirkwood Dataset. The first two columns of data in Table 8 compare the study abroad subset to the full Kirkwood enrollment dataset. There are significant differences between the profile in the full dataset as compared to the profile in the study abroad dataset, especially those with LIFTR identities. The first LIFTR identity of low-income status, measured as students who identified as Pell-eligible is shown on the final line of Table 8. In the table, findings show that the frequency of low-income students in the full dataset is 38.5% of the total Kirkwood enrollment whereas, in the study abroad dataset, the frequency of low-income students was more predominant at 43.1%. The study abroad dataset had a higher proportion of low-income students than the full dataset, indicating a finding that is contrary to

the deficit narrative where perceptions indicate that low-income students are less interested and therefore less likely to study abroad.

Contrary to this low-income student frequency result, first-generation students showed the opposite result where they made up 25.16% of the total population but only 20.99% of the study abroad population. This finding indicates that there are more first-generation students in the full Kirkwood population than the proportion who study abroad.

In the next category of technical students pursuing CTE degrees, the full dataset indicated that 31.35% of students at Kirkwood are considered CTE students. Within the study abroad dataset, significantly more students, in fact 45.01% fit the criteria of CTE students. Again, this finding debunks the idea that those with a CTE identity are at a deficit.

Continuing to the fourth LIFTR identity, rural students were indicated as 21.2% of the total dataset. In the study abroad dataset, 31.43% (10.23 points higher) are rural students. This is significant because it shows a sub-set, i.e., rural students who are typically portrayed in the literature as not participating in study abroad, do participate at a significant level at Kirkwood. This finding debunks the idea that rural students are at a deficit.

Table 8 also illustrates some expected findings related to many of the other variables presented. For example, racial and ethnic data indicates that 22.92% of Kirkwood students are classified as non-white, while the study abroad dataset contains only 9.65% of non-white students, consistent with findings of other studies in the past. Gender data in Table 8 shows that 49.30% of Kirkwood's total population over ten years was male and that only 34.46% of the study abroad population was male, again consistent with the greater study abroad research data. Similarly, Kirkwood's population of under 25-year-olds is 79.44%, while in study abroad these under 25-year-olds constituted 90.12% of the total who chose to study abroad, confirming the

idea that those younger than 25 are more likely to participate than non-traditional adult students. Another variable measured was those students who came from within the state of Iowa. This result yielded that in-state students were 85.11% of the total dataset, but 91.02% of the study abroad selected group, thus more likely to study abroad than those outside of the state of Iowa.

Full-time students showed a higher likelihood of choosing study abroad according to the data showing that the full dataset included only 28.06% of full-time students while those who studied abroad were 66.11% full-time. This data is also consistent with more broad-based study abroad research studies about participation.

Table 8 contains some striking comparisons debunking prevailing deficit narratives about community college students when it comes to LIFTR identities, particularly low-income, technical, and rural students. Table 8 indicates that students at Kirkwood are more likely to choose to study abroad if they possess one of the following identities: low-income, rural, and technical. Consistent with previous research, categories such as a racial and ethnic identity of white, female gender, age under 25 years old, in-state, and full-time, and not of first-generation status all confirm that these identities are less likely at Kirkwood to choose to study abroad.

The finding seems so counter-intuitive to the deficit mindset presented in the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The deficit mindset is the perceptions of others that students of marginalized identities are not interested in and therefore do not participate in study abroad programs. Findings indicate that LIFTR students with who have been presumed in the deficit mindset to not participate in international programs, do indeed participate in international activities when afforded the opportunity by their community college.

Compare IaH to Full Kirkwood Dataset. Like the previous section, this section compares the IaH subset to the full Kirkwood enrollment dataset first focusing in on the LIFTR

categories and then other noteworthy categories collected in the dataset. See the first and third columns of data in Table 8 for the full comparison. Similar to the study abroad results shared in the comparison above, several of the comparisons illustrate a contradiction to the deficit perception many people have about LIFTR students as a whole.

The first category of LIFTRs to compare is low-income status, represented as Pell-eligible in the final row in Table 8. The frequency table shows that low-income students in the full dataset represent 38.5% while in the IaH dataset, low-income status is held by 55.081%. The IaH dataset has a much larger percentage of low-income students than the general Kirkwood dataset, illustrating again data that is contrary to the perception that low-income students do not engage in interculturality. Similarly, first-generation students make up 25.16% of the total population while first-generation students account for 30.47% of the IaH population. In this case first-generation students are more prevalent in the IaH population than in the total population. This finding is different for IaH than it was for study abroad where first-generation students are not more prevalent than the total population.

The next LIFTR category to compare is the technical or CTE students. CTE students in the full dataset include 31.35% of students while the IaH dataset contain 52.73%, a much higher proportion. Focusing in on the rural identity, the full dataset contains 21.2% who are considered rural students while in the IaH dataset, 41.02% (almost 20% higher) are rural. The finding here then illustrates that in the case of IaH, all four LIFTR categories are more prevalent in the IaH subset than is evidenced in the full dataset.

It is also interesting to examine some of the identity markers that are more prevalent in participation research overall such as race, ethnicity, gender, age and residency status. For the IaH dataset subset these percentages seem more comparable without such striking discrepancies.

Regarding ethnicity, 22.92% of Kirkwood students are classified as non-white, while the IaH dataset shows 18.75%, slightly lower than the Kirkwood general population. For gender, 49.30% of Kirkwood's total population is male while the IaH dataset shows 46.88%, again slightly lower. Considering age, students under 25 years old make up 79.44% of Kirkwood's total population while the IaH dataset shows 77.73%, again slightly lower. In-state status is indicated for 85.11% of the total dataset and 93.75% of the IaH dataset indicating a slightly higher probability of in-state students participating in IaH. One area that is significantly different is full-time enrollment status where full-time students account for 28.06% of the full dataset while the IaH dataset is comprised of 55.86% full-time students.

The IaH dataset indicates that those included in the IaH dataset are more likely to possess rural, CTE, low-income, white, female, in-state, first-generation, and full-time identity markers. It is important to note that IaH students are not necessarily choosing to participate in IaH but rather are enrolled in a course where the faculty member chooses to participate in the experience, thereby including the IaH students in their class in this dataset. This high incidence of LIFTR criteria makes this dataset a ripe one for further exploring interculturality in non-elite populations later in the qualitative findings in chapters 7-9 of this dissertation.

Compare Study Abroad to IaH. This section compares those students in the study abroad subset to those in the IaH subset, the second and third columns of Table 8. Again, in this comparison, there are notable differences between the two subsets.

In many cases, the IaH subset has higher percentages of students who possessed the LIFTR identity. The IaH subset included 41.02% rural students while the study abroad subset includes only 31.43% rural. Similarly, the IaH subset includes 52.73% technical students while study abroad was comprised of 45.01% technical students. The IaH subset includes 30.47% first-

generation college students while study abroad includes 20.99% first-generation college students.

Even the low-income identity marker is higher in the IaH subset with 55.08% represented as

low-income students whereas the low-income students represent 43.10% in the study abroad

dataset. See Figure 7 for a comparison of LIFTR identities between the study abroad subset and

the IaH subset.

Figure 7

Comparing LIFTR Identities in Study Abroad to IaH
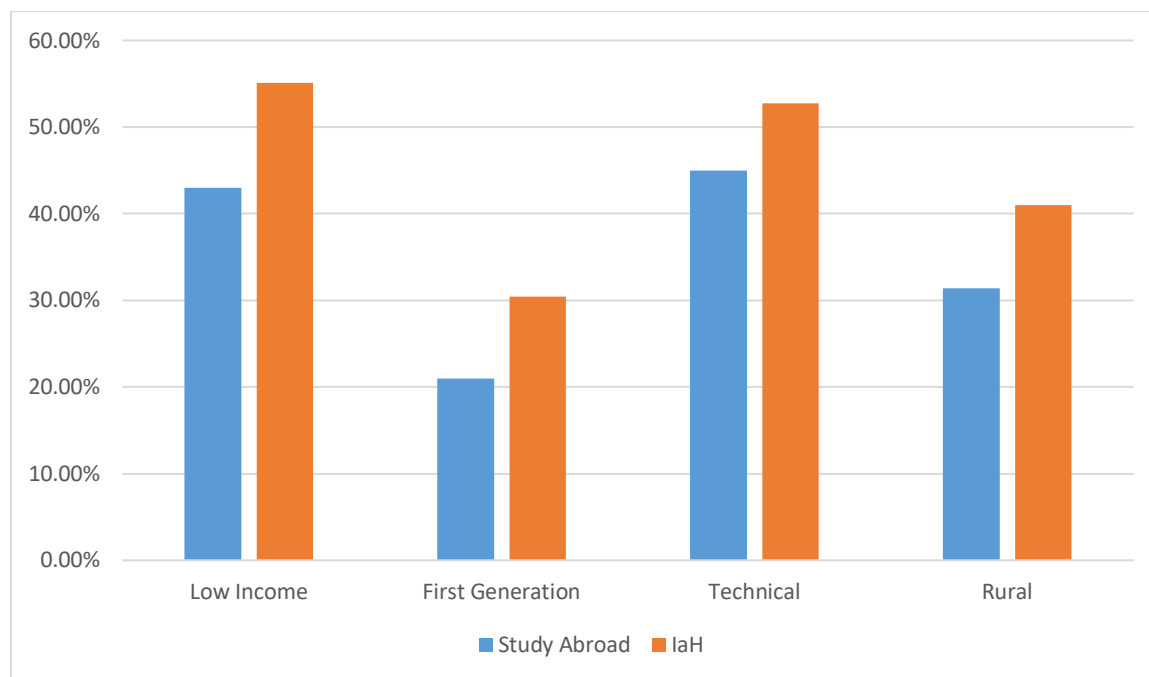
The other categories of interest include non-white students (18.75% among IaH and

9.65% among study abroad), male (46.88% among IaH and 34.46% among study abroad), over

25 years old (22.27% among IaH and 9.88% among study abroad), part-time (44.14% among

IaH and 33.89% among study abroad). It is also interesting to compare the first-term GPA

between study abroad (3.3) and IaH (2.9) subsets noting a considerably higher achieving student

among the study abroad subset. This higher GPA among study abroad participants could also be

attributed to the fact that study abroad scholarships are awarded to all students with 2.5 GPA or higher thus attracting a higher achieving student.

The takeaway from this analysis of the community college study abroad subset and IaH subset is striking. Internationalization at Home (IaH), where intercultural experiences are integrated in the community college classroom curriculum, increases the likelihood of students from marginal identities participating in interculturality. Figure 7 illustrates clearly how IaH integrated in the classroom on campus involves a higher proportion of LIFTR identities thereby providing more access to the process and impact of interculturality on campus.

LIFTR Category Comparisons and Chi-squared Analysis

Findings from the frequency table illuminate some thought-provoking results about community college student identities related to those who experience interculturality and those who do not. In this section, I delve a little bit more deeply into the comparisons of the four LIFTR identities participating in interculturality by performing a Chi-squared analysis of each of the four identity markers as well as some combinations of the identity markers. Comparisons of each identity are presented in table form along with results from a Chi-squared test further clarifying if there is a relationship between categorical variables (Field, 2016). In this study the dependent variable is participation in study abroad or IaH and the categorical independent variables being studied are the LIFTR categories including field of study (CTE or ASH), rurality, first-generation status, and low-income status. Because the descriptive statistics include several categorical variables, the Chi-squared tests are a germane test to run to determine if and to what extent these categories are correlated. Chi-squared testing compares what is expected in the data versus what is observed in the data (Field, 2016; Lund Research, 2020). All Chi-squared tests

follow the formula shown in Figure 8 where "e" represents the expected value and "o" represents the observed value.

Figure 8

Chi-squared Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Several Chi-squared tests were performed, where null values and/or unknown values were excluded from the analysis. Because of the unknown values, a test was needed to determine whether the missing values have a pattern or are completely at random. A Missing Values Analysis (MVA) was performed on the dataset. The results of Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was significant ($\chi2 = 26,034$, $p>0.05$) only for first-generation status. This finding was expected because first-generation status was the only one of the four variables that was not required for student entry and the missing data represented about 46% of the data. An additional analysis is presented at the end of this section using imputed data and I compare those results to the results I am about to present.

The four sections that follow represent each of the four LIFTR categories and corresponding Chi-squared test. Following the four independent variables being discussed, another Chi-squared test is performed on a combination of the four variables to illustrate the overlap effect or intersectionality of the identities. Considering the above discussion regarding the missing data for the first-generation status, it should be noted that all missing values for the below analysis were removed.

Low-income Students

The first LIFTR identity Chi-squared test is run on low-income students. According to the frequency table presented earlier, only 38.55% of Kirkwood students are considered to be low-income students by virtue of their eligibility for Pell grants compared to 43.10% of the students who study abroad, which indicates that if you are Pell-eligible at Kirkwood, you are more likely to study abroad than if you are not. To demonstrate this, a Chi-squared analysis was completed. Table 9 compares the percentages of low-income students at Kirkwood and those observed to be participating in intercultural experiences. IaH participation shows an even more striking difference where 55.08% of total IaH students are observed to be low-income students versus the 38.55% low income that makes up the total population at Kirkwood.

The Chi-squared analysis illustrates the Pell Eligible participation rate (1.6% observed, 1.4% expected) is significantly different ($\chi2 = 8.073$, $p = .004$) than Non-Pell Eligible participation rate (1.3% observed, 1.4% expected). In other words, the observed rate of 1.6% of the total Pell-eligible/low-income population is the actual number that were observed to participate in study abroad while if we look at the general enrollment data, we would expect only 1.4% of the total population.

The observed versus expected conclusion is important because it amplifies the debunking of the deficit perception of low-income students. The findings here show that the opposite participation trend, an anti-deficit trend, occurred even though those who perceive the low-income identity as deficit would have expected less participation. In other words, the students with the low-income identity over-performed what was expected in terms of participation rather than under-performed. Under-performance would have supported the deficit mindset while this

over-performance debunks it. In the LIFTR sections that follow, a similar debunking occurs,

except for in the case of first-generation students.

Table 9

Low-income Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total

	Expected Study Abroad Participation Rate	Observed Study Abroad Participation Rate	Observed Total Enrollment	Observed % Study Abroad	Observed % IaH Participation
Low-income Student	1.4%	1.6%*	38.55%	43.10%	55.08%
Not Low-income Student	1.4%	1.3%	61.50%	56.90%	44.92%

Note: Low-income status is derived from Pell Grant eligibility

First-generation College Students

The next LIFTR identity includes students who are considered to be in the first

generation in their family to attend college. Students that fall within the three LIFTR categories

of low-income, rural, and CTE are more likely to study abroad at Kirkwood compared to the

Kirkwood enrollment dataset. This was not found to be the case for first-generation college

students. In fact, 25.16% of the total Kirkwood population are first-generation college students

while they represented only 20.99% of the study abroad dataset (see Table 10), and this

difference was significantly different, $\chi2 = 75.899$, $p < .001$. For IaH participation, the opposite

occurred where 30.47% were first-generation college students, compared to 20.99% for the total

Kirkwood population and this difference was significant. First-generation participation rate

(1.2% observed, 1.9% expected) was significantly different ($\chi2 = 75.899$, $p < .001$) than Non-

first-generation participation rate (2.5% observed, 1.9% expected).

Table 10

First-generation Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total

	Expected Study Abroad Participation Rate	Observed Study Abroad Participation Rate	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
First-generation Student	1.9%	1.2%	25.16%	20.99%	30.47%
Non-First-generation Student	1.9%	2.5%*	74.74%	79.01%	69.53%

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Students

As stated earlier, the Kirkwood enrollment data analysis reveals that Career and Technical Education (CTE), technical students, represent 45.01% of all study abroad enrollment at Kirkwood, despite representing only 31.35% of total enrollment. The analysis highlights that Kirkwood technical students participate in international education programs proportionally more than Kirkwood Arts, Science, and Humanities (ASH) students, the type of students who traditionally study abroad (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017). Table 11 shows enrollment percentages for CTE and ASH and the comparison between observed and expected participation rates for Kirkwood students in Study Abroad and participating in Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities.

To further confirm the significance of this finding, a Chi-squared analysis illustrates how the expected count of CTE and ASH student participation compared to the observed count. Table 2 shows that CTE students studied abroad at 2.1%, .07% higher than the general student population. The expected study abroad participation rate for all students is 1.4%, shown in Table 3 Total column. This is calculated by dividing 891 total students indicated in the "Yes" column by

the 62,022 total student count to arrive at 1.4%. For CTE participation, divide the observed number

who studied abroad (401) by the CTE total number (19,462) to arrive at 2.1%, .07% higher than

the expected 1.4%, and this difference was significant, $\chi2 = 77.952$, p = .000. Appendix G contains

detailed tables related to Chi-squared crosstab results and Chi-squared test results.

Table 11

CTE Study Abroad and IaH Participation Comparison

	Expected Study Abroad Participation Rate	Observed Study Abroad Participation Rate	% of Total Enrollment	% of Study Abroad Participation	% of IaH Participation
CTE Student	1.4%	2.1%*	31.35%	45.01%	52.73%
ASH Student	1.4%	1.2%	68.64%	54.99%	47.27%

Rural Students

Similar to the CTE and low-income status findings, rural study abroad and IaH

participation mimic those results, indicating that among the total enrollment at Kirkwood only

21.2% are rural students. Strikingly among those who study abroad, 31.43% are rural and among

those who participated in IaH 41.02% are rural. To further confirm the significance of this

finding, a Chi-squared analysis illustrates that this difference was significant, $\chi2 = 19.203$, p =

.000). Rural participation rate (3.4% observed, 1.7% expected) was significantly different ($\chi2 =$

19.203, p = .000) than non-rural participation rate (1.6% observed, 1.7% expected). Rural

students are therefore more represented among those who engage in interculturality, again

debunking the deficit narrative prescribed to rural student populations. Table 12 compares the

percentages of rural students at Kirkwood and those participating in intercultural experiences.

Table 12

Rural Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total

	Expected Study Abroad Participation	Observed Study Abroad Participation	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
Rural Student	1.7%	3.4%*	21.20%	31.43%	41.02%
Non-rural Student	1.7%	1.6%	78.80%	68.57%	58.98%

Note: Rural is classified by the location of high school attended

Intersectionality of LIFTR Variables

The findings in the above four sections are organized distinctly, one LIFTR variable at a time. Each individual variable is compared against the general student population that does not identify with that individual variable. In addition to considering how each distinct LIFTR variable results in interculturality, this section considers how variables might overlap. Intersectionality is the phenomenon prescribed to overlapping identities and how that overlap may impact one's overall identity. In this section, we look more closely at how one or more LIFTR variables may impact participation. The findings indicate that possessing more than one identity actually increases the likelihood of participation.

In order to better understand the overlap of LIFTR variables, a Chi-squared test was run on all of the variables together. Students who possessed any combination of the four LIFTR categories were compared to those that did not possess any of the LIFTR categories. If students didn't fit into any of these LIFTR categories they were assigned a zero, all others were assigned a 1. Chi-squared analysis revealed that the difference between these groups was significant. The target group participation rate (5.3% observed, 2.6% expected) was significantly different ($\chi2 = 4.195$, $p = .041$) than the alternate group participation rate (2.5% observed, 2.6% expected).

Regression

The Chi-squared analysis presented in the previous section provides some understanding of how observed and expected participation in study abroad and IAH interact. To further confirm this study's findings about LIFTR students and their participation in study abroad and IaH, a regression analysis is performed next to better understand how the LIFTR categories influence participation in isolation. The first regression analysis was run on the full dataset of Kirkwood enrollment. The resulting regression model is shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Regression Model

Variable	Beta	Standard Error	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Low-income	-.388	.083	1	.000
Rurality	.648	.186	1	.000
CTE	.318	.081	1	.000
Non-first - generation	.670	.090	1	.000
Constant	-4.320	.104	1	.000

Results from the binary linear regression analysis utilize study abroad participation as the dependent variable and the four LIFTR variables as explanatory variables. The overall model was significant and explain 2.2 % of the total variance in study abroad participation (Nagelkerke R Square = .022). Non-first-generation status (B = .6702, p = .000), CTE enrollment (B = .318, p = .000), and rurality (B = .648, p = .000) were found to have a positive influence on study abroad participation while Pell Eligibility (B = -.388, p = .000) was found to have a negative influence.

The model reflects what we have seen in the past, but with such a low R square value it is not substantial. Most of the variance in students' decision to study abroad is still unexplained.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

To explain the variance more completely a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is performed next. PCA is a variable-reduction technique that aims to reduce a larger set of variables into a smaller set of variables called principal components which account for most of the variance in the original variance (Lund Research, 2020). When running the PCA, the KMO test resulted in .594 indicating that the data is suitable for PCA. The anti-image matrices showed that the measures of sampling adequacy (MSA) were above .6 in almost all cases except for cohort and study abroad participation, again indicating that the data is suitable for PCA. A rotation method was used.

The PCA extracted seven components that were greater than 1.0. Each of the seven components has been named in the seven columns illustrated in Table 14. The first column and first component represents the low-income student. The second column, technical degree, includes those components related to the student's area of study or major (i.e. Agriculture, Business Management, Construction Management) as well as an indication of what type of degree they are pursuing, specifically whether they are pursuing a CTE degree program. The third column's component is comprised of those elements that pertain to race and ethnicity. The fourth column is a combination of first-generation status and age. The fifth column is the component related to rurality, the sixth column is veteran status, and the final column is indicative of cohort meaning the year in which they participated in the intercultural experience as well as whether they participated in IaH. The PCA determined that 61.265% of the variance is

explained by these seven components. Table 14 presents the findings in the form of a pattern matrix.

Table 14

PCA Rotated Component Matrix with Seven Components

Rotated Component Matrix[a]							
	Component						
	Low-income	Technical (CTE) Degree	Race Ethnicity	First Gen	Rural	Vet	Cohort IAH
Grant (Numeric)	.880						
Pell Eligible (Numeric)	.849						
Loan (Numeric)	.692						
Major Area (Numeric)		.961					
Expected Degree (Numeric)		.960					
Race (Numeric)			.976				
Ethnicity (Numeric)			.974				
First Generation (Numeric)				-.624			
Age Group (Numeric)				.600			
Enrollment Status (Numeric)	-.435			-.542			
Study Abroad Participation (Numeric)							
Residency Status (Numeric)					-.725		
Rural, Urban, High School Classification (Numeric)					.603		
High School Type (Numeric)					.509		
Gender (Numeric)						-.704	-.326
Veteran Status (Numeric)						.689	-.436
Cohort							.612
IAH Participation (Numeric)							.593
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.							

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Studying this group of community college students and the variables that predicted whether they participated in study abroad, the main takeaway from the PCA is that a combination of seven components can explain the choice. 61.265% of the variance is explained which is considerable. The PCA results show that four of the seven components correspond

directly with the four LIFTR identities, some showing a more significant relationship than others.

The component that showed the highest level of predictability for opting in to study abroad at Kirkwood was not a LIFTR identity but rather a combination of the identities of race and ethnicity. While this study did not focus directly on race and ethnicity elements, the data does indicate strongly that racial and ethnic identities of students are the highest major predictor of participation as shown by the high numbers in the third column (.976 for race and .974 for ethnicity). Earlier in this chapter, Table 8 also confirms race and ethnicity to be a strong factor showing evidence that although 22.92% of the Kirkwood population is non-white, only 9.65% of all study abroad students are non-white. Non-white students are in the most predictable category of student for a lower likelihood of study abroad participation.

The next highest combination of predictors after race and ethnicity is a combination of major area and expected degree (Column 2). This confirms the finding in the frequency table that showed that CTE status at Kirkwood predicts a higher likelihood of study abroad. This evidence provides support that Kirkwood students in certain CTE majors are more likely to opt in to study abroad when programs are intentionally designed to align with their program major's learning outcomes. For example, agriculture CTE students are more likely to study abroad because they are CTE and agriculture, with a study abroad programming component that is specifically tailored to agriculture.

The next highest numbered component with .880, .849 and .692, is the component related to low-income status, another of the LIFTR categories of interest to this study. Following this theme of LIFTR category, the next highest component, labeled rural, is also partically comprised of a LIFTR category containing three different elements including rurality (.725), high school

classification (.509), and residence status (.725). The last LIFTR category is first-generation

student which shows a lower predictability and is combined with first-generation (-.624), age

group (.6), and enrollment status (-.542)

The PCA results displayed in Table 14 strengthen the findings from the frequency table

illustrated earlier in Table 8. Both tables indicate that some of the most significant predictors of

study abroad participation for this population of Kirkwood students, other than race/ethnicity, are

three of the four LIFTR categories. The LIFTR category that is the strongest predictor is the CTE

or technical degree objective. This category is followed by the remaining LIFTR categories: low-

income, rurality, and first-generation. These findings are contrary to the deficit narrative and

strengthen the evidence that LIFTR identities can be a predictor of study abroad participation at a

community college rather than a non-predictor. LIFTR students in this study engage in

intercultural experiences that allow for the process of interculturality. The three LIFTR

categories (all except for first-generation) are shown in this analysis to predict participation

rather than impede participation.

Regression Analysis Utilizing Imputed Data

As noted at the beginning of the comparisons section, the first-generation identity marker

has a significant number of missing values in the comprehensive enrollment dataset. The first set

of Chi-squared analysis above was run based on the SPSS software automatically removing the

null values. A Little's MCAR analysis was performed and confirms that the missing first-

generation values are not missing completely at random.

Because the values were not missing completely at random, I ran another regression

analysis utilizing imputed data to further confirm results. Imputed data was generated using the

NIPALS method. Using the imputed data, the linear regression analysis output is shown in Table

15 and Figure 9 below. In the dataset with the imputed data, it is confirmed that low income, non-first generation, technical students, as well as those with a combination of low income and CTE or a combination of rurality and CTE have a significant relationship to the dependent variable of study abroad participation. This is slightly different than the results shown in the earlier Table 13 where non-first generation status, technical status, and rurality were found to have a positive influence on study abroad participation and low-income showed a negative influence. In this model, low-income showed a positive influence. Both models support evidence that argues against a deficit narrative related to the four LIFTR characteristics, each just in a slightly different way.

Table 15

Regression Table with Imputed Data

Source	Value	Standard error	t	Pr > |t|
Pell Numeric	0.038	0.010	3.900	**<0.0001**
Ruralilty	0.003	0.010	0.324	0.746
CTE	0.063	0.011	5.788	**<0.0001**
Non_First_Gen	0.032	0.010	3.251	**0.001**
Pell_Numeric*Rurality	-0.010	0.008	-1.312	0.190
Pell_Numeric*CTE	-0.049	0.009	-5.669	**<0.0001**
Pell_Numeric*Non_First_Gen	0.000	0.010	0.033	0.973
Ruralilty*CTE	0.027	0.009	3.084	**0.002**
Ruralilty*Non_First_Gen	0.004	0.009	0.466	0.642
CTE*Non_First_Gen	-0.006	0.009	-0.658	0.511

Note. Significant P values are shown in bold.

Figure 9

Regression Results in Graphic Form
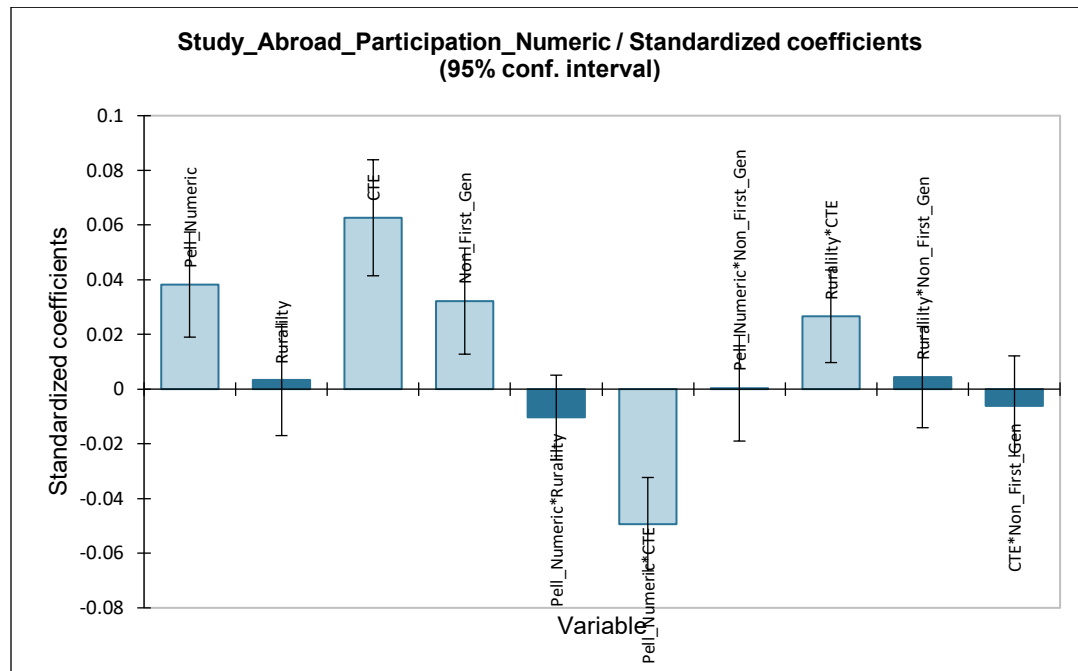
Profile Findings Inform the Survey and Interviews

As a conclusion to this chapter, it is useful to summarize the main takeaways from the extensive quantitative findings presented in this chapter. The descriptive statistics and regression analysis form a basis for informing the qualitative findings to be presented in the next two chpaters. The frequency tables, the PCA, and the regression analysis all help to form a basis for understanding the answer to RQ1 regarding the profile of community college students at Kirkwood, outlining who they are and what unique identities they possess.

Overall quantitative findings indicate that community college students possess a multiplicity of marginalized identities creating a profile of rich and varied intersectional identities. The community college student profile discovered among those engaging in intercultural experiences in this study turned out to be incompatible with the deficit perceptions many have regarding identities most likely to engage in interculturality. The profile of those

engaging in intercultural experiences at Kirkwood includes LIFTR students to a greater extent than what was expected. In fact, the profile data shows that Kirkwood LIFTR students are more likely to participate in both study abroad and IaH as part of their community college education experience than non-LIFTRs.

These findings provide evidence that more understanding is needed of students with LIFTR identities to see who they are and how engaging in interculturality impacts their personal and professional lives. Given that students of these non-elite identities are not often included in studies about interculturality, this study provides a unique opportunity to delve more deeply into their profiles, ask them to reflect on their profiles, and explore the interculturality they experienced. In the qualitative findings presented in the next two chapters, the exploration of LIFTR interculturality will be undertaken through survey data and transcripts from personal interviews. These methods of inquiry will reveal more about the process of interculturality among community college students with LIFTR identities who are participating in greater numbers at Kirkwood.

Within the survey and interviews, findings look to explore student identities more and explore the interculturality experienced by students with LIFTR identities. The quantitative findings about the profile of students help in the development of the questions for the survey and interviews. The questions are designed to be more pointed about their LIFTR identities and how students contribute these identities to their engagement in interculturality. My goal in the subsequent findings chapters is to reveal more about LIFTR student identities by directly asking students about these specific identity markers and how those identities interacted with their experience of interculturality. Questions on the survey and interviews are structured to allow for more exploration of the interculturality that occurs as well as an opportunity for conversation

about how these specific identity markers influence their capability to engage as well as their

likelihood of engaging in interculturality when offered the opportunity.

CHAPTER 7: STUDY ABROAD RETROSPECTIVE SURVEY FINDINGS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter 6, quantitative findings show that low-income, technical, and rural students (LIFTRs) at Kirkwood are more likely to participate in both study abroad and IaH. This represents a remarkable finding about community college students that is contrary to the mainstream university or four-year college intercultural experience research. The quantitative findings from Chapter 6 illustrate the unexpectedly high and engaged participation of low-income first-generation technical and rural (LIFTR) students. These results inform the development of the survey and interviews to focus specific questions on identity. Minimal comprehensive data exists about community college students who do study abroad and/or engage in interculturality (Raby & Rhodes, 2018; Whatley, 2021). Chapter 6 findings create an opportunity for distinguishing community college interculturality as exceptional and deserving of more study, particularly by investigating and gaining a deeper understanding of the identities to which community college students affiliate.

This chapter, Chapter 7, presents the overall study abroad retrospective survey findings. Findings are derived from the survey distributed to all Kirkwood students who studied abroad during the time period of 2010-2019. The survey's goal is to collect data to analyze long-term impact and the students' stories of interculturality. Note that this chapter's findings are exclusively about education abroad impact and story rather than Internationalization at Home impact. The survey was designed only for study abroad participants.

Figure 10

Presentation of Findings Visual
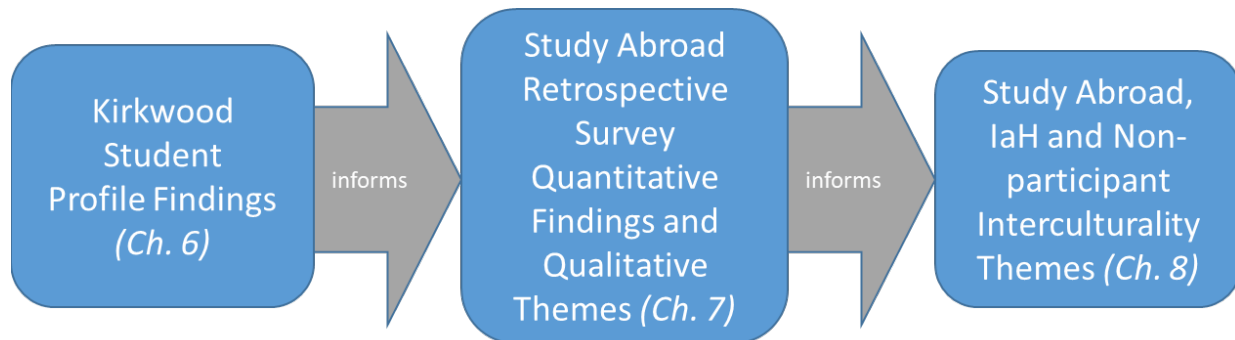
As shown in Figure 10, Chapter 8 will subsequently provide more depth to this story

through the analysis of interviews conducted with both study abroad and IaH students. The

purpose of Chapter 7 is to illustrate the impact that study abroad experiences have on community

college students over time. This impact addresses the over-arching research question (RQ1) of

this dissertation about the experiences of U.S. community college LIFTR students who have the

opportunity to engage in interculturality. The survey also informs an answer to RQ3 and RQ4

about the impact of intercultural experiences on US community college students both in the

short- and long-term. The survey instrument itself is available for detailed review in Appendix A.

Findings presented in this chapter include both the quantitative (descriptive statistics) and

qualitative findings from the survey. Findings from each of the survey questions are presented as

a whole, and then also identified by LIFTR category. From these findings, it is then possible to

analyze whether the full set of survey responses are different than LIFTR responses. This

provides some interesting comparisons between LIFTRs and non-LIFTRs.

This chapter presents the survey's quantitative results and the qualitative results. The

quantitative results include five sections. The first section presents findings about participants'

self-identification with the LIFTR characteristics. Their self-reported responses about LIFTR

identities validate the dataset. The second section reports on prior and subsequent travel abroad, followed by the third section about their current employment and education level. The final two sections include a self-report of whether study abroad was a meaningful experience and a self-report on how the experience impacted them on several aspects of their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The qualitative results of the survey include findings about students' motivations and subsequent personal and professional impact. Several qualitative, open-ended questions were asked in the survey that allowed students to elaborate on their experiences of interculturality. Student responses are presented as excerpts from their surveys and responses are identified by students' anonymous ID.

Survey Respondents by LIFTR Category

The survey respondents totaled 190 individual responses out of a total of 847 surveys distributed. This represented a 22.43% response rate. Of the respondents, 53.74 % indicated they were willing to participate in a personal interview in the future. Follow up interview findings providing even more qualitative data on the long-term impact of the experience are included in Chapter 8.

In order to determine which of the 190 survey respondents identifies with one of the four LIFTR categories for comparison, this study relied on both information from the student information system reported in the large enrollment dataset and on self-reported responses from the survey and interviews. This is one way the quantitative results informed the qualitative questions asked on the survey. The first survey questions on the survey asked students to self-identify as a low-income student, a student from a rural community or a first-generation college student in order to validate the data from the dataset. This question was phrased as follows:

When you were a student at Kirkwood, did you consider yourself (check all that apply):

low income – eligible for Pell grand and/or total family income below $50,000, from a

rural community of small town under 20,000 people in population, and first generation –

first in your family to attend college.

To this question, 38.89% self-reported themselves as low-income students or eligible for Pell

grant and/or total family income below $50,000. For the next category, 38.89% were from a rural

community or small town under 20,000 people in population. The first-generation college

student was claimed by 22.22% of the total respondents. The final category of CTE was not

determined by self-report but instead by the data from the Kirkwood dataset, indicating that 88 of

the 190 respondents or 46% were from CTE fields of study and 54% were from Arts Sciences

and Humanities (ASH) fields of study.

Table 16 compares the three categories of self-reported membership by the respondents

to the information from Kirkwood's student information database related to these same

categories. According to Kirkwood's student information on this same group of students, 95 out

of the total of 190 were tagged as Pell eligible or 50% compared to the 38.89% who self-reported

on the survey question, indicating that students self-report rate was lower than actual financial

aid information. Those who met the USDA characteristic of rural according to the Kirkwood

dataset was 21% while 38.89% self-reported as rural, indicating that students self-report a higher

rate of rurality than those tagged on the Kirkwood dataset according to rural high school

attendance. First-generation data seemed a bit closer where 22% self-reported and Kirkwood's

dataset indicated a slightly higher result of 25% first-generation college student. The survey did

not ask students to self-report technical degree status relying on the Kirkwood dataset report of

31% of those surveyed having studied in a technical degree category.

For the purposes of comparing the total group responses to those in each category, individual records were flagged in the dataset whether they self-identified or met the criteria of the demographic in the dataset in order to represent the largest possible number of students who identify with these groups. Table 16 summarizes this information for perspective.

Table 16

Survey Respondents by LIFTR Category

LIFTR Category	% of Study Abroad Survey Respondents self-identifying	% tagged in Kirkwood Dataset	% used for comparison
Low Income	38.89%	50%	50%
First Generation	22.22%	25%	25%
Technical (CTE)	NA (no self-report)	31%	31%
Rural	38.89%	21%	38.89%

Quantitative Survey Responses

This section of the findings explores the quantitative results of the survey comparing the full dataset result to the results found in the specific LIFTR category subsets. These questions include responses about prior and subsequent travel abroad and highest education level completed in order to better understand the community college student profile. These categories are important to analyze because there is often a misconception or stereotype that community college students, especially those with LIFTR characteristics, have not traveled or do not travel after their course of study. This study seeks to challenge stereotypes that exist in the literature advancing a deficit perspective that suggests that students lacking money, social capital, etc. are

somehow less able to participate in study abroad (McKay & Devlin, 2016; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Whatley, 2021a). The survey seeks to support the research that validates efforts to breakdown this deficit mindset (Amani & Kim, 2018; R.L. Raby, 2019).

In addition to breaking down stereotypes and supporting an anti-deficit perspective, the next section of the findings presents responses from students about how meaningful the experience was to them. Survey results include self-reported ratings of impact on a variety of statements. This section directly addresses the answers to RQ1, 3 and 4, seeking to better understand the impact of the intercultural experiences for those who have an opportunity to engage in interculturality. The survey sections related to prior and subsequent travel abroad, highest education level achieved, meaningful experience, and impact self-report are detailed out in the four sections that follow.

Prior and Subsequent Travel Abroad

The question about previous travel asks survey respondents if they had traveled abroad prior to studying abroad at Kirkwood. I asked this question because in my experience as a practitioner of over 25 years, I have noticed a shift in experience with travel. In previous generations of students, I encountered many students who were without passports or travel experience. In the recent decade my personal experience has changed. When talking to students, I have noted that many of them do have travel experience and/or keen interest in other cultures or travel. In fact, many of them have told me they themselves originate in another country and/or lived in another country for a period of time. The deficit narrative was being negated in my personal experience with community college students and I wanted to ask this question on the survey in an attempt to negate that deficit narrative and recognize the existing interculturality of community college students.

Figure 11 illustrates the results showing that 55.66% of the total respondents had traveled abroad before their Kirkwood study abroad experience while 44.34% had not. LIFTR category responses indicate that 53.45% of low-income students had not traveled abroad before. 46.48% of first-generation students had not traveled abroad before and 50.46% of rural student had not traveled abroad before. The largest differential for comparison indicated that 56.12% of CTE students had not traveled abroad before. It is noteworthy that all four LIFTR categories were higher in percentage than the overall survey respondents, indicating that community college students with a LIFTR status are less likely to have traveled abroad than those without LIFTR status. Although LIFTRs, as a group, travel less, it is noteworthy to point out that they do travel. Deficit-thinking often lends the perspective that those of disadvantaged identities do not travel where here findings illustrate that over 50% do indeed travel and therefore do indeed have past experience with other places and cultures.

For a longitudinal perspective on how the experience may have impacted subsequent travel in the two to ten years since studying abroad, respondents were asked a question about whether or not they had traveled abroad since they studied abroad at Kirkwood. Figure 9 summarizes the results showing 59.03% of the total respondents have traveled abroad since studying abroad while 40.57% have not traveled outside the US since studying abroad. Of CTE respondents, 54.84% have not traveled outside the US since studying abroad, significantly more than the 40.57% of the total dataset. With regard to the other LIFTR categories, percentages were very close, only slightly higher, than the full dataset's 40.57% number. Data showed that 42.02% of the low-income students, 42.03% of the first-generation college students and 42.03% of the rural respondents have not traveled outside the US since studying abroad. These numbers indicate that CTE students who studied abroad are less likely than other Kirkwood study abroad

students to travel abroad after attending Kirkwood. The other LIFTR categories were more similar to the overall dataset than the CTE. Findings here indicate that subsequent travel is almost as likely for low-income, first-generation, and rural students but clearly less likely for CTE students.

Figure 11

Survey Respondents Indicating No Prior or No Subsequent Travel Abroad
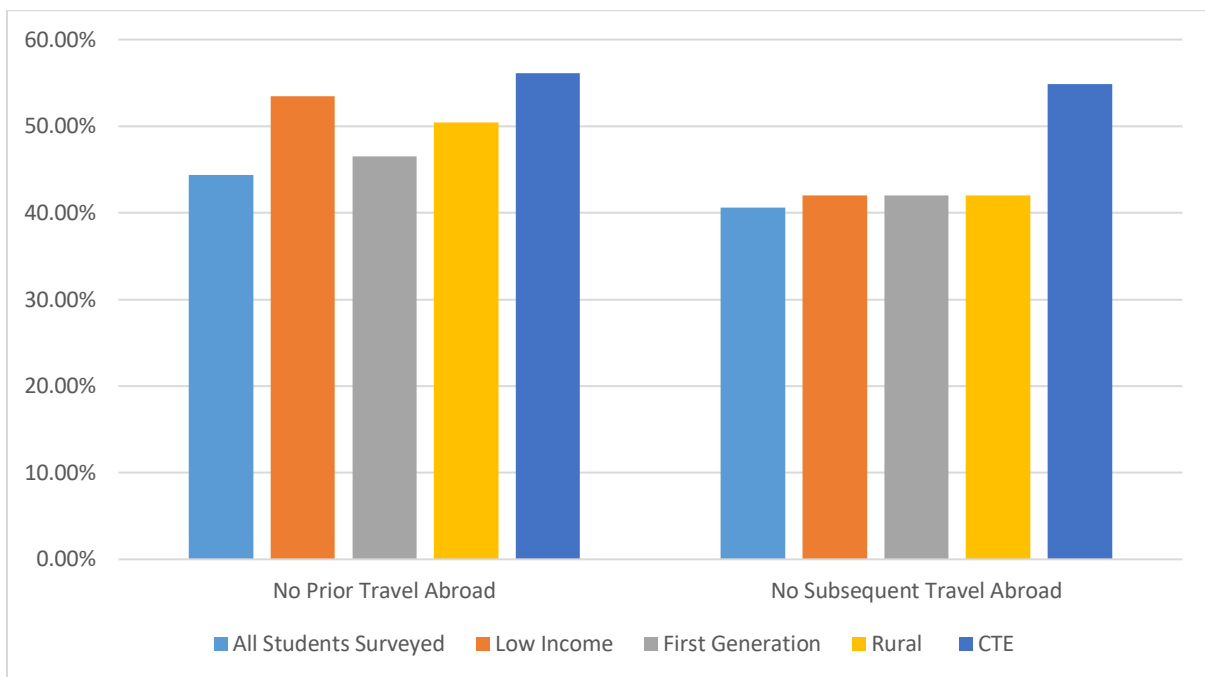
Highest Education Level

The survey next asks participants, "What is the highest level of education you currently hold?" I include this question on the survey to gauge how many of the students since studying abroad choose to continue their education and also to see how many achieved the Associate's 2-year degree as their highest level of education. If the Associate's degree was their goal and they sought no additional educational experience after Kirkwood, then it would be accurate to

conclude that their only opportunity for an education abroad experience in college existed in the community college setting (Raby, 2008; Raby & Valeau, 2007).

Figure 12 summarizes the results showing that the largest percentage, 44.71% self-reported that they had completed the associate degree as their highest degree, indicating that for 44.71% of the Kirkwood students who studied abroad, community college was their only higher education experience. The second largest grouping indicated that 28.24% completed a bachelor degree as their highest degree earned. The next category of master and doctoral degree completion included only 3.53% of the respondents.

Figure 12

Highest Level of Education Currently Held
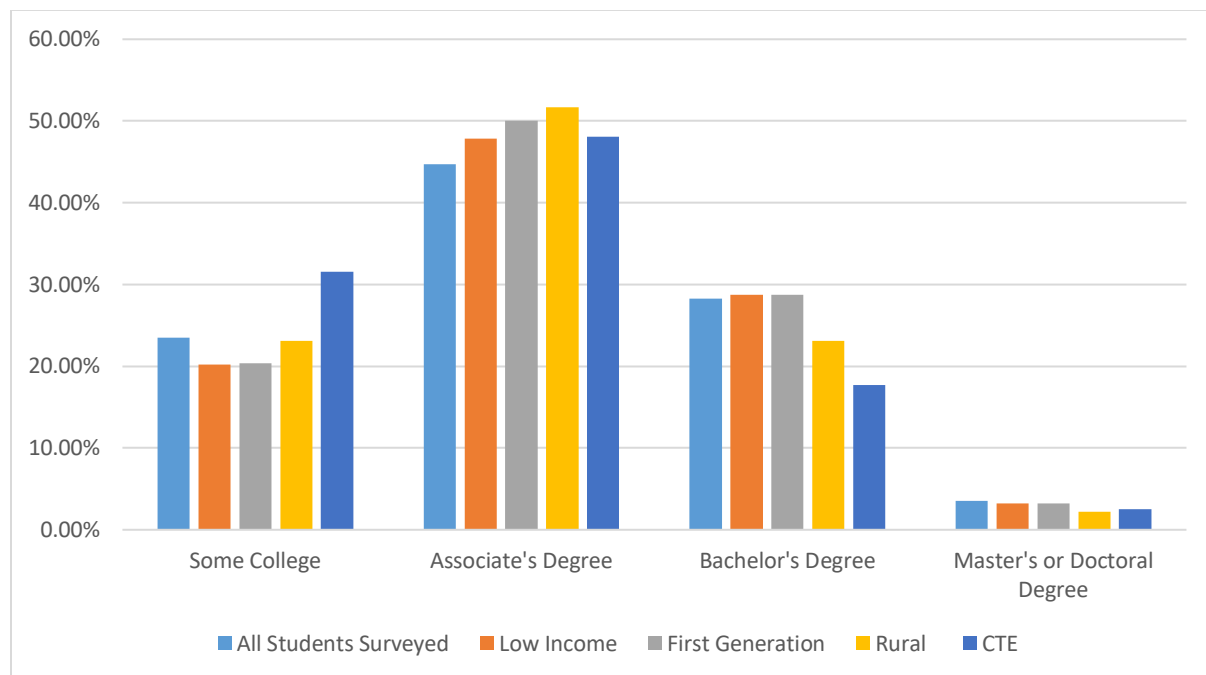
This finding about associate degree being the highest degree of education obtained is more likely exhibited in respondents with LIFTR characteristics. For example, among low-income respondents, 20.21% indicated some college, 47.87% indicated associate degree, 28.72% indicated bachelor, and 3.19% indicated master. Among respondents who were first-generation

students, 20.37% indicated some college, 50% indicated associate, 24.07% indicated bachelor

and 5.56% indicated master. CTE respondents included 31.65% who indicated some college,

48.1 % associate, 17.72% bachelor, and 2.53% master. Finally, the rural respondents indicated

23.08% some college, 51.65% associate, 23.08% bachelor and 2.2% master.

The takeaway from this section about highest level of education achieved is illustrating

how important it is to offer education abroad to LIFTRs at the community college level since

community college will likely be their highest level of education earned. Over 70% of those who

possess a LIFTR identity will not go on to a bachelor's degree at a university for another

opportunity to study abroad. Community college is their chance.

Meaningful Experience

I also wanted to ask in the survey about the level of meaning that students attributed to

their study abroad experience as part of their education. Study abroad has been labelled and

primarily accepted as a high impact practice in education and one that correlates with academic

success (AIFS Foundation & IIE, 2018; Raby et al., 2014; Twombley et al., 2012; Whatley &

González Canché, 2021). The significance of asking community college students about the

meaning they attributed to the experience was to measure to some extent the level of high impact

it had on them both personally and professionally. I wanted to collect student voices and stories

to determine how important interculturality was to community college students' educational

experience overall and utilize their voice and impact data to accentuate the importance of

including interculturality opportunities at the community college.

Results of the question clearly indicate overall agreement with the statement that study

abroad was the most meaningful experience of their community college education. The survey

showed that 68.03% strongly agreed and 17.01% agreed, a very high rating. LIFTR responses

were similarly split with low-income respondents indicating 65.85% strongly agreed and 19.51%

agreed, first-generation respondents indicating 70.83% strongly agreed and 20.83% agreed.,

technical respondents indicating 64.29% strongly agreed and 18.57% agreed, and finally rural

respondents 71.95% strongly agreed and 13.41% agreed. I was intrigued that first-generation

respondents showed the strongest level of agreement where 91.66% either agreed or strongly

agreed with this statement. This is intriguing also because first-generations students were found

to be the least likely of the four LIFTR groups to participate in study abroad, yet the group that

found it the most meaningful when they did. This survey response indicates to me that first-

generation students, although less likely than their counterparts to select study abroad, as

evidenced in both the quantitative findings in Chapter 6 and the survey responses, are the ones

most impacted by the participation. Figure 13 illustrates the responses more clearly.

Figure 13

Most Meaningful Experience of Education
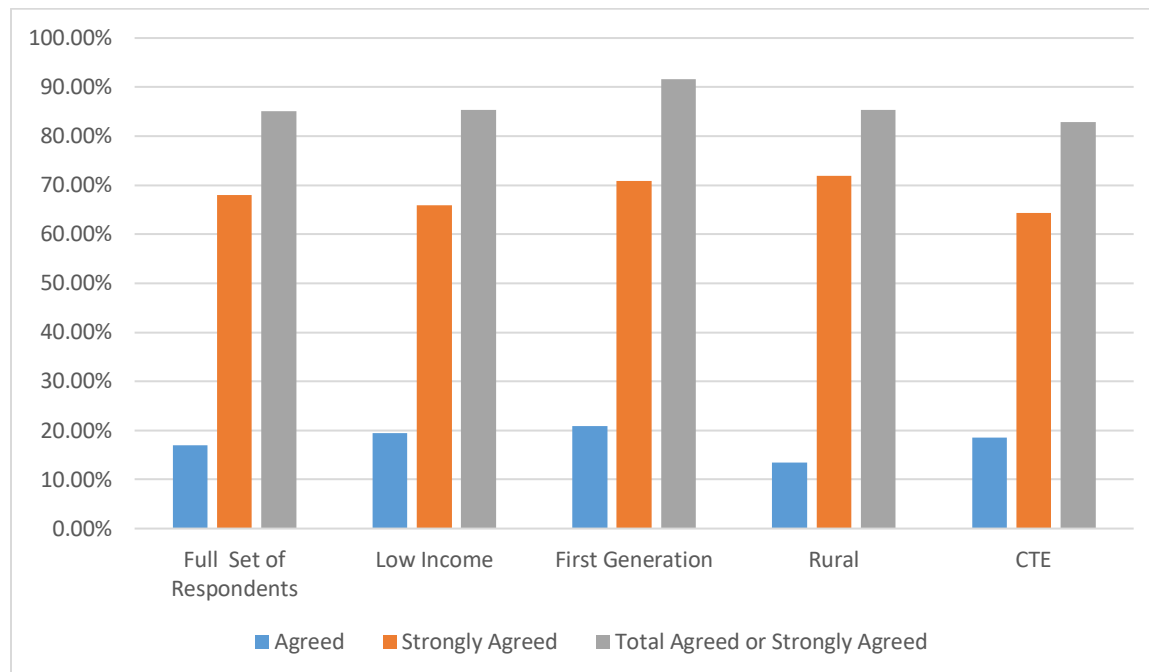
Impact Self-Report

In order to dive more deeply into the question of impact in the long term (RQ3), several survey questions addressed how participation in study abroad made an impact on respondents. I wanted to better understand the long-term impact on all community college participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The impact statements were developed from past surveys that had been conducted on long-term participants so as to provide a comparison to past research. Although self-reported data can sometimes be suspect, the subsequent interviews probe a bit deeper into the self-reported statements for additional evidence of impact. Respondents were given a Likert scale to rate their agreement with a variety of statements. Table 17 illustrates the findings in percentages of agreed and/or strongly agreed for the series of impact statements, with several of them having a combined total of "% Agreed" and "% Strongly Agreed" totaling over 90%. Those highly rated (above 90%) indicated that their participation in study abroad contributed to the following statements: "My knowledge about another culture", "A better understanding of myself and my values", "My ability to accept differences in other people" and "My ability to be more flexible and open-minded".

The rating about knowledge of another culture was the highest at 95.33% indicating that the study abroad students felt the most strongly about gaining cultural knowledge. The second highest rating of a better understanding of self indicates a higher level of self-awareness was the next highest impact. The third one of accepting differences in other people seems to indicate a better understanding and appreciation for diversity. Finally the fourth highest rating of being more flexible and open-minded indicates an increase in these specific attributes, which are both on the list of desirable soft skills. In summary, the top four ratings of impact show that students highest level of impact (90% range or above) come in the form of knowledge about other

cultures, self-awareness, appreciation for diversity, and increased flexibility and open-

mindedness. The second tier of ratings in the 80% range, which is also quite high, includes an

increase in self-confidence, adaptability in a diverse workplace, tolerance of ambiguity, desire

for diverse friendships, independence, and interest in world events.

Table 17

Self-reported Impact Statements

Please rate your agreement with the following statements: My participation in Kirkwood Study Abroad contributed to:	%Agreed	%Strongly Agreed	%Agreed or strongly agreed
My knowledge about another culture	33.33%	62%	95.33%
A better understanding of myself and my values	30.41%	61.49%	91.9%
My ability to accept differences in other people	22.97%	68.92%	91.89%
My ability to be more flexible and open-minded	21.48%	69.13%	90.61%
My sense of confidence in new situations or when meeting new people	28.86%	59.73%	88.59%
My ability to adapt in diverse workplace environments	30.41%	58.11%	88.52%
My tolerance of ambiguity in a variety of situations	31.54%	56.38%	87.92%
My desire for more diverse friendships and social networks	32.89%	55.03%	87.92%
My ability to be independent	21.48%	61.76%	83.24%
Developing my awareness of political, economic or social events around the world	29.33%	53.33%	82.66%
My desire to further my education	30.41%	48.65%	79.06%
The importance I place on working in a field that I find interesting	27.03%	50.00%	77.03%
My ability to formulate my career goals and clarify my professional aspirations	29.05%	35.14%	64.19%
Developing skills and intercultural competencies which contributed to obtaining my first job after graduation	26.35%	37.84%	64.19%
My desire to be active in my local community	31.76%	31.76%	63.52%
My choice of college major	26.17%	26.17%	52.34%
My choice of field of employment	22.97%	26.35%	49.32%

Qualitative Survey Responses

The survey design includes many opportunities for open-ended comments and elaboration so that the community college students' engagement in interculturality could be better understood. In this section, findings are presented about the open-ended questions. There are three main sections to the survey that included responses to open-ended questions. These three sections were about motivations, job and career status, personal impact and professional impact. In the findings that follow, participants are referred to by their anonymous participant number (i.e. P42, etc.).

Motivations

Because study abroad participants at Kirkwood self-select into a study abroad program thus making a conscious choice to participate, it is important to understand the reasons or motivations behind that choice. There has been an extensive amount of research conducted on the motivations to study abroad. There are even some studies that show significantly less motivated students who hold marginalized identity characteristics such as LIFTRs. (Salisbury et al., 2009).

To this end, the survey asked study abroad participants from the past ten years to reflect on the following open-ended question "What were your motivations/reasons for studying abroad?" Respondents submitted open-ended responses which were imported into a software program, Dedoose, for coding and analysis. Responses were coded utilizing an in vivo coding method to capture the exact words of the respondents. A total of 153 excerpts were coded resulting in a total of 302 codes. The 302 codes were then grouped into the following categories and frequencies calculated as shown here in Table 18.

Table 18

Open-Ended Responses to Motivations

Category	# of Incidents
Learn Culture	67
Cultural differences	55
Personal Growth	34
Opportunity/Once-in-a-Lifetime	31
Career Interest	27
Out of Comfort Zone	23
Make Friends / Meet People	13
Help People/Service	11
Kirkwood Process	8
Heritage	6
Adventure	4
Broaden World View	4
Experience	4
Travel with Friends	4
Fun	2
See the World / Desire to Travel	2
Academic Credit	1
Affordable	1
Challenge	1
Country Specific Interest	1
Faculty	1
Language	1
Recommended by others	1

Table 18 illustrates the themes that emerged from the motivations open-ended survey included several common motivations noted in the literature about other study abroad participants. The most common coded responses included a desire to learn about other cultures and experience cultural differences. In line with the theme of learning culture, P136 shares "I wanted to travel and learn more about other cultures while also gaining college credits" or even more specific, P112 shares motivations included "wanting to go to a different country, learn about different cultures, trying new foods and meeting new people". P98 shares motivations in

this way "I love learning about other cultures, and what better way to learn than being immersed in other culture."

There were over 30 excerpts coded as "personal growth" or the desire to grow as a person. An example excerpt from P69 shares "I knew it would be a great way to push myself out of my comfort zone to grow academically and personally." An additional 31 excerpts indicated directly that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for them. In other words, if they did not participate now, they may not get the opportunity again. P81 expresses it this way, "If I didn't study abroad I was probably never going to see a foreign country."

Findings also indicated that several students were motivated to participate due to a desire to "help" people or a desire to improve their career opportunities. P19 says "I liked the opportunity to help those in poverty." P17 shares "My biggest motive to study abroad was my love for travel and help people! It is nice to see the world and gain new experiences and being able to do all that while giving back to the local community was amazing!" Other notable categories include a desire to step outside of their comfort zone, broaden their world view, experience the world, and have fun travelling with friends.

Overall these findings confirm what previous studies have found about the motivations of community college students, low-income students, or students identifying with other marginalized identities. Those studies found that students are highly motivated and want to maximize any opportunity to learn about culture and experience something of value (Amani & Kim, 2018; Barone, 2021; Perkins, 2020). Most importantly, these findings confirm that community college students, including LIFTR community college students, are motivated to study abroad, are interested in other cultures, and desire the opportunity. This finding debunks the deficit narrative that indicates that LIFTR community college students do not have an interest

and/or are not motivated to engage in intercultural experiences. Of course, there are always

students who do not opt in to study abroad. Those students' experiences will be explored more in

Chapter 8 where the interview portion of the findings where non-participant as well as IaH

LIFTRs will be interviewed about their interests and/or motivations to engage in intercultural

experiences.

Professional Impact

Several of the open-ended survey questions addressed the professional impact that study

abroad had on the participants. To this direct question about professional impact, responses were

coded to find themes. Those themes are shown here in Table 19.

Table 19

Professional Impact Themes

Category	Number of Incidents
People skills	37
Career direction or selection decisions	13
Travel skills	12
Broader view	11
Career advancement opportunities	9
Improved communication	7
More confidence	7
Diverse work environment	6
Learned knowledge	6
Aspirations increased	4
Improved worldview	4
Learned cultural differences	4
Better teamwork collaboration skills	3
More flexibility and open to change	3
Self-awareness	3
More risk taking	2
Real world experience	2

The professional impact themes show that community college students benefit broadly

from the people skills they gain, notably communication skills and confidence. They also benefit

from an improved ability to select an appropriate career direction, skills to travel in the future

and a broader view overall of the world and their employment prospects/career advancement.

In addition to the general open-ended question addressing professional impact directly,

several additional questions on the survey focused on professional impact by asking about job

type, about how they experience interculturality in their current job, and about how the study

abroad experience impacted their career impact and career direction. The following three

sections will explore the survey responses in these three areas.

Job Type

In my experience working at a community college, the story is always told about how

community college graduates and alumni tend to stay in their local communities and that their

training and education at the community college prepares them to meet community needs. For

this reason I wanted to explore exactly what type of jobs Kirkwood study abroad alumni are

currently engaged in and how they are contributing to local community needs. Questions related

to job and career status were asked in detail because of the importance study abroad participation

has shown in the research in terms of employability skills (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017). It is

recognized that community college students, especially CTE students, are likely to work in

different types of jobs than 4-year college graduates upon completion of their degrees. It is also

recognized that community college students are more likely to stay in their home community

upon completion of their degree.

This survey explored more about the relationship of the study abroad experience

specifically to those types of jobs that CTE and community college students tend to have. To this

end, the first open-ended career-themed question asked: "What is your current job?" The

findings of these open-ended responses were organized and coded by job type utilizing the

International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) (International Labour

Organization, 2017). The eleven major groups included in the ISCO-08 are managers,

professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerical support workers, services and

sales workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers,

plant and machine operators and assemblers, elementary occupations, and armed forces

occupations. Table 20 lists the frequency of responses for each ISCO code.

From the table, findings indicate that study abroad alumni were most often currently

employed in jobs that were classified as professional, services and sales workers, and technical

and associate professionals. Some were still students and some were working as clerical support

workers.

Table 20

ISCO Codes (All derived from ISCO except Category 0)

Category	Description	Frequency
0	Student or Volunteer	20
1	Managers	12
2	Professional	38
3	Technical and Associate Professionals	25
4	Clerical Support Workers	16
5	Services and Sales Workers	31
6	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	4
7	Craft and Related Trades Workers	7
8	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	2
9	Elementary Occupations	3

Interculturality in Current Job

The next survey question asked whether their current career requires interaction with

individuals that are from a different culture. Without using the word "interculturality", this

question essentially asked study abroad alumni to reflect on how their current job had the

potential to involve interaction with people from different cultures. In essence this question aims

to explore whether study abroad alumni's current jobs allowed them to engage in interculturality as part of their job. The responses indicated that 79.29% of study abroad alumni indicated that their job did to some degree or to a large degree. Respondents were asked to elaborate on their responses to this question resulting in 129 excerpts elaborating on their job and how they interact with individuals from other cultures. Open-ended responses to the question were coded and two primary themes emerged. The first theme was that their job involves interactions with people of other cultures and the second is that their living environment or community has a high level of diversity.

The most common theme overall was that their current job and/or jobs since studying abroad required interaction with people of all backgrounds. This interaction was cross-cutting across many job types and often described interactions with customers, patients, students, and/or clients but also with co-workers and colleagues. A few excerpts illustrating this theme include P166 who shares that "Every day I come into contact with forty or so people who all come from different cultures…" and P165 who shares that "I work at an elementary school that represents many countries, with families that speak more than 20 different languages and the minorities make up over two thirds of the population." P121 shares that "I check in people of all ethnicities at the front desk" while P72 indicates that "I install appliances at people's house and that means I run into very different individuals of different national culture." P12 shares that "I assist participants all across the world with their retirement account questions."

Clearly, respondents were regularly in environments or communities that are multicultural and diverse, often indicating explicitly a need for multilingual skills. There were several excerpts that represented this theme including the following examples when P155 shares that "We have a large diversity in the town I live in. Some people only know some English."

And P3 shares that "I work in a town where English is not the common language and more than 5 languages are spoken in the town."

Career Impact and Career Direction

The next question drives at RQ3's question of impact on students' professional lives by asking the study abroad participants "To what degree did your study abroad experience help your career and/or career direction?" I felt it very important in the survey to gauge long-term career impact with this unique set of study abroad alumni who are already in the workforce, many in our local community. To assess impact on career was vital to better understand the impact that study abroad has on community college students long-term.

The responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive where 27.81% indicated it helped to a large degree and 47.34% indicated it helped to some degree. An open-ended question asked respondents to elaborate on their answer in order to get a more qualitative perspective on the specifics of why they thought this to be true and students shared a considerable amount of qualitative perspective.

To analyze these responses, responses were coded and analyzed for themes and six predominant themes emerged. The six themes were that students gained employability attributes desirable in the workplace, that the study abroad experience affirmed or changed participants' career direction, that experiencing interculturality opened up options in their career of which they were otherwise not aware, that students learned skills directly applicable to career, that they gained employment specifics that helped with their resume/interview skills to acquire a good job in the first place and that the study abroad experience actually gave them a desire and/or ability to travel and/or work internationally. Each of the six themes is highlighted in the sections that follow sharing some specific excerpts from student survey responses.

Gained Employability Attributes. The first of the six themes about career and career direction that emerged indicated that study abroad participants made gains in employability personal attributes that respondents. These attributes included self-awareness, communications skills, the ability to adapt and compromise, confidence, collaboration, relatability, and respect. The following excerpts exemplify this theme. P95 shares that "Throughout my career as an advocate for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, I have utilized the profound experiences I had while studying abroad to be a mindful, inclusive, and culturally competent advocate as I provide services to a wide array of communities." P90 states that "it helped me improve my communication, collaboration, and professionalism skills that I can use in any aspect of life."

Affirmed or Changed Career Direction. The second of the six career impact themes is about career direction and choices about their future careers. Study abroad alumni share in their responses in this second theme that the study abroad experience served to either affirm their career choice or completely change their career choice. Often respondents indicate they clarified their direction in life or future education such as this excerpt from P159 who shares that "Gaining a clearer picture of how the world really is, with all its injustices and inequalities, was part of my motivation to pursue a law degree." Another example shared in the case of P141 who shares "I was still trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. During my trip we worked with other students on a seat belt marketing campaign for Australia's version of the department of transportation. After seeing the presentations and going on the trip it confirmed my decision to go into Public Relations/Marketing." P109 shares "It made me very interested in global health, which is what I'm now studying" P97 states that "Visiting marketing agencies abroad and sampling daily work made me add marketing as a second major and is influencing my upcoming internship." P94 states "I got to build a house while abroad, so that sparked my

interest in architectural technology." P82 states "I found out that I can lead with my intellect. I am now interested in medicine." P76 states "It made me realize even more that I want to work within the agriculture industry." P59 says "I changed my major after studying abroad and decided I wanted to get a bachelors in an area I was passionate about, rather than get out of college fast and make money."

Opened Up Career Options. The third of the career themes is related to how the experience brought to light that they have options they did not previously recognize. Survey responses clearly illustrated how studying abroad opened up options other than just one, broadened the perspective etc. "I always thought I wanted to own a bakery, but studying abroad has showed me the endless possibilities my career path has to offer. It showed me to travel the world, figure out who I want to be and what I want to do with my life, you can always come back and start a business." (P132) "It helped me open up, as well as helped me explore opportunities I would not have." (P73)

Learned Skills Directly Applicable to Career. The fourth of the career themes is related to how they acquired necessary career-relevant skills during the intercultural experience itself. Survey responses shared very specific skills that were developed through the intercultural experience that were directly applicable to their career. The following excerpt from P166 indicates how study abroad provided strategies and behaviors that are needed in the environment where they currently work: "That is no different from what I do at work now. When the pressure gets going, I can't walk away from my job. I have to learn and adapt and compromise. I have to communicate effectively and respect people. I have to work hard. That is one thing I took away from my study abroad trip. I had a lot to learn and I still do, I'm sure, but that truly helped."

Particularly for technical students, the study abroad experience reaped skills specifically applicable to their career and technical field such as culinary, fashion, agriculture, or nursing for example. There were several excerpts that specifically mentioned career-specific knowledge gain such as these "The experience did shed some light on the differences in Nursing between our two countries." (P158) "broadened my experience and knowledge of cooking and food" (P161) "Learning about Ag in Brazil can help me compared to what we do in America" (P162). "It has helped me see how others operate in the business world in different countries." (P137) "will help me in my future career in the fashion industry, by being more aware of how current clothing should look to reflect a certain culture." (P126)

There was even a sense that this career learning was directly applicable immediately on return, such as "I incorporated some of the Spanish style of cooking in our current menu" (P147). "I used interactions abroad to help with interactions with patients." (P144) "Ability to understand and appreciate different cultures eases my interactions with my residents" (P103).

Gained Job Search Skills. The fifth of the career impact themes is related to an increase in job search skills including improved skills in building a resume and participating in job interviews. Retrospective survey comments also indicated that study abroad participants gained skills that made it easier for them to seek and attain jobs such as specific skills/knowledge/experiences they could share in a resume for a job opportunity or directly in a job interview. Students' reflections told the story of how the experience gave them specific experience that improved their job options and ability to get a job. For example, P29 shares that "Studying abroad (short term) to Tanzania made me marketable for my job."

Desire to Travel or Work Internationally. The final of the six career impact themes revealed that the study abroad experience contributed to a personal strong desire to work

internationally and/or travel for work. This was expressed in several comments about seeking the opportunity to work internationally or dreaming of working for a multinational corporation. For example, P124 shares that "It reminds me of the world outside of my current life and inspires me to travel more and experience new moments and people of other cultures". P110 shares that "Seeing how healthcare is different in other countries made me very interested in further studying global health and public health." P35 says "I began to seriously consider doing undergraduate or graduate work abroad. From there I was able to narrow down my options and make a decision to come to Germany, where I now reside."

Personal Impact

In the previous set of findings, the survey illustrates a significant professional impact on students' professional lives and careers. In this next section of findings, I explore more of the findings that illustrate personal impact and how study abroad impacted students' personal lives and life choices. To gather this data, an open-ended question was asked about how their study abroad experience impacts or influences them personally. Respondents submitted open-ended responses which were coded to find emerging themes. A total of 118 excerpts were coded resulting in a total of 361 codes. The 361 codes were then grouped into the following themes and frequencies calculated as shown here in Table 21.

Table 21 shows that the largest personal impact theme is a desire to travel and experience more after their study abroad experience at Kirkwood. This aligns with one of the themes from the professional impact area as well where students indicated on the survey that they wanted to work internationally and/or travel for work. The next most common theme was about broadening or providing a different perspective on them personally followed closely by the personal impact of understanding another culture. The experience impacted their level of confidence and also

their perceived learning or knowledge about other cultures. Notably personal impact was also

described as gaining an appreciation for diversity, developing friendships, and a better

understanding of one's own culture. The survey respondents clearly indicated gratitude for the

opportunity and that they reflected on the experience often in their current daily life.

Table 21

Personal Impact Themes

Category	Number of Incidents
Want to travel and experience more	49
Broadened and offered different perspective	34
Understanding of other culture	28
Improved confidence	15
Learned knowledge	15
Appreciation for Diversity	13
Friendships developed	13
Reflect on it often	12
Understanding of one's own culture	9
Gratitude for opportunity	7
Learned travel skills	6
Changed Me	5
Improved independence	5
Understanding of personal aspirations/desires/career	4
Want to improve the planet or make a difference in world issues	3

Overall Reflections and Comments

In the final question on the survey, respondents submitted qualitative responses to the

question "Please use this space to write about any reflections and/or comments you have about

your Kirkwood Study Abroad experience and its impact on you." There were 71 comments

coded and analyzed for a total of 210 codes. The codes were then categorized and the top themes

are listed in Table 22.

Table 22

Overall Reflections and Comments Themes

Category	Frequency
Experience was Beneficial	35
Friends made	15
Serve as ambassador/recommend to others	13
Confidence building	11
Self-Awareness	11
Affirmed Career Choice	9
Appreciation for the world and culture	7
Changed me	7
Broadened perspective	6
Gratitude for Experience	5
Learned about another culture	4
Want to travel more	4
Diversity awareness	2

The table derived from this final comment area mirrors some of the themes shared above

in the professional and personal impact section but also provided an opportunity for the study

abroad participants to share an overall thought. In this section of the survey, the most common

theme reflected the sense of benefit that students derived from the study abroad experience. They

clearly see the value of the experience on their current lives. The second theme of making

friends, and often lifelong ones was also prevalent. One of the new themes that arose in this

section was the sense of serving as an ambassador or recommending study abroad to others. This goes hand-in-hand with the idea that this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for them and they want to help others not to miss the opportunity.

Conclusion

This retrospective survey of 190 community college students who studied abroad provides a remarkable amount of insight and context into exploring interculturality and its long-term impact on community college students. This study, as far as I am aware from my extensive literature reviewed on this topic in Chapter 2, is the most comprehensive and most detailed study to analyze community college students' participation from a holistic lens. The survey, informed by the quantitative findings analyzing the entirety of the Kirkwood enrollment dataset, as well as the subset of each LIFTR category, provides a lens on how study abroad impacts community college students long-term as a whole and then offers a laser focus on those who possess these specific identities. Quantitative findings from the Kirkwood dataset indicate that LIFTR students do study abroad and engage in intercultural experiences. The survey design is based on these quantitative findings with the goal of disaggregating survey findings by identity. The survey's first question asks students to self-identify with LIFTR categories. Recognizing that LIFTR identities are relevantly less understood in the realm of study abroad, survey questions are structured to allow ample room for elaboration and qualitative responses to illicit more information about students' stories and identities linked to those stories. The interviews that follow mimic a similar strategy of seeking student stories and voice.

The survey findings presented here in Chapter 7 are unique due to their focus on long-term impact. Because of the relative lack of data in the current body of literature specifically focused on community college students, especially those who identify with LIFTR categories,

this long-term impact survey data is valuable to the field in affirming that participation occurs

and long-term impact results, even in those local technical and service careers and local personal

futures. Community college degrees and careers are just as important as non-community college

degrees and careers. Non-elite is just as important as elite. Interculturality and exposure to

interculturality in college education impacts personal and professional lives despite one's

background or choice of post-secondary institution.

Findings first debunk the deficit narrative that community college students, especially

those that are LIFTRs do not participate in intercultural experiences and then illustrate the level

of long-term impact that is attained. Findings further debunk the deficit narrative with survey

responses revealing the overall mobility pre- and post-college of community college study

abroad students. Findings showed that community college students with a LIFTR status are less

likely to have traveled abroad than those without LIFTR status prior to their study abroad

experience, but that they do definitely have significant travel experience. Also of note is that

subsequent travel after the study abroad experience is almost as likely for low-income, first-

generation, and rural students, indicating post-college travel to be on par despite LIFTR status;

however, post-college travel was less likely for CTE students, most likely due to the nature of

their jobs. Overall findings show that LIFTR students do travel.

Findings support the significance of community college study abroad opportunities long-

term. Most community college students who study abroad achieve some college or an associate's

degree as their highest level of degree completed. LIFTR study abroad students have an even

larger group in this category with less than 30% of LIFTRs who studied abroad going on to get a

bachelor's degree. Their community college experience is where they had their opportunity for

international education. This finding justifies the inclusion of intercultural experiences at the

community college rather than assuming students will study abroad when they arrive at their

four-year institution since many of them are simply not intending to enroll in a four-year

institution. If community colleges do not provide an opportunity to explore interculturality as

part of the educational experience, most LIFTRs will not have the opportunity to do so as part of

their educational experience.

Summarizing the main takeaways from the survey in terms of impact, LIFTR students

often out-matched non-LIFTR students in terms of impact. Overall, community college students

agree with the statement that this was the most meaningful experience of their community

college education. First-generation students are even more steadfast in this response with 91.66%

indicated a stronger impact in terms of it being the most meaningful experience of their

community college education. The responses to the impact statements self-reporting their levels

of growth on several measures of impact are high in all community college students.

Community college students overall are motivated to experience study abroad because of

their desire to learn about culture and cultural differences. They also want to take an opportunity

that may be a once-in-a-lifetime chance. They are motivated by their career interests as well as

their desire to help people and interact with people. Overall these findings confirm what previous

studies have found about the motivations of community college students and student with

marginalized identities, that being that students are highly motivated and want to maximize any

opportunity to learn about culture and experience something of value (Amani & Kim, 2018;

Barone, 2021; Perkins, 2020).

Findings show significant impact on community college students' professional lives.

Community college students typically land in jobs with a professional or technical nature. They

are less likely to be managers. After they complete college, they are likely to be employed in

fields such as service, sales, and/or technical work. Several also make their careers in the trades or agriculture area. These careers and jobs were shown to be strongly impacted by the study abroad experience. The findings showed that no matter the job, whether it is a trade, or a farm worker or a service worker, study abroad profoundly impacted their career. Despite the assumption many in our society might make about these types of jobs as not necessarily being "intercultural", 79% of study abroad alumni indicate that their job did involve interaction with other cultures. The survey's open-ended questions resulted in students explaining how they reside in small communities but that there is interculturality present and their study abroad experience makes a difference in terms of jobs, levels of pay and social mobility.

Personal long-term impact was also illustrated through gaining an appreciation for diversity, developing friendships, and a better understanding of one's own culture. The survey respondents shared their long-term impact clearly indicated gratitude for the opportunity and the fact that they reflected on the experience often in their current daily life even though the interculturality experience happened many years prior.

Overall, the survey results helped me to identify significant long-term impact and gain support for an anti-deficit approach. Themes collected in the sections on professional and personal impact as well as overall reflections and comments served to inform the development of questions for the interview protocols and the importance of open-ended questions to discover more about students' identities as it relates to their interculturality. The survey responses provide some information about interculturality and identity; however even more is gained by structuring the interviews in a way that elicits more information about the student stories, backgrounds, and pathways to the experience, all things that shape interculturality. The survey results indicated that engagement in interculturality bore great long-term impact on students' knowledge of other

cultures, self-awareness, appreciation for diversity, and increased flexibility and open-

mindedness. Reflecting on these survey results built a bridge to the interviews to allow for

deeper discussion with LIFTRs specifically.

CHAPTER 8: THEMES FROM LIFTR VOICES

Introduction

Exploring interculturality among community college students involves first understanding student identities at the community college. To begin this discovery of community college student identities, the quantitative findings presented in Chapter 6 establish that a multiplicity of identities exist among community college students. The intersectionality of these identities, particularly marginalized identities labeled as LIFTR (low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural) is noteworthy in the population at Kirkwood. The quantitative research findings establish that community college students do participate in internationalization programs at a significantly higher rate than expected. Findings support the premise that students of marginalized identities are often more likely to participate in interculturality if offered the opportunity at community college. This finding signals a potential misunderstanding of who community college students are and their capability and propensity to engage in interculturality.

The literature review establishes that U.S. community college students represent a population of diverse backgrounds that is more diverse than the typical four-year college population traditionally studied in international education literature. In this chapter, those diverse backgrounds and perspectives are explored by presenting the findings from the open-ended survey questions and personal interviews and applying it to themes of their experiences in interculturality. Students share their experiences about choices, opportunities, job relevance, and the impact of their intercultural experience over time. Throughout this chapter, both survey open-ended response exceprts and interview transcript excerpts are referenced. Survey respondents are identified by their anonymized number and interview respondents by their pseudonyms.

The long-term impact of LIFTR's experiences in interculturality is also analyzed in the previous chapter's retrospective study abroad survey findings. This chapter also adds more depth to the exploration of long-term impact by presenting findings from the interviews of LIFTR students who participate in intercultural experiences including both study abroad and/or Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities such as virtual exchange analyzing both the long-term and short-term impact. Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities contribute to the concept of interculturality by recognizing that interculturality occurs not only due to mobility progrmas but also on campus in the form of IaH activities. See Figure 14 repeated from previous chapters for visual illustration of findings logic and presentation.

Figure 14

Presentation of Findings Visual
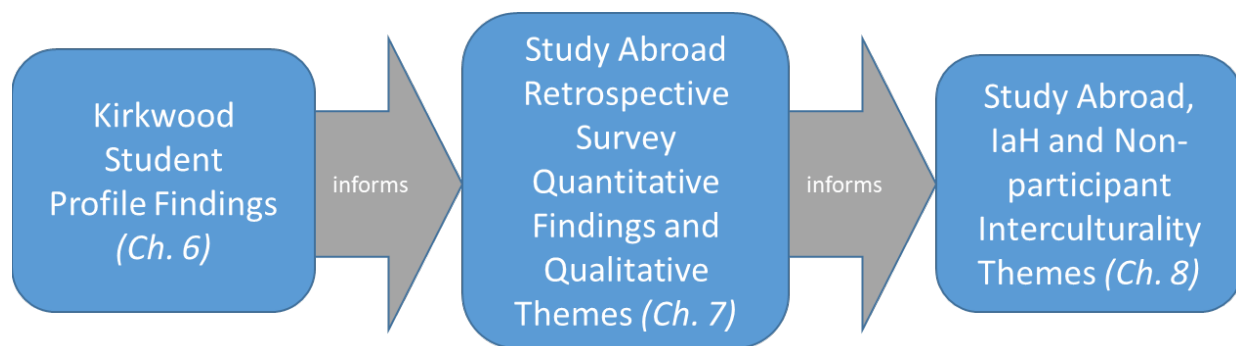
Through the qualitative analysis of community college student voices, this chapter builds on the previous two findings chapters by telling the story of how LIFTR community college students experience interculturality in the long-term and the short-term specifically focusing on the impact of study abroad and/or IaH activities on their personal and professional lives. The research questions that guided this qualitative inquiry are:

1. What are the experiences of low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural US community college students who have the opportunity to engage in interculturality? (RQ1)

2. How do intercultural experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and technical US community college students both in the short and long term? (RQ3)

3. How do study abroad experiences impact low-income, first-generation, rural, and technical U.S. community college students compared to the impact from planned Internationalization at Home (IaH) experiences or no planned intercultural experience? (RQ4)

This chapter starts by outlining the demographics of the students interviewed in this study including all three groups of focus: study abroad participants, IaH participants and students who were non-participants. Following the section on interview demographics, a detailed analysis of the impact and importance of interculturality on student participants engaged in interculturality as a planned education experience at Kirkwood is presented as a list of overarching themes supported by evidence from student voices. There are eight overarching themes presented. The eight themes were derived from the inductive coding of LIFTR intercultural experiences evidenced in participant survey responses and interview transcripts.

In the next section of the chapter, three themes are presented that are derived specifically from non-participant students to provide some focus on the non-participant population and their educational experience. The non-participant themes directly address RQ4. The chapter continues by presenting a comparison of themes comparing the impact of interculturality on study abroad participants, IaH participants and non-participants. Following the overall comparison, the chapter continues by comparing short- and long-term impact through two prevailing themes. The final

section of the chapter presents the findings as viewed through the anti-deficit theoretical lens utilized in this research illustrating how the LIFTR characteristics are evidenced to serve as less of a deficit and more of an empowering factor in their participation. More critical analysis of these findings will then be presented in Chapter 9.

Interview Demographics

I interviewed 65 students during the Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 timeframe, during the time of deepest COVID isolation for many people in the world. Although COVID was a strong part of global reality during this time and interpersonal interaction was low, the opportunity to interview these students via Zoom was a light during a dark time not only for me, as the interviewer, but I also witnessed the positivity from the students themselves. Students exhibited a general ingenuousness in their interviews sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. I experienced that students were eager to talk to someone during this COVID time of isolation and they appreciated the Zoom format as a way to connect. As a result of this willingness and interest in sharing, many of the interviews had a duration of over 30 minutes, several even over an hour, even though I had requested students allow only 15-20 minutes for the appointment time. I attribute the length of the interviews and the desire to talk to each other about their experience partly due to the isolation and the need for human contact. It was my experience that students were very open to share, more than might have been the case if we were not all isolating from one another. I personally enjoyed the opportunity to connect with these diverse and unique students and listening to their perception of the impact of their intercultural experiences, their life struggles, their goals and accomplishments, and their appreciation of interculturality.

The 65 interviews were conducted with 43 unique community college students who fit one of three types of experiences: study abroad, IaH or non-participant. Table 23 details the

interviewee population illustrating that 18 of the interviewees participated in study abroad, 15 participated in IaH, and 10 were non-participants.

IaH and non-participants were interviewed twice, first at the beginning of the Spring 2021 term (pre-Spring 2021) and then a second time at the end of the Spring 2021 semester (post-Spring 2021). Study abroad participants were interviewed once due to the focus on long-term impact only and no access to the alumni prior to their experience. Because this study was conducted during COVID, there were no students engaging in study abroad that could be intereviewed pre- and post- for comparison to the IaH and non-participants. Although this lack of current study abroad comparison makes direct comparison of impact a bit challenging, it does allow for a broader view of the long-term impact of study abroad compared to the immediate impact of IaH and non-participation.

Table 23

Interviewees by Type of Experience

Type of Experience	Number of students interviewed	Percent of students interviewed
Study Abroad (interviewed once)	18	41.86%
IaH (interviewed pre- and post-)	15	34.88%
Non-Participants (interviewed pre- and post-)	10	23.26%
Total Unique Individuals	43	

Table 24 shows the interviewees according to LIFTR characteristics. There were 43 total interviewees of which 36 students are classified as low-income students, 27 are first-generation students, 30 are students studying in a CTE or technical field, and 19 are rural. For a more detailed picture of the profile of the intersectionality of the identities of each interviewee and to

note the overlap of the 4 LIFTR identities, see the chart in Appendix H where students are listed

by pseudonym, major, interview type, and LIFTR identities.

Table 24

Interviewees by LIFTR Status Frequency

LIFTR Characteristic	Number of students interviewed	Percent of students interviewed
Low Income	36	83.72%
First Generation	27	62.79%
Technical	30	69.77%
Rural	19	44.19%
Total Unique Individuals	43	

Overarching Themes

To begin the analysis of the interview data, this chapter examines the over-arching

themes that emerged from the in vivo coding of interview transcripts with intercultural

experience participants, both Study Abroad and IaH as well as non-participants. All three groups

provided extensive transcripts sharing personal perceptions of their educational and intercultural

experiences. As I combed through the transcripts and codes, it was clear to me that the impacts

of the experiences that students had engaged in were strong, life-changing, and profound. It was

also apparent that students who had not participated in planned intercultural experiences were

diverse, intrigued by international opportunities, and clearly understood the relevance and

importance of interculturality in their lives.

Personal interview findings combined with the responses from the survey open-ended

questions and interview transcripts were analyzed and compared resulting in a set of eight

overarching themes shown in the list below and then detailed out in the subsequent sections by pulling excerpts directly from the words of students. The eight resulting themes are:

- Making Purposeful Choices

- Maximizing Intercultural Opportunities

- Job Relevance

- Personal Growth in Appreciation for Diversity

- Life Struggles and Second Chance

- Human Connection, Networking and Friendships

- Subsequent Travel and International Experiences

- Open Eyes to New Perspectives

Each of these themes are presented individually in the following sections, first grounding the theme in current literature and then providing corresponding excerpts from interviews and surveys supporting the themes.

Making Purposeful Choices

Extensive research has been done about the reasons why students make decisions to study abroad, particularly about the norm of choosing study abroad and how that might be impacted by institution type and/or the norm to study abroad in a given setting (Petzold & Peter, 2015; Salisbury et al., 2009). These studies negate the experiences of particular populations, such as the subjects of this study, community college LIFTR students. With my experience working directly with students from this population, with this study, I aim to show that the negation of those populations does not need to exist and instead should be magnified so that the population is better understood and more opportunities offered to enhance interculturality on a larger scale. Based on the quantitative findings in Chapter 6, students from LIFTR populations do engage in

interculturality and at higher rates than assumed. Past studies often point to a lack of specific research on the motivations of diverse students from underrepresented populations (Amani & Kim, 2018; Willis, 2012). This study's findings supplement those, by providing targeted results about diverse community college students giving additional valuable insight into the motivations of diverse students.

One of the most prevalent themes found in the responses to this study was that community college students make purposeful choices about their educational experiences often attributable to their diverse group identities as non-traditional students, especially when these choices enable them to achieve their dream. In other words, their diverse backgrounds are the motivator rather than the de-motivator. Many students share specific stories that recognize links between their marginalized identities and their participation in intercultural experiences. This linkage of their marginalized identities as a reason for participating is contrary to some of the studies on motivations and choice that found that students with a norm for study abroad or previous exposure to study abroad are more likely to participate. On the contrary, these community college students chose it precisely because they were not "normed" for it.

Study Abroad Interculturality

One example of making purposeful choices comes from a study abroad participant whose pseundonym is Paul, who prior to studying abroad in Australia, had traveled around the world in his previous job and life experience. He had been to several parts of Europe and 17 countries in Africa as well as all around the US. He expressed in his interview that he loves traveling and has a goal of traveling around the world. He had experienced many other cultures. Originating in West Africa, he moved to the state of Nevada through the US through diversity lottery program. His work experience includes information technology work in Africa. He moved to Iowa to go to

community college to take courses in information technology and computer networking because it seemed like easy access to get an IT job and Iowa has an easy lifestyle for him. Living in Iowa now, he has a full-time job and has 3 teenage kids and a very busy household. When asked about why he chose to study abroad, he indicated:

> For me, the study abroad was like a dream come true. . . So, I was about to graduate and I contacted the international programs office and they told me how it could work. It is a dream for me to go and see how things work and touch things with my hands because I read a lot about them. And so yeah, that's how I decided to go.

Another Study Abroad student, Marci, who completed high school 23 years before restarting her education at Kirkwood, is a first-generation student from a low-income family with a sister who recently achieved her PhD. Marci worked for a local employer for over 10 years and wanted to go back to college to improve her salary and get a promotion. She values her education more than anything and wanted to take advantage of all opportunities available in this second path choice of her education. When the opportunity to study abroad presented itself, she took it and has taken up many opportunities while at Kirkwood. Marci is a first-generation student from a low-income family and describes her choice to participate as being directly related to her first-generation status:

> For first-generation students like me, I wanted to study abroad to set an example you know for other students. . . now's your chance. Go ahead, go ahead and go, it may be, you know, a little pricey, but I got a couple scholarships to go study abroad. . . because, you know, like I said it's a once in a lifetime thing.

Cyrus, a study abroad student who had never been outside of the country prior to coming to Kirkwood, self-identified as a first-generation student, and described his motivations as

directly related to his purpose of connecting to another culture during his education. His purpose was to connect to a different culture and shake up his life a bit, realizing that an experience like that would help him with his shyness and difficulties with the social aspect of going to school.

> I think that looking for that cultural connection and not necessarily specifically for Chinese culture, but again for that really being able to connect with a culture that is just fundamentally not the same as the one that I am surrounded by 24/7.

Fatma, a low-income first-generation Nursing student, was born in an African country, lived in a refugee camp there as a girl and moved here to the US when she was small. She enrolled in the Nursing program at Kirkwood because she enjoys the helping profession and serving refugee populations specifically in the local community. Her motivations to participate in study abroad were very purposeful in that she wanted to participate in a service learning global program, not be a tourist, and make a difference. She has a purposeful draw to service to others and a passion for serving. She describes her motivations as follows,

> To be able to go somewhere, learn about their country and serve in their country with local people and not be a tourist. Yes, I'm traveling but I'm not a tourist. I'm there for a specific reason to brush shoulders with people and make a difference. That is what really motivated me. I was drawn to this study abroad program because of the people we were going to serve. They were at a high poverty level.

In summary, study abroad LIFTRs seem to have very specific motivations to participate in study abroad that are directly related to their LIFTR status and connect to that element of their identity. Their purpose for participating is often tied to their LIFTR identities as is the case of Fatma who saw her low-income refugee status as a reason to participate in study abroad instead of a deficit.

IaH Interculturality

In the case of IaH LIFTR students, they may not have purposefully chosen the experience of interculturality in the same way as study abroad participants; however, IaH students still showed a motivation for wanting to participate in IaH as part of their course after they were enrolled in it and placed in the interculturality opportunity of virtual exchange and interacting with people who were different from them. In the IaH interviews I asked participants what motivated them to participate in the virtual exchange. One response about IaH motivation came from Deb, a 43-year-old veteran low-income technical IaH participant who lived abroad for 2 years as part of her military service and also lived on the west coast working as an aircraft mechanic for 10 years. She now works full time doing her internship for her Electronics degree and has a very busy schedule. When asked about why she wanted to participate in the IaH intercultural experience that was offered to her within her curriculum, she said

> I'm motivated that way because I've never done anything like that before and honestly like with my background with military I've worked with a lot of other foreign nationals and we always had a great time and it was always fun to kind of mix cultures or you know, have a different outlook, or idea of how to do something.

Another IaH student, Sally, who possesses all four LIFTR identities, was motivated to participate in the virtual exchange offered by international programs for a new experience. Sally recognizes her non-traditional student status as being the impetus to her eagerness for intercultural experiences:

> Sometimes I think I want to learn about people because I'm so worried about being different from people or it's been my coping mechanism to so people don't know that I was different than them . . . just being a non-traditional type student. I mean I didn't

have as much experience with people. So for me it's learning what I missed when I was

in high school or in you know early my early 20s where I didn't I didn't work with

anyone that was different for me so now i'm trying to catch up.

Jess, a first-generation low-income student is motivated to participate in the IaH virtual exchange

because it seems like a great opportunity for her to interact with people and she sees it as a

stepping stone to study abroad and a way for her to interact with people who are different than

her. Jess contributes this excerpt about her motivations to participate in the virtual exchange,

It sounds really cool, especially since I'm first-generation and my family has never had a

whole lot of money for traveling. We've only ever traveled like within the states. We've

never really gone internationally before. And so that's what interested me in college as

well, like studying abroad. Since I'm getting older and moving up in college, this seems

like a really good opportunity for me to start the studying abroad adventure, especially

where as an introvert, it helps me to know that I can live at home but still have this

experience, which may see weird, but it's a nice stepping stone for me just to kind of see

how the process works and get to work with other students as well.

As I interviewed the IaH students and the Study Abroad students, I noticed how easy and

natural it was for these LIFTR community college students to connect their LIFTR identity to the

interculturality. Both groups were motivated to partake in interculturality, whether it is study

abroad or IaH, engage people from different backgrounds and learn from it. This motivation to

them seemed to stem from their LIFTR identities rather than be opposed to it. It seemed natural.

Maximizing Intercultural Opportunities

In addition to making purposeful choices that are directly tied to their marginalized group

identities, several CTE students reflect on internationalization as an opportunity equated with

success and have the desire to maximize it or seize it. This theme, maximizing intercultural opportunities, confirms findings from previous studies on community college students or on students with marginalized identities focused on decision factors where findings indicated a theme that community college students viewed international opportunities as a once in a lifetime experience, or, in other words, as something they needed to maximize.

There is some contradiction in the study abroad literature where it is pre-supposed that non-traditional students like those at community colleges do not have the social capital to be able to take advantage of opportunities given (Salisbury et al., 2011). Numerous anti-deficit studies, however, have shown this to be invalid (Raby & Rhodes, 1999; Robertson, 2016; Willis, 2016). The students in this study talk about seeing international activities as opportunities and having the hunger or striving for opportunities in order to get the most out of their education. They equate opportunity with being successful and to represent success to others in their immediate family or group came up frequently. Community college students expressed that they had a role to play in their education – that their education had a greater meaning and they had to take on everything they could, every opportunity so that they could represent and be successful as in the case above where Marci indicates she wanted to represent non-traditional first-generation students and illustrate how if she could do it, others could follow.

Coming from low-income and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, a certain resiliency seemed to manifest in many of the interviews and a real need to capitalize on any opportunity that arose, because it may not present itself again. This theme presented itself as a dominant theme for both study abroad and IaH students.

Lucy, a low-income, rural, technical student, who participated in study abroad several years ago, shares her reflection on maximizing the opportunity,

Let's do this like live in the moment let's do it now, while we're young. As we get

older we will have jobs, have families and we can't find the time to like go and do this

kind of thing . . . If I can study abroad, anybody can. It should not just be focused on

one type of say like university or one type of students like even if you're a community

college student you need to take this opportunity to do this.

Another student who participated in study abroad several years ago, Brett, who identifies

with a low-income, technical, rural study abroad identity shared that

Before I went, I attended a faculty information session, just listening to how the program

will go and saw another student who had previously studied abroad and I remember

thinking 'How did you even go about this? Why did you even do this at a two-year

school?' But I feel that taking upon those opportunities to not let that you're at a

community college deter you from going abroad and doing something other than your

coursework and your program study is really saying that Kirkwood has something more

to offer you than coming and going to class for 55 minutes.

Shawn, a low-income, technical IaH student, like other community college students

expresses how he saw an opportunity to serve as a role model for others. In this way, education

does not just serve the one student, but rather is maximized and has the potential to serve

generations:

I guess you don't see many people like me you know a young African American man

trying to study, go to school, let alone go for technology that often. I think me being

that minority and going through the different obstacles that I went through, like where

I'm from, it kind of pushed me and driven me to want to go far, because I'm gonna be

the spokesman for the people that look like me or had those different obstacles growing

up. I want to be the person that they look up to and say "Wow, if he did it, then I can do it."

Finally, Julio, a low-income first-generation technical rural IaH student, and others mention that without an opportunity presenting itself directly in their academic program, they might not have participated in an intercultural experience at all during their community college experience. Students, such as Julio, have a preconception that international opportunities are not intended for low-income students. Even though IaH was included within his academic course, some students still ascribed the experience to elite status and therefore not something they as LIFTRs could partake in. Julio explains that he appreciated the opportunity to engage in an intercultural experience, although he did not self-select it directly in his academic course at the community college. An IaH experience in interculturality, meeting students from another country, gave him an opportunity he had assumed he could not have due to his low-income status. He shares that even though his intercultural experience was an in-classroom experience and was provided to him without his choice, he still maintained the perspective that interculturality was something he could not participate in as a college student. Julio shares

> The experience was not that different but still there is some level of 'oh I can't do this because I don't have enough money' compared to someone that does have money. Being able to do this (IaH) and getting the opportunity to actually meet new people is really cool. I'm a first-generation and basically just doing anything in college is new to me either way. Just doing this is extraordinary.

When Julio says "doing this" or "do this", he essentially is talking about "doing" interculturality. He, in essence, had the perception prior to this opportunity in his class that interculturality was not something for him because he was a LIFTR student. He says that directly

here in the excerpt above. Julio was an IaH participant who did not self-select into the experience, but rather was offered it during his class. Because it was offered in his class, he experienced interculturality and derived impact from it. Had it not been offered as part and parcel of his community college experience, he may have not engaged in interculturality at all, deeming it inappropriate for his identity.

Job Relevance

The third theme that emerged from the interviews is that students shared openly about the relevancy of their intercultural experience to their current and future job or careers. The interviews evidenced that interculturality made an impact on community college students' professional lives, similar to the themes derived findings from the retrospective survey presented in Chapter 6.

Excerpts outlined students' recognition that intercultural experiences do impact their job in a very practical and hands-on way. Multiple articles and publications cite intercultural experiences as being relevant to employability and students' career choices (AIFS Foundation & IIE, 2018; Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Jones, 2013), but these articles and publications are typically focused on four-year college students instead of community college students. The findings here of job relevance, and relevance specifically to two-year technical degree college students, is significant and is a connection that is repeated over and over again in the student interviews.

Students are clearly cognizant of the direct relevance of the intercultural experience to their current jobs as well as the tangible impact interculturality will have on their future careers. Responses from students indicate that intercultural experiences are relevant in three separate themes: relevant to their career decisions and direction, relevant by enhancing their workplace knowledge and skills, and relevant in their deepened their understanding of diversity in the workplace. All three of these themes are vitally important components of work in the present day.

Each of these job relevant themes is supported by the interview excerpts and survey responses in the three sections that follow.

Career Impact and Direction

The first theme that emerged related to job relevance was the concept that intercultural experiences directly impact students' professional lives, present and future. In the study abroad survey results presented in the previous chapter, 73% of students say that the study abroad experience influenced their career choices and 64.7% said it clarified professional aspirations. In addition to recognizing that their career offers opportunities elsewhere, many interviewees note that their choice of career is either affirmed or changed by the experience. In Nell's interview, she shares that she identifies as a low-income, technical, and rural student and that her study abroad experience opened up career options for her.

> You know, you get stuck in a little bubble sometimes of, you know, this is where you are and everything is so narrow vision that once you get out there, that it definitely opened it up for me. And I think that in my career too I have been able to you know, it's not just this narrow walking where there's a bunch of walks of life and I've been able to experience that.

Darla, a study abroad alumni pursuing a 2-year technical degree, shares how her career perspective was changed by the experience.

> I would still be working night shift in a factory. After my first study abroad, I knew I wanted something better for myself. I recognized how big the world is, and how many options there truly are out there. I was not restricted to my location and circumstances anymore.

Survey respondents in the study abroad alumni group also share similar sentiments. P85 shares the following about the study abroad experience "It gives me more opportunities for other career options if I were to leave my current position." P76, an agriculture student, said it "made me realize even more that I want to work within the agriculture industry". P94 indicates "I got to build a house while abroad, so that sparked my interest in architectural technology."

Most students share that their intercultural experience helps with job searches. P126 said:

Fashion is all about having diversity in the fashion industry, by showing a culture in the garments you make in a collection. Studying abroad helped me become more aware of another culture which will help me in my future career in the fashion industry.

Students also share how their experiences are an asset in the job interview stage. P40 notes that "during my interviews all of the employers asked me about my study abroad experience." Darla says that "I don't think I have the job that I have right now, or I'd be doing the things that I'm doing right now had I not decided to do that one thing."

In addition to study abroad alumni, IaH participants recognize the impact the experience has on their career as well. Denzel, a low-income technical IaH participant shares that the virtual exchange experience "shed a light on how this career path can take you anywhere in the world. It's used everywhere." Like Denzel, several other IaH participants share their realization that their career is not only local, but global in nature and that people in other parts of the world are engaging in similar work.

Deb, a low-income technical IaH participant, realizes as an outcome of her IaH experience that employment did not need to be local as "there are other opportunities elsewhere." Likewise, Shawn, also a low-income technical IaH student notes he does not want to stay local and instead wants to work in other countries. A majority of IaH students mention in their interviews that the

experience with interculturality opened up their eyes to the fact that opportunities in their field exist elsewhere.

Enhanced Workplace Knowledge and Skills

Participation in interculturality results in enhanced workplace knowledge and skills. In the responses to both the survey and the interview questions, students detail knowledge gain as well as communication and collaboration skills growth from the intercultural experience. Students agree that the knowledge learned directly applies to their jobs. In my own experience working with students at community college, particularly those enrolled in two-year technical degree programs, the short nature of their study and the relative immediacy of their need for employment is front and center on their minds. As I interviewed the students it was clear that employability and workplace knowledge were a priority and the ability to relate what they learned through interculturality was natural due to that heightened sense of employability as a priority.

A concrete example of this immediate application to the workplace is evidenced in several of the survey students sharing how they immediately applied what they learned in their daily work. P147, a Culinary Arts student shares that he, "incorporates some of the Spanish style of cooking in our current menu." P144 applies skills to the healthcare field by "using interactions abroad to help with interactions with patients. We get many international patients and are challenged culturally." P28, also in healthcare, notes

> It put me in a situation where I was in an environment where I didn't speak the language and I was the foreigner. It gave me the ability to put myself in a situation and gain some understanding of what some of my patients go through.

> Study abroad interviewees also elaborated on the application to workplace knowledge and skills.

In addition to the survey responses, the personal interviews also revealed this direct application of interculturality impacting workplace knowledge. For example, Nell, a low-income, technical, and rural study abroad student shares

Doing the marketing project really for a different country is something you do not typically do in marketing in America. Doing those things makes me feel like I could do bigger things that accompany more international things… You know, you get stuck in a little bubble sometimes of, you know, this is where you are and everything is so narrow vision that once you get out there, that it definitely opened it up for me. And I think that in my career too I have been able to you know break out of the bubble. It's not just this narrow walking. There's a bunch of walks of life and I've been able to experience that.

Fatma, a low-income, first-generation study abroad student shares how the study abroad experience impacted her communication and people skills, being better able to identify people's needs and communicate with people in her job. She shares, "That's a huge thing that even now I do, instead of trying to assume what someone needs, actually asking them and then trying to find the resources."

In addition to study abroad alumni sharing how their experiences with interculturality impacted their job knowledge and skills, IaH students share similar perspective gained from the experience interacting with people different than them. In his virtual exchange experience course, Carlos who identifies as a low-income technical student collaborates in teams to build circuits with French electronics students in his participation in an IaH intercultural experience. He recalls that communication is a skill essential to success,

I think this was good and like kind of necessary, especially like for technicians or any type of technical background because you're going to be working in a diverse

environment. Most of the engineers I work with for example are Indian so it's necessary.

Ken, a low-income technical rural IaH participant, agrees that "being able to interact with people from other parts of the world it's important because I'm going to have to do it in my work definitely." Julio, a low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural student notes that "getting to collaborate with other people is really important and even more important because they're from a different culture." Ken says it "definitely made me more comfortable with remote work and international collaboration" while Carlos indicates the impact as "beneficial for more teamwork skills, especially international group teamwork skills. It was nice to work with people from different world perspectives that you have."

LIFTR students also seem to recognize how their workplace skills will require them to apply what they learned from interculturality as when Shawn, a low-income technical IaH student shares "I might have to go overseas or go to you know, a different country or be around people that have different speak different languages"

Diverse Workplace

Students indicate that they gained appreciation of diversity in their current workplace. 94.29% of study abroad survey respondents agree that "My participation in Kirkwood Study Abroad contributed to my knowledge of another culture" and rated this with the highest impact level. P152 said, "I feel that I am more adaptable and knowledgeable of experiences outside of my own than those who have not traveled". Students share enhanced acceptance of differences in other people, flexibility and open-mindedness, and a desire for more diverse friendships and networks.

When study abroad alumni were asked on the survey about their current jobs, 76% of survey respondents have jobs that require them to work with individuals from a different culture.

P173 says "We serve clients from different backgrounds." P69 shares, "My boss, who started this company, has ties to Ethiopia and plans to expand the company to branches abroad." Some students' perceptions of diversity changed from the pre- to post interviews. P166 describes:

> I think that having been taken out of my home-town and put in a place that was foreign to me, in so many ways, changed my focus. I think when I was coming out of high school, I had a lot of unnecessary biases. I was much more ignorant than I am today.

Max, a low-income technical rural study abroad alumni shares in his interview how study abroad

> allowed me to be able to work with a diverse group of people…[as] over time, my understanding of people and the world changed. The experience of having to get outside my comfort zone and experience things I would never have had the opportunity to, gave me life experience that has been invaluable. In the past few years I have seen it pay off monetarily.

Max goes on in his interview to talk about how the experience opened up his ability to appreciate diversity in the workplace and that this is something he attributes to his study abroad experience. He developed skills and procedures at work that are inclusive and sits on the diversity and inclusion committee at his work. He has made it his personal mission to make all people feel welcome in his inclusive workplace.

While study abroad alumni were able to reflect on their diverse workplace understanding over time, the IaH participants indicated a direct impact from their experience in the here and now. For example, Ken, a low-income technical rural IaH participant works for an international company and rated himself low in empathy during the pre-interview saying that he "tries to be empathetic" but that working with other cultures makes him nervous. In the post-interview he seemed more aware of his diverse workplace and noted his empathy for other cultures increased

and said he is now "more aware of who I am talking to at work and that I need to be more clear communicating." The IaH experience had awakened in him how he himself could utilize skills in the diverse workplace to improve the workplace for everyone. Interculturality had been experienced and a level playing field of difference and similarities explored that opened up a whole new world of how to navigate a diverse workplace.

Another similar example about navigating diversity in the workplace came from Jess, a low-income, first-generation IaH participant who notes that

> I learned from the experience that just because something to us may seem like an OK everyday thing, it may not be comfortable for someone else. You kind of have to train yourself for it. Definitely a part of the cultural learning is understanding how to be general enough and then once you learn more about them, take the next step. One thing I learned is that I continued to build upon the idea that everyone learns differently and everyone works differently.

Personal Growth in Appreciation for Diversity

The fourth theme, in addition to career application and professional growth, shows there is a clear story told by students of the personal growth they experience from interculturality. In the study abroad survey results, 90% of survey respondents share that their experience led to a desire for more diverse friendships and social networks, 91% now accept differences in people, and 87% adapt more in diverse workplace environments. For example, Max, a low-income technical and rural study abroad participant, shares how he identifies his own personal biases from the intercultural experience: "being able to be exposed to people from a little more backgrounds certainly has helped. I think it just exposed the personal biases that I have so I can confront those myself."

There is a growing discussion in the literature and recent publications in international education about the intersection of international education with advancing social justice and a better appreciation for addressing systemic oppression and inequality (Wick & Willis, 2020). Interculturality itself is often described as aiming for an environment that is based in equity and mutual respect (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021; Leclercq, 2003). These premises are supported in these results, where community college student interviewees shared in their own words an appreciation for diversity due to the experience of interculturality. This theme of growing appreciation for diversity and empathy for diverse people more generally also affirms findings from other studies on study abroad in community college students (Fischer, 2021).

Study abroad students share an increase in flexibility, open-mindedness, and confidence. P150 shares "I am much more open minded to things happening outside this country. I also don't jump to conclusions as quickly as I used to. I hear people's story out more." P69 notes, "I crave learning more about different cultures, and also to know that I am capable of more than thought." Finally, the personal imprint on Lucy, a low-income technical rural study abroad participant, extends to her wearing a necklace with the dates of her study abroad experience illustrating how she reflects on the experience regularly, integrating it into her daily life although it happened years ago.

Several note not only their own changes but note witnessing growth in their peers. Moe, an immigrant to the US who identified as low-income, first-generation, and technical has vast international and life experiences. In his interview post-IaH experience, he shares how he feels that his classmates grew through the IaH experience of interculturality:

When some people are just living in a special area with a specific sort of people and they

don't have contact with other, they just have some prototype just in their mind. They don't

have that experience. When that becomes part of their studies, or part of their syllabus, this

will break a lot of barriers between the people. From discussions, I see a lot of Iraqi people

and many of our American colleagues didn't have any background about each other, they

just listen to the media and they have heard about each other from the media and they have

that thing in their mind. When we talk to each other, when we melt that iceberg, we will be

better. Especially those who are poor, they don't have opportunities to learn about each

other.

Carlos, a low-income CTE student who participated in IaH shares:

I would say that not everybody comes from a diversified background, especially if you

grew up in the country or isolated. You know your people and those are your people.

Everybody else is an outsider. So I'd say this was good, like in the sense of teaching people

how to work with people who are completely foreign.

Students express that their level of empathy for others was enhanced. Julio, a low-income,

first-generation, technical, and rural student who participated in an IaH experience, notes how it is

now "easier to see how people feel." Corinne says, "I was able to see first-hand that they had a

hard time understanding and vice versa. I took the time to understand and not to just judge

somebody."

Josiah, a low-income first-generation IaH student, indicates that his personal growth in

appreciation for diversity was so enjoyable. By engaging in interculturality via virtual exchange it

was something very exciting and new for him to interact with people different from him.

I really enjoyed the experience. It was really fun. It was something I had never experienced

before. I never really have gotten to talk to others from a totally different country like that

and got to know them on a one on one bases… Being low-income I didn't get to have that

really experience to go wherever outside of the country. It was something I've never been able to experience before.

The appreciation for diversity comes from a place where similarities are discovered as well as difference. Interculturality stresses how seeing similarities is part of the process of interculturality. Several of the excerpts express this level of understanding that similarities are important to their learning. Dervin & Jacobsen (2016) noted that "identifying similarities might be a more rewarding intellectual and relational exercise than identifying mere differences, as it requires spending quality time with people and in-depth discussions" (Dervin & Jacobsen, 2016, p. 37). This sentiment is expressed here by Tammi, a low-income, first-generation IaH student, and others like her when she shares

Me and my counterpart have the same job on the teams. We both have days that are very similar, like with going to school, cooking, cleaning, taking care of the kids, and all that kind of thing. But also like the way we feel about things and like past experiences and how they've affected our lives. And in just a lot of ways just so similar, I didn't expect it. And so a lot of the same ideas came out I discovered. Because you think you have people from these other countries and you're like, oh we're so different, but I actually learned more about how similar we actually are.

Another example of this is Jenn, a low-income first-generation technical rural IaH participant who shares

There was a lot more similar among us than what I had expected. The media pretty much portrays Iraq and Jordan to be like just war zones and everything is war, war, war and so that's really all I had thought about it beforehand, and then I did this project and was like

it's not even like that. I mean they have issues obviously every area has issues but they

work well with what they have.

Another example is Luis, a low-income, first-generation, rural student who shares about how the

intercultural experience stressed similarities to him. He speaks about how engaging in

interculturality and recognizing similarities made him a better team player.

I feel like I'm more of a team player because of this experience. Before I really liked to

do my work individually. I felt like I couldn't really rely on others because I was a bit of a

perfectionist. But I've met some really nice people who are also more similar to me

because they also take their work seriously. So if you just find the right people for your

team, you don't have to put all the pressure on yourself.

Life Struggles and Second Chance

LIFTR students routinely expressed their personal challenges and life struggles related to

their educational goals. Having worked at a community college now for over fourteen years, my

experience working with this diverse student population has been eye-opening to witness the

inspiring life challenges that students endure as they struggle to achieve their educational goals.

During the interviews for this study, students openly share details of life struggles and

resiliency with me as the interviewer. Often in their description of their life challenge or struggle,

the struggle itself is not explained as a limiting factor or something that placed them in a deficit

from others, but rather as an asset, a process to overcome and as a strength enabling them to have

a second chance that allows them to partake in interculturality. Students spoke in an anti-deficit

mindset consistent aligned with research in this area that has called on higher education to

recognize a more positive view of LIFTR students as hard-working, high-achieving and resilient

due to struggles they encounter (McKay & Devlin, 2016). The theoretical framework that guides

this inquiry, that of the capabilities theory, calls on us to view the capabilities of all students

(Gale & Molla, 2015).

LIFTRs spoke frequently about the fact that they are on their "second chance"

educational opportunity after trying once to complete an education and failing, and/or other life

events preventing them from succeeding on their first attempt at pursuing higher education. This

type of struggle experience often portrayed itself in a way that impacted their experience of

interculturality as in this excerpt where Jenn, a low-income first-generation technical and rural

IaH participant indicates that in her intercultural experience she could relate on the level of

struggle:

> I think that probably I changed in empathy. Not to say that I was judgmental before, you
>
> know stereotypes and generations but um.. I really did. I assumed that Iraq and the entire
>
> country of Iraq was nothing but war and troops and rubble and just terrible. I think now
>
> that I have met these people and stuff, you know, they have like their homes are like
>
> sanctuaries. They are happy there and they have struggles, just like every other person,
>
> but they really make them work and then being students, you know, they are working
>
> towards future goals and bettering their life so I think I have a lot of empathy so now I'm
>
> more considerate I guess.

Josiah, a low-income first-generation IaH participant, also shares how he can relate with others

about struggles in a way that enhances his level of empathy:

> Being from a single parent home, I just understand the struggles of life sometimes and
>
> I'm definitely empathetic for others.

Students who identified as low-income or from a lower socio-economic status also shared

how this educational opportunity was important to their college experience. Previous studies

about students from low socioeconomic status families are often focused on four-year institutions and more selective colleges thus providing a new perspective from a two-year college perspective (Walpole, 2003).

Lana, a low-income first-generation study abroad participant, shares her family's financial struggles

> My parents couldn't really help me out because they were helping my siblings. So it was difficult coming from parents who weren't financially stable.

Fatma, a low-income first-generation study abroad participant, shares her thoughts on how her low-income identity is actually a strength rather than a deficit

> When you are in this bigger group (low-income), it's easy to think that you can't do something like study abroad, that it's too much of a fantasy. There's just too many variables. I would beg to differ that it is possible and the wealth of experience that you learn about yourself and about other countries but about yourself as well, is totally worth it.

Lana also shares her struggles with money during study abroad and her first-generation student struggles.

> I was only able to study abroad because my scholarship was able to pay for it. If I didn't have my scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to experience any of us. I think as a first-generation I'm really really grateful for the opportunity. But it was also like even going on the trip and like having to afford food and anything like if I'm going to buy souvenirs or anything. That was really a difficult task because I didn't have the money for it. Outside of all that, I am still very grateful for the opportunity to meet everyone I did and experience what I did. I feel like it's kind of hard to explain.

As students share their stories about their backgrounds and identities, many of them discussed how Kirkwood and the option of community college was a second chance for them. They indicate how they are going to make the most of this second chance opportunity.

Human Connection, Networking, and Friendships

There were several excerpts from the interviews with students engaged in interculturality that commented on the deep human connections, networks, and friendships that were forged over the course of the intercultural experience. Sometimes these human connections were with people they met from the other culture and sometimes these human connections occurred more on the "intra" dimension or within the group of Kirkwood students themselves. This aligns with findings from other studies about the impact of study abroad where findings showed that students including community college students who participate in intercultural experiences become more open to connect with others (Potts, 2015; Wilson, 2018).

In general, the excerpts from the interviews with study abroad students illustrated more of an intra- dimension or bonds formed within the Kirkwood group itself and the IaH participants indicated more a bonding experience with the people from the other culture to which they were engaging in interculturality.

To illustrate the intra-group bonding and connections, Lana, a low-income first-generation study abroad student shares "I feel like on the trip, everyone just kind of started relying on each other and so I opened up" and Nell, a low-income technical rural student also shares that she "met a lot of great friends" and "built relationships" with members of the group who studied abroad with her in Vietnam that she continues to maintain relationships with. Mitch, a low-income technical rural study abroad student also notes how one of the greatest impacts on him from the study abroad experience was the human connection and "close relationships" he

was able to build from the experience. Iris, a low-income first-generation technical and rural study abroad participants indicates that she "built friendships that lasted beyond the trip"

Wes, a low-income first-generation rural study abroad student, shares

There's something different about international programs on a community college level because it's more than just a trip. It's more than just a vacation. I've had friends that have studies abroad with bigger universities, and they tell me about all the fun things they did. It just didn't sound like you know, it didn't sound like much studying was done or much learning. But with the community college you have a personal, very family like connection, with the group you're in. Almost all of us are still very connected and still keep in touch. We are talking about a five year reunion.

Marci, low-income first-generation technical study abroad participant indicated that in her study abroad experience in Denmark she "still keeps in contact with Danish students".

Because the IaH participants worked in multicultural teams for a virtual exchange, the theme of human connection, networking and friendships seemed to be even stronger for the IaH group than the study abroad group. For example, Tammi, a low-income first-generation student, in her post-IaH interviews shares "I was working closely with the people from Jordan and I became pretty good friends with them." Denzel, a low-income technical IaH participant, shares "It would be neat to have an opportunity to meet them afterwards" showing a desire to want to continue the relationship with the students from overseas that he met. Ken, a low-income technical rural IaH student, talks about similarities, an important component of interculturality, when he says, "Even though we're a long ways away it's just pretty much the same. They were really not different. That's a popular thing everybody says, but until you actually meet someone I guess you don't know."

Subsequent Travel and International Experience

The next prevalent theme from the interview transcripts was the notion that their intercultural experience led to a strong desire to travel in the future to other places in the world and have more international and intercultural experiences. This theme indicates that their engagement in interculturality somehow gave them the capability of travelling and/or engaging with other cultures that they did not have before. There is a certain sense of independence and feeling of capability.

Lana, a study abroad alumni who identifies as low-income and first-generation, shares about her new perspective on living internationally after her study abroad experience and looking back on it several years later,

> And so I think the motivation to not be like my parents, to not live that kind of life changed my outlook on everything which is why the study abroad program actually changed a lot of my future goals, like, I want to live abroad. I want to be able to do what I want and try all these new things. Like as a first-generation student, I want to experience something else unlike my parents have.

Dante, a low-income study abroad student, shares,

> I used to think I wasn't good at it but then I kind of realized I was because of how prepared I was. So it made me feel like I can travel anywhere.

Wes, a first-generation low-income rural student who studied abroad, shares,

> My experience with the study abroad really propelled me to pursue other opportunities, go abroad. The second experience was with Italy. Being able to travel a little bit within the country, to get to know other people of different backgrounds and really have a huge more worldly understanding of different cultures. That's where I'm headed now. I'm

getting my English degree and I'm getting my TESOL which is the ultimate goal to travel

and teach abroad. I want to see the world."

Penny, a first-generation low-income student, who studied abroad shares,

I started off landing in country very uncomfortable, feeling very out of place. As I moved

through my two weeks in Guatemala, I felt what I was scared of, I was no longer scared

of. I think that that experience of learning about other cultures and going to other places

that are different than my own, it led to a curiosity that led me to be more comfortable

moving on. After college, I did a little work in Guatemala and also traveled throughout

Central and South American.

Lana, a first-generation low-income student, who studied abroad shares

I feel like as long as I've lived in the US, I've never been fulfilled as much as I have when

I travel and meet new people and work together with those people on changing their

future, so I think that gave me a different view. It's a long term goal of mine to live

abroad and work with other people."

In this theme about international experience, it was also interesting to note that although a

handful of participants had never traveled abroad prior to their Kirkwood international

experience, several LIFTR students had already experienced significant travel experience prior to

their Kirkwood intercultural experience and their Kirkwood experience was just another way for

them to keep experiencing interculturality with more to come in their future plans. For example,

Luis, an IaH participant identifying as low-income first-generation and rural shared

I've traveled to Mexico so I lived there when I was two and I moved over here but I have

visited a couple of times. I've also visited Honduras and they are definitely a different

culture than us but everything was amazing out there and I learned a lot.

Moe, a low-income first-generation technical IaH student, shares

> Before when I when I was in Sudan, I used to travel and work in China, the Gulf area
> Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Dubai, Indonesia, Malaysia. I went over there. I used to work with
> the company in many places during that time… oil and gas companies. I used to work
> with that company from 2005 to 2014. I used to travel with them from time to time to
> several countries and it was kind of fun." Similar to Moe, Paul had also had extensive
> travel experience prior to coming to Kirkwood and reflected on the relationship between
> those experiences and this one as "any time you travel abroad and any time you meet new
> people and meet new cultures, it is a plus. You get a plus. Because you see that people
> understand things differently. People are acting differently. And if you're somebody who
> has his head on his shoulder, you should know that. And that should be a plus to you
> when you come back home.

Open Eyes to New Perspectives

Certainly one of the predominant themes derived from the interviews was the idea that interculturality opened students' eyes to new perspectives that they were not aware of previously. This theme was shared similarly by both IAH and Study Abroad students.

Study Abroad New Perspectives

The following study abroad excerpts are just a few chosen from the interview transcripts confirming this prevalent theme.

Marci, a low-income first-generation CTE student who studied abroad, shares

> My perspective of thinking of somebody different is from another country that has
> changed to me totally because just because somebody speaks different doesn't you know I
> shouldn't judge them because of that.

Nell, a low-income technical rural student who studied abroad, shares:

> It's just the shift in perspective that I had. You know, now living in my town where its mostly minorities and after visiting Vietnam and loving the food and the culture, I love going to the Vietnamese stores. I visit them all the time now. So, it wasn't just getting me out of the bubble of communication, not being really around other culture, but it's like after I visited there, I just wanted to dive in, like, I wanted to go explore you know, different paths and different stores that have products that I don't even know the name of. Yeah, I definitely enjoy trying new things now.

Brett, a low-income technical rural student who studied abroad, shares:

> The process for burning everything is not something I wanted to see coming from a sustainability project. . . but then I wondered to myself months later, perhaps this is a tactic that we might use in the USA for waste management. Looking at it from a Singaporean perspective, it is an immediate approach for a problem that's in the present.

Penny, a low-income first-generation study abroad alumni, shares:

> I think it did most definitely impact my level of empathy and ability to see things from other perspectives because it was the first time my own beliefs, traditions, my own culture was challenged and so knowing that my way isn't the right way. I really learned that just because I grew up with these certain beliefs doesn't mean that my beliefs and my values are the only correct beliefs and values. I think that I really learned that during my time in study abroad.

Lana, a first-generation low-income student, who studied abroad shares:

> I got a new perspective. When I got back, I chose to not push my traditions away. I chose to not push that culture away. I've learned to embrace it and just accept it as is.

Lucy, a low-income rural CTE student who took the 2-year Dental Hygiene program at:

Kirkwood and studied abroad, now works in a small town Iowa community, and shares

> I think I did because I don't want to say that I grew up poor but I probably grew up with
>
> less than people from like a bigger city had so I kind of saw like the perspective, these
>
> Guatemala and families had like they had nothing and they're just like trying to reap what
>
> they sow and like they cherish the the things they have.

IaH New Perspectives

The following IaH excerpts are very similar to those shared by the study abroad students

indicating that this them arose in both types of experience.

Josiah, a first-generation low-income student, who participated in an IaH virtual exchange

experience shares:

> I feel like I would always be open to learning about more cultures. I feel like we're all
>
> kind of brainwashed on what it's like outside of America. We act like we have it really
>
> well. Learning about a different culture and how they do things could be totally different
>
> and maybe even more efficient. We have this narrative that American is the best country
>
> in the world and we do things perfect. But if you go somewhere else, they might do it
>
> better than you thought and have a different perspective on how things go. So I feel like
>
> it's definitely something that I would be interested in.

Denzel, a low-income technical students studying in an electronics engineering 2-year technical

program at Kirkwood and participating in an IaH virtual exchange shares his experience as

follows:

I mean in the grander scheme of you know, careers and life, you can really learn and

benefit from you know people overseas or just from a different life that you're not

accustomed to opens different perspectives

Sally, a student with all four LIFTR identity markers participated in an IaH virtual exchange

related to her 2-year Management program and shares:

It's not the same as what our Iraqi partners are facing, but at the same time in our society

you're treated the same you're not given the same opportunities and you're made fun of

and you don't have the you don't have the same nice things that everybody else has so I

think it just offers a different perspective on it.

Moe, a first-generation, low-income, 2-year management IaH participant, shares how he

witnessed perspective-shifting among his group in the virtual exchange as well as those in the

group from Iraq:

I was some people wrote about some of our American policies. They said before what

they think about Iraq was just what they see in the media. One of them said when I think

about Iraq I am just thinking about rioting, killing. But now that he is connecting with a

lot of people, he sees a completely different picture. I have a dialogues with theose

people and I wrote a comment on their discussions. I feel those people, you know they

had many barrier before between them. They had some communication difficulties. I feel

what they feel about each other.

Non-Participant Interviews

The findings of this dissertation to this point provide unique perspective and insight into

the experiences of LIFTR community college students who engage in planned intercultural

experiences within their Kirkwood educational experience. To explore interculturality from

another perspective, this section seeks to broaden the lens even a bit further to encapsulate those perspectives in the LIFTR non-participant interviews. My goal in interviewing non-participants is to add more perspective on the identities and experiences of LIFTR community college students, to understand more about their backgrounds and identify ways in which interculturality is or is not part of their lived experience. There is perspective gained from comparing the stories of interculturality from those who participated in study abroad, those who participated in IaH and those who did not participate in planned intercultural experiences.

Ten non-participant Kirkwood Community College students were interviewed for the purpose of exploring more about LIFTR identities and stories. Each of the ten non-participants was interviewed at the start of the Spring 2021 semester and then again as a follow up at the end of the Spring 2021 semester. By drawing on specific experiences in the semester that may have included interculturality, non-participants could reflect on those experiences as well that occurred in the classroom, albeit informally rather than planned. By interviewing the group at the start and at the end of the semester, I asked non-participants about their goals for the semester and then reflected on those goals at the end, allowing an opportunity to open up a bit more in the second interview after having some time to "break the ice" in the first interview.

Of the 10 students, 9 identify as low-income students, 8 identify as first-generation college students, 8 are in technical CTE academic programs, and 5 are students from a rural background. See Appendix H for complete list of interviewees and identities noting where identities overlap. See Appendix F for the non-participant interview protocol followed.

Non-Participant Themes

Non-participants in this study are Kirkwood LIFTR students identified as not having participated in a planned intercultural experience. Effort was made to recruit participants from

one of Kirkwood's special support programs, TRIO. TRIO program participants were targeted

because TRIO serves low-income and first-generation students increasing the likelihood that

non-participant students possessed LIFTR identities. TRIO students were sent an email by their

TRIO advisor to see if they would like to participate in the study and then connected directly

with me to schedule an interview. Non-participants were encouraged to participate by their

advisor as an opportunity to practice interview skills and communication. The encouragement to

participate was not presented to them as an opportunity to engage in interculturality, but rather as

a general activity that would provide a benefit to them in terms of communication skills. Similar

to the IaH interview timeline, non-participants were interviewed two times, a pre-interview at the

start of the Spring 2021 semester and a post-interview at the conclusion of the Spring 2021

semester.

The purpose of presenting non-participant findings is to better understand community

college LIFTR identities in general, compare the themes to those of participants, and illustrate

that interculturality also occurs to those who are not participating in planned intercultural

experiences. Interculturality is not isolated to those who engage in travel or planned virtual

exchange. Instead, the concept of interculturality and the outcomes it produces can occur any

time anywhere when two individuals of differing identities encounter one another. This type of

encounter happens regularly on the community college campus and within the diverse

communities served. To better understand LIFTRs, I focus here on the themes found uniquely

from non-participant LIFTRs who have not engaged in planned intercultural experiences. Four

specific themes emerge about their education at the community college. The interviews were

structured in the same way as the study abroad and IaH interviews in order to illicit similar

stories. The resulting three themes from the non-participant group center on the theme of life

struggles and their interest in other cultures. The three themes are that life struggles contribute to empathy, that life struggles stand in the way, and that non-participants possess already an interest and/or experience with other cultures

Life Struggles Contribute to Empathy

The interview transcripts and coding revealed the fact that LIFTR students clearly face challenges and struggles in their lives. These challenges are real and have a very strong impact on their experience of education. Students interviewed shared with openness about their life struggles and when asked about their level of empathy, often indicated that they had an increased level of empathy as a result of their life struggles. An increase in empathy is also often referred to as a trait or quality found in those that possess intercultural competence or experience interculturality (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2022; Deardorff, 2009; Dietz, 2018; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). There are several excerpts from non-participants where they share their struggle and link the struggle to the reason why they have empathy for others. When shared in this way, life struggles do not seem to be viewed as a deficit trait but rather life struggles are presented as a capital or positive factor in the way it helps them empathize with others.

To illustrate how non-participants seemed to experience some very significant life struggles, there are several excerpts that give some window into that world of students experiencing tough challenges in their educational pathway. For example, Tracy, a low-income first-generation technical and rural student, shares

> Money got really tight. Family disowned me and then he didn't come back until I was 17. Then we had a bunch of house issues where the pipes froze somewhere to the house and like my dad's house was warmed by steam heat. Then I moved back out to my mom's

house and then she ended up kicking me out and that was just like a revolving door of your family.

Sheryl, a low-income first-generation technical non-participant, is a non-traditional single mom on her second chance at her education after not being able to complete years ago due to challenges. Regarding her life challenges, she shares openly,

> People get into this mentality where if you had a hard childhood, sometimes a lot of the daily obstacles you go through become part of your normal conversation… like how are they even going to get shoes? How are they even going to get there? How are they going to get their mom off the floor when they're drunk and things like that, like they don't even understand? It's like completely different.

Stacy, a low-income first-generation student, struggling through her semester and post-interview sharing that she once again did not have a good semester and had to drop several classes, shares

> As far as school because I had to take a year off due to my mental illness, I feel like being in school period - that is going to really boost me - That's going to positively impact me period.

Almost all of the non-participants shared significant struggles in their life in the interviews. Each one had their own story about that struggle and how it impacted them personally as well as how it impacted their educational journey. When asked about their level of empathy and how it had changed over the course of their semester and/or previous experiences, several indicated that empathy was an outcome of their life struggle. As I reflected on their responses related to empathy, I connected the consideration that in the intercultural competence literature, empathy is also often considered an outcome of intercultural experiences. Larry goes on to indicate that the struggles in his life actually cause him to have more empathy for others.

I feel like not having money, living in an area like, that you just kind of develop into a

person that knows that if somebody needs help, you help them regardless of their

situation. Feeling a need to help people just so that I can feel better so that like my life is

not a waste.

Juana, a low-income first-generation technical student, who struggles with what she wants to do

with her life because it was "traumatizing in high school when you do not know what you want

to do" and she has tried many avenues shares about her level of empathy in this excerpt:

I definitely think I am over-empathetic like to a fault. I can have empathy for the devil.

See the good in everyone and definitely sometimes a doormat because of it, but you know

I'm working on it. And I would say it's probably something to do with my environment or

the way I was raised. I was raised in what might be called a militaristic household.

Life Struggles Stand in the Way

Although it is positive and uplifting to consider how life struggles can serve as a

motivator to participate, there are also some students who share how their multiple life struggles

simply stand in the way of them participating in study abroad. In the interviews, I asked non-

participant students about whether they would participate in study abroad and/or would find it

valuable to participate, several had life struggles that stood in the way of their participation.

For example, Stacy, a low-income, first-generation, black student who started her

education by going out-of-state and then was not able to make it work, returned to her home

town and now is enrolled for her second chance education at Kirkwood, Stacy works almost full-

time to help pay for her education and repeatedly mentioned how financial aid "barely gives me

any money" and how education "takes all my money", shares about her struggle with her mental

health, struggles due to racism, and how all of these struggles would be a barrier for her to travel abroad, although she is definitely interested in other cultures,

> Especially with my anxiety, that will drive me through the roof. For me personally, just trying one new thing I'm freaking out. I'm sweating bullets. My whole world changed around me would ultimately make me stronger. But being there I don't know what would happen to me.

Scott shares how his responsibilities are too much to try study abroad although he says "I have an interest because I've traveled. I think it's interesting to learn about lifestyles of other people". Even with this level of interest, he shares how his obligations outweigh his availability,

> This is going to be the first semester I have to juggle three things: school, work and my own stuff. I think that's definitely going to be hard because any other person up here (at KCC) doesn't have the same responsibilities - they just have to make sure their room is clean..

In some cases, the non-participants shared with me how they were perceived as "less than" due to their LIFTR identities as is the case here with Juana, a low-income, first-generation, CTE student who reflected on here CTE status this way,

> People put a stigma on it and say it's easier because oh, You're cooking, learning to build a house and then the people who are doing Math and stuff, have only 3 classes and that's very nice. But you know what I do is harder. Some people say your GPA is not the same as my GPA because you're in a technical program and stuff like that.

Larry shares how he is not from the "right background" to fulfill his dreams in the excerpt below.

> Back in middle school, I always wanted to be a neurosurgeon. As a kid I always wanted to be a doctor. It was one of those things. I'm not from the right background. I don't have

the money. That kind of stuff. I had the grades. I just felt like there was so much else that like it felt so out of reach.

Interest and Experience with other Cultures

The next theme that was prevalent among non-participants was an overall interest in other cultures and/or experience with other cultures. This theme may seem counter-intuitive to some but was clearly present in the interview transcripts. One may assume that non-participants do not participate in intercultural experiences because they are not interested. This would fit with the deficit mindset that was discussed in the theoretical framework of this study. There were definitely a small minority of the interviews where students expressed a lack of diversity in their upbringing and a lack of access to experiences with other cultures. The excerpts supporting this experience are among the minority. Here are some examples:

Ella, a non-participant who identified as low-income, first-generation and pursuing a 2-year technical degree shares that she hosted foreign exchange students as a high school student and also studied abroad herself in high school for a year, shares that growing up in her small town community "The people we see in school, we are not very diverse, but then we learn about like different cultures and stuff"

Theo, a first-generation, technical rural student who grew up on a farm and has the goal of taking over his family farm after he completes his 2-year degree at Kirkwood, shares that prior to coming to the city where the community college is located he did not have much interaction with people that were different from him "It's definitely different being up here... just all the people and there's a whole bunch of different people… just different people"

Besides the excerpts indicating their home communities were not very diverse, there were also excerpts across the group stressing similarities and how other cultures add perspective and

value to the community. The majority of non-participant interviewees express a distinct interest

for other cultures and a desire to engage with people who are different from them to better

understand the world. Consistent with the idea that interculturality deepens understanding of

inequalities that shape cultural diversity (Dietz, 2018), non-participants seemed to know

inherently that intercultural experience is an avenue toward increased understanding.

Several excerpts indicated that LIFTR participants recognized their communities did not

possess much diversity. Larry, a non-participant LIFTR, who had traveled to Japan with a friend

as a 15-year-old, experienced an interracial marriage, and had experienced several traumatic

experiences in his life shares

> Growing up, I saw a lot of.. What's a nice word for it? I'll just say it. I saw a lot of I'll just
>
> say it, 'racists'. I find a lot of those in small towns. I never understood what their deal
>
> was. And seeing more and more essays and research coming out about embracing other
>
> cultures... Whenever I think about it, It's like, Why are we not any farther along with this
>
> than we are?

> Ella, who in the excerpt above indicated that the people in her school were not very

diverse, also stresses the importance of similarities such as "I think it just takes one person to

open up and share their story for everyone else to realize how alike we all are."

Valerie shares that she is interested in other cultures because she is from a homogenous

community. Again, this debunks the deficit narrative that indicates people from small rural

communities are not interested in meeting people who are different from them. On the contrary,

Valerie shares the reason why she is interested in other cultures in this excerpt "I think it comes

from being from a small town. It was kind of one of those everybody knows everybody.

Everybody is like the same background." Because of this feeling that everybody is from the same background, she wanted to explore other types of people.

Five of the ten non-participants had some experience including living in another country or another culture for a considerable length of time, hosting exchange students, working directly in a job that required a great deal of interaction with workers from other cultures or who spoke other languages, or traveled on multiple trips for vacation or otherwise to other countries.

Comparison of Study Abroad, IaH and Non-Participant Themes

This dissertation's findings have been presented in this chapter as qualitative themes identified as prevalent among community college LIFTRs who are members of three different subsets: those who participate in study abroad, those who participate in IaH, and those students who do not participate in planned intercultural activities. Themes were generated through multiple methods of collecting the voices of LIFTR students who are often overlooked in the international education literature. The aim of this qualitative component of the research has been to get to know the LIFTR students, hear their stories, understand their motivations, and gauge the impact that interculturality made on their educational experience at the community college.

RQ4 asks the question of comparison across types of experiences. How does the impact of study abroad compare to IaH? How does the impact of study abroad and IaH compare to non-participants? By utilizing the themes presented in this chapter, Table 25 illustrates a comparison of themes derived from student stories of various level of participation. It is important to note that all of the community college students included in this study identify with one or more of the LIFTR identities so the themes that have emerged here represent students with identities that are less likely to have been included in previous study abroad research. See Appendix H for detail on LIFTR identity affiliations and intersectionality of each individual student.

Similarities

Table 25 illustrates that all three groups of LIFTRs, whether they participated in planned intercultural experience or not, thematically show that they are interested in and/or have experience with other cultures. This theme leads to the conclusion that community college students are indeed interested in intercultural experiences and even expect to engage in interculturality of some sort in their higher education experience at the community college.

Table 25

Theme Comparison by Participant Type

Theme	Study Abroad	IaH	Non-Participant
Interest/Experience with other Cultures	X	X	X
Maximizing Intercultural Opportunities	X	X	
Job Relevance	X	X	
Personal Growth in Appreciation for Diversity	X	X	
Human Connection, Networking and Friendships	X	X	
Experience Opened Eyes to New Perspectives	X	X	
Life Struggles and Second Chance	X	X	X
Life Struggles Contribute to Empathy	X	X	X
Life Struggles Stand in the Way			X

This finding is noteworthy on two accounts. First, it provides direct evidence disputing the deficit theory which indicates that students who are from non-elite background such as LIFTRs are not interested in participating in intercultural experiences. All three groups of Kirkwood students in this study indicated a strong interest and/or experience with other cultures.

Second, this finding is noteworthy in its implications for the practices of many community colleges and TVET like institutions where planned intercultural experiences in the curriculum are not provided and/or prioritized in an intentional way (Helms et al., 2017). Findings in this study indicate that LIFTRs at community colleges are interested and see the opportunities for benefit, supporting the literature presented in the literature review demonstrating a need for community college and TVET administrators and faculty to offer a curriculum with an intentional intercultural experience component in the interest of a human capability and social justice approach (Tikly, 2013).

Table 25 also indicates that many of the themes between IaH and study abroad are shared. The larger themes shared earlier in this chapter seem to be shared by both study abroad and IaH, including maximizing intercultural opportunities, job relevance, personal growth in appreciation for diversity, human connection, networking and friendships, broaden perspective and the shared LIFTR life struggles.

The topic of life struggles exhibited in multiple ways and life struggles were a very common theme indicated by all three groups. Although this manifestation of life struggles may have been expected based on LIFTR identity markers being associated with struggles, the key takeaway here is that life struggles do not equate with lack of motivation to participate in intercultural experiences, nor lack of interest. Life struggles instead may be even more of a motivator, reversing the perception of deficit to a perception of opportunity to engage in interculturality.

Three life struggle themes are highlighted in Table 25. The three themes are as follows: life struggles contribute to empathy, life struggles, and second chance, and life struggles stand in the way. Excerpts from the interviews reveal that all three categories of student talk about life

struggles. Life struggles are not unique to only non-participants. In all three cases of life

struggles, when LIFTRs talk about their life struggles it is often accompanied with students self-

ascribing themselves a higher level of perceived empathy due to the life struggle. This matching

of life struggles to empathy is important because empathy is a common attribute ascribed to

interculturally competent individuals (Deardorff, 2006). My own reaction to the conversations

about empathy led me to believe that perhaps LIFTRs with life struggles are indeed more

uniquely prepared to engage in interculturality, more equipped to tackle change and cultural

difference, than non-LIFTRs based on their own perceived empathy ratings. This perception is

anti-deficit in nature because it switches the perspective of viewing a life struggle as a deficit to

viewing it as an asset.

The second life struggle theme illustrated in the Table 25 that is common across all three

groups is that life struggles lead LIFTRs to perceive themselves as in a second chance mode of

life or second chance mode of education. They have failed once and are trying again, and

therefore have resilience to persevere in this second chance opportunity that the community

college education affords them. The excerpts presented in all three groups indicate that the

second chance mode increases their motivation to participate in education as a whole, and in this

case, in intercultural experiences. The excerpts indicate that the second chance mode is once

again not expressed from a position of deficit, but rather as an asset contributing to their success,

resilience, and their ability to participate in educational opportunities.

Differences

The comparison presented in Table 25 illustrates some differences to note particularly

between non-participants and participants regarding what they learned from their educational

experience. Non-participants did not have a theme that emerged about professional impact or

career relevance although they were asked directly about how their semester would impact their professional life or career. Analyzing the transcripts, non-participants sometimes shared how their study at Kirkwood during the semester was relevant to their career, but not to the same level or depth of the participants in study abroad or IaH. Interculturality experienced in study abroad and IaH also created a theme of a greater appreciation for diversity where non-participants did not share a similar learning experience from their normal on-campus education during the semester. Non-participants also did not present with a theme about broadening perspectives or the theme about human connection.

A unique non-participant theme is that a life struggle has stood in the way of studying abroad and/or interculturality in some other form. To this question, LIFTR non-participants clearly indicate that life struggles are the primary obstacle. The life struggles discussed in the interviews with non-participants were often multiple per individual and overlapping in struggle. Non-participants shared their life struggles in a very open and matter-of-fact way. In fact, in seven of the ten non-participant interviews, students spent significant time in the interview sharing with me some deep life struggles such as poverty, food insecurity, family upheaval due to job loss, death in the family, mental health struggles, etc. It is clear in the non-participant interviews that when asked about why they have not studied abroad or opted for an intercultural experience that life had gotten in the way and that no opportunity directly related to their area or opportunity put directly in front of them, as was the case of Tammi in the previous section, presented itself.

This theme about non-participant life struggles being an obstacle to participation provides an alternative to the deficit narrative. This shifts the focus of previous research that presupposes that LIFTRs do not participate because of a perceived deficit, or a disinterest in interculturality.

This deficit perspective has in the literature been attributed toa lack of social and cultural capital to participate in study abroad (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012; Weenink, 2014). Findings here alternatively conclude that non-participants are not disinterested or have a lack of awareness due to lack of a particular type of capital. Instead they are motivated but blocked by life struggles that stand in the way. The cause of non-participation is not lack of interest or even lack of expectation that this type of activity should be part of their normal higher education experience. Instead, it is about life getting in the way.

Non-participants speak clearly about their interest in interculturality, past experience in interculturality in their daily lives, and clearly expect interculturality to be part of their higher education experience. This theme indicates that LIFTR students' lack of elite status and lack of social and cultural capital are not equivalent to a lack of interest in interculturality. The inability to participate was not identified with deficit or lack of interest. Instead, the inability to participate was related to something difficult that got in the way of the participation opportunity. The ability to participate was attributed to the fact that Kirkwood offered intercultural experiences within the curriculum. Participants noted the IaH opportunity within their class or the opportunity for study abroad in their program area as opportunities they expected and seized for maximum impact.

Short- and Long-Term Impact

This dissertation is jam-packed with data about intercultural experiences among LIFTR community college students and how those diverse experiences impact community college students in the short-term or immediately upon having the experience, and in the long-term, as in several years later in the case of the retrospective survey participants. LIFTR students experience short-term impact in their daily lives at the time of the intercultural experience as was evidenced by several of the IaH interviewees who shared how their experience was immediately applicable

to their work and made a difference in their daily lives. The long-term impact was illustrated by the retrospective survey results of study abroad students who had participated in intercultural experiences up to ten years in the past and still had regular reflections about the experience and saw it as the most meaningful experience in their education.

As international educators, we often hear the phrase "this experience changed my life." While this is a heart-warming and job-affirming result, it is also a difficult result to measure when presenting findings. This dissertation is unique in its analysis of that life-changing experience both in the near term on the job, in the community, in the current classroom and in the long term, in the development and realization of career and life paths several years in the future and as such begins to bring a more holistic understanding to how the intercultural experiences impact life changes.

Short-term impact is best illustrated through the IaH interviews wherein students interviewed expressed profound impact sharing how the experience impacted their immediate personal and professional lives in countless ways. The prevailing themes that emerged included an increased ability to work in diverse teams, employability skills like communication and problem-solving, and the ability to network with others and make connections. Because the IaH experience itself was happening at the same time the interviews were conducted, the interculturality itself was in the present and the impact was tangible the present as well.

IaH students show that they make a direct application of these newly discovered skills and perspectives to their current personal and professional lives. As I interviewed students, I heard a deep realization of how participating in IaH opened doors to new perspectives in the short-term and allowed students to see the world through a new lens. For example, one IaH student shared how he went to work the next day after the IaH experience and realized he had the

skills to talk to his co-worker who he earlier thought did not speak English. These types of immediate realizations and direct applications of interculturality and the opportunities that interculturality allows were frequent in the comments and excerpts shared.

Long-term impact was also explored in this study allowing for a more holistic picture of how LIFTR community college interculturality impacts students and their communities in the long-term. LIFTR community college students who had studied abroad from one to ten years prior participated in the study through the retrospective survey and personal interviews. There were 190 survey responses followed up by 18 interviews that contribute to learning about long-term impact of interculturality within community college students who have graduated and are already members of the working community, many local. Questions in the interview asked students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves long-term.

Contributing to the research that has been done on long-term impact on intercultural experiences overall, this study examines long-term impact specifically on community college students, understanding that community college students are those most likely to impact local communities and the unique industries in which they work in the local context.

The surveys and interviews with the long-term study abroad participants showed that participants' personal and professional lives were directly impacted by the experience. Students gained intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes including confidence, courage, independence, empathy, self-awareness, and respect for others. Other noted impacts included an increase in communication skills, adaptability, relatability, open-mindedness, and the ability to be reflective. Like the overall themes, long-term impact was similar in terms of job relevance, personal growth in appreciation for diversity, human connection, networking and friendships, subsequent travel and international experiences as well as opening eyes to new perspectives.

The two themes which stood out as unique to the long-term respondents that did not show up as regularly in the short-term respondents included two themes. The first theme was intercultural knowledge or knowledge about other cultures. The second theme reflected on how their experience with interculturality challenged their personal values or was a major turning point in life. These two themes are explored a bit more in the following two sections.

Intercultural Knowledge

One of the most recurring themes derived from the coding of those who had experienced study abroad in the past was that of cultural learning or knowledge about other cultures. This theme was much more prevalent in the study abroad students reflecting on study abroad that happened years in the past than it was on the students who were currently engaging in IaH. Past research in the field of intercultural experiences has identified this type of cultural learning as intercultural knowledge and has determined that intercultural knowledge is indeed a common outcome of intercultural experiences. In this type of research, cultural learning is often described as knowledge growth about factual information and experiences about day-to-day experiences such as food, home life, transportation, educational norms, art, dance, political discussions, etc. that are part of the host culture (Czerwionka et al., 2015). The survey indicated over 95% agreed or strongly agreed with the impact statement related to learning culture. Learning culture was also the highest theme under motivations to participate in study abroad.

The survey findings when combined with the interview findings conclude that one of the greatest take-aways long-term is the learning that students gained from learning about other cultures, the knowledge component. This was not as prevalent in the IaH experiences. The IaH experiences were more focused on the learning of the intercultural skills derived such as

communication, networking, problem-solving, or flexibility and then applying these skills directly to their current job or life situation.

Challenged Values and/or Turning Point in Life

The second interesting comparison between the short-term and long-term impact is about how study abroad participants frequently spoke about the long-term impact their intercultural experience had on their life decisions. They explicitly stated how it opened up options for them in terms of career and/or social mobility. Several mentioned that it either affirmed their choice of career and/or influenced them to change direction in their career. Several excerpts were focused on significant changes in their lives including impact on career, marriage, decisions about education and/or overall lifestyle choices. IaH participants did indicate some of this in their responses, but without the benefit of time to reflect upon the experience this deeper level of personal values being changed or life taking a different turn did not show up as a frequent theme among the IaH shorter term students.

Debunking the Deficit Narrative

This research is framed by anti-deficit theory and perspectives. In the theoretical framework chapter, the anti-deficit perspective is presented as a way to view students as having the capabilities or assets needed to partake in interculturality. Throughout the interviews and responses from students, community college students indicate that the very attributes that are often viewed as deficit for intercultural experiences are indeed the assets that propelled them forward in their experience of interculturality. All three groups including study abroad, IaH and non-participants found interculturality in the circumstances that surround them, whether that be in the classroom, outside of the classroom or in normal life. In this section, excerpts are

presented about how the identities of rural, low-income, technical, or first-generation students were reversed from deficit to asset.

Rural is Not a Deficit

Rural student interviews conducted ask rural students about their identities as rural students and how that impacts them in their educational pursuits. Rural student responses are overwhelmingly positive and present with an asset mindset. Rural students do not view rurality as a deficit. To the contrary, respondents clarify the positive aspects of their rural identity indicating that being from a rural background makes them more independent, competitive, resilient, etc. Rural students share a clear sense of pride in their rural identity that comes across clearly and plainly in the interviews. This rural student asset-based response is true for both study abroad, IaH and non-participants alike who share the rural student identity. There are several examples to share from the excerpts.

For example, Lucy, a low-income, technical, rural study abroad participant, indicates that it was actually the fact that she was from a small town that pushed her into wanting to go study abroad. In her excerpt here she shares, "we just mostly stick to our little corner of the world and don't do anything out of the ordinary, so I think being from a small town and maybe pushed me like let's go do this like let's go see the world besides like living in small town and before we settle down kind of thing."

Several rural student respondents indicate that for them, being from a rural or small town upbringing meant that they experienced their daily life as "always a competition" since everyone knows everyone and "face" must be maintained. Luis, a low-income first-generation rural student, in his pre-IaH Interview shares that being from a small town made him more competitive and driven.

There is a general sense from the rural interviewees that they view life with a "Nothing is impossible attitude" that leads to more a resilient nature. When asked if faced to move to another culture, IaH pre-interviewee Carlos indicates he thinks it would be very difficult and hard to adjust but he finishes his comments by stating "I'd find a way". During the post-interview after the IaH experience, Carlos says this type of intercultural adaptation "seems more plausible" where before it did not seem something he could relate to. In this way, the IaH experience gave him some tools to help him "find a way". In the IaH pre-interview, Josiah indicated that if faced with living or working in another culture, he is not afraid. He mentions "I can accomplish anything I put my mind to."

Theo, a non-participant, who identifies as a rural student indicated that his main struggle is that he gets homesick often so that he often drives home during the week to see his home and family. He also mentions how he learned quite a bit about Brazil in his agriculture class and thinks he will learn more because this stimulated more interest for him in other cultures and in agriculture in other places, comparisons, and contrasts between agriculture in Brazil and the U.S. In his interview he shares how his rural identity is an asset to him and how it also motivates him to learn more. There is no mention of rural being a deficit.

Low-income Status is Not a Deficit

Similar to the rural student identities, low-income students also do not necessarily view themselves as having a deficit due to their low-income identity. When probed in the interview about their identities as low-income students, most responses exemplify an asset mindset by all of the students including the study abroad, IaH and non-participants. The examples of asset mindset include descriptions about being more resourceful, determined, persistent, resilient, gracious, empathetic and hard working. All of these attributes are deemed an asset rather than a

deficit and all are linked to the low-income status. The low-income component is mentioned many times in the interview as an identity trait but not as someone with a deficit nor as someone without resources.

In the case of study abroad participation among low-income students, they repeatedly stress how they were able to save up and/or find resources to make it happen due to the enormity of the opportunity. They go on to describe on multiple occasions how they are scrappy, resourceful, and know how to make things work. The scholarship opportunity is one way they achieve the opportunity of education abroad, for example, and also finding help through innovative fundraising with family, working extra hours, saving tips, etc. IaH and non-participants also mention these asset-based traits in their responses and when reflecting on their low-income identities, bring up the positive components that are pushing them to be successful. Even if they are not able to engage in a planned intercultural experience, they see other ways that interculturality is presented in the classroom through exposure to students who are different from them. For example, Ella talks about her exposure to students who are non-traditional or much older than she is and how she has learned from them, experienced difference in the classroom as well as similarities. She credits her low-income status as one reason why she understands the struggles that other non-traditional students face whether it is due to age, race, or other identities.

For example, Lana says "Being low-income pushed me to work harder". Another interviewee, Valentina said "I was low-income which means I worked really hard". Fatma says "Being low-income, I wanted to help someone who was worse off than me". Fatma also shares "Even with the scholarship and the help, I still had to pay for my own airfare". She goes on to say "So it was a huge financial burden for me that I couldn't pay. But I love my family because we're very family oriented. And like I said, they're very supportive. So together they came up

with, we just gave all that they could. And I did what I could. And that's how I was able to make the journey. I would have never been able to go if it weren't for their help and their sacrifice." She continues with "When you are in this, I guess bigger group (low-income), it's easy to think that you can't do something like study abroad, that it's too much of a fantasy. There's just too many variables. I would beg to differ that it is possible and the wealth of experience that you learn about yourself and about other countries but about yourself as well, is totally worth it."

Even when asked to talk about being low-income, Fatma indicate "I am very privileged". She says she comes from a "hard working family that stays at the same level of income no matter what they do."

Low-income students shared that they are driven by hard work and determination. When asked to describe her experience being a low-income student, Jenn said pre-experience that "I know that growing up, it was just me, my mom, and my brother, and so we were really low-income. I always just knew that I needed to do something more, I guess, you could say I knew that I had to set the bar higher and I have realized that to do so, you have to adapt to people. You have to become good at communication, so I would say that kind of plays a role in it"

Tammi, a low-income first-generation student who participated in IaH reflects,

When I first heard about, I guess when I was emailed me about it, I was thinking I don't know why I am being invited to this. It sounds like something for somebody ummm more than I am. Like I do good in school but I don't know, I just, I felt really lucky and honored to be offered to join the team.

Josiah, IaH pre-interview says "Other people may be smarter than me, but I feel like I definitely will outwork anybody that's not compared to me. . . I'm going to outwork you and work as hard as I can possible to attain the knowledge than I am able to."

Several low-income respondents regarded their low-income identity as a factor that equates to a higher level of empathy for all people, particularly people who struggle. Many of the students who indicated they were low-income students indicated that there was a general relationship between being a low-income person and having empathy, or having life struggles and having empathy. In general, students shared that when you have less, you can understand people better. For example, Josiah in his pre-interview discussing his low-income identity says, "Being from a single parent home, I just understand the struggles of life sometimes and I'm definitely empathetic for others." Luis in his pre-interview discussing that he would rate himself as a 10 on empathy on a 1 to 10 scale because he "has had really bad luck in life" which helps him understand other people's perspectives.

First-generation Status is not a Deficit

In the same way as the previous two section on rural and low-income, first-generation students do not speak of their affiliation with first-generation status as being a deficit. To the contrary, interview transcripts show that first-generation students at Kirkwood speak proudly about their first-generation status and how they can serve as an example for others. As discussed in the literature review, there is very little research on first-generation students at community colleges who participate in intercultural experiences. This study puts forward one of the only opportunities to understand the experiences of this group.

It is important to mention that first-generation students were the only of the four LIFTR identities where findings from the quantitative dataset found that first-generation students did not participate in study abroad more than non-first-generation. Undergraduate research on study abroad, although limited, had confirmed the same finding that first-generation students were less likely to participate in study abroad than non-first -generation students at the four-year university

level (Andriano, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2004). My research, instead of accepting the outdated

deficit perception, joins a very small cadre of research that hones in on first-generation students

with a strengths-based approach instead of a deficit-based perception (Wick et al., 2019). It is

key to note that even fewer studies exist that involve community colleges, the higher education

sector of choice for first-generation students.

First-generation students in this study do however participate more in IaH activities than

non-first-generation and shared significant stories about the impact that the experience had on

their personal and professional lives. This means that although first-generation students do not

participate in study abroad in large numbers or proportions, when they were offered an

opportunity to participate through IaH, they experience profound impact. The stories shared were

significant to their personal and professional lives. More research is needed to understand why

first-generation students at community college are not choosing to study abroad in light of the

findings about the community college student profile and the need to tailor opportunities to their

needs.

Through further analysis of the first-generation student data in this study, several unique

themes emerge specific to first-generation status. The three prevalent themes from first-

generation students were maximizing intercultural opportunities, being proud of debt-free status,

and finally, serving as an example or role model for others like them.

First-generation status students share the same theme of maximizing interncultural

opportunities as the non-first-generation students with several stories shared about how when

opportunities are presented, they tend to seize them. This theme is definitely present among those

first-generation students who chose to participate in study abroad but it is interesting to note it is

also prevalent in the IaH experience, where first-generation students did not opt in to the IaH

experience but when it was presented, they are making the most of it, optimizing the IaH experience to get the most out of it, taking on leadership roles in the multicultural groups, and serving as a leader in the experience.

In addition to the theme of first-generation students maximizing both study abroad and IaH experiences, when looking at the first-generation responses separately from the others, a theme of how proud they are to be debt free emerged. This theme came from both IaH, SA and non-participants. This theme of debt free matches with much of the literature about how first-generation students mark affordable tuition and financial aid packages as the top reasons why they choose a certain college or academic program (Ezarik, 2022). International educators considering more ways to engage first-generation students in interculturality should emphasize opportunities that are labeled as affordable opportunities so that first-generation students can relate to the offering in a way that means more to them. Opportunities for leadership in IaH virtual exchange is also an attractive opportunity to first-generation students and should be intentionally employed to facilitate more meaningful participation for this group.

Another common them of the first-generation students who participated in interculturality was that they would take this chance to serve as an example or role model for others who are considering study abroad or who have an opportunity for an IaH experience. Several excerpts from first-generation students speak to the idea that they have a desire to serve as a role model for others, paying it forward to other students in the future.

LIFTR Gratitude

Across the board, students with LIFTR identities expressed an overwhelming sense of gratitude for either the opportunity to experience interculturality or the actual experience. It was almost as if they had absorbed the deficit narrative that had been put upon them and experienced

these opportunities as something they were "lucky" to have had access to due to their identities

and even enrollment in a community college institution. Fatma, a low-income first-generation

study abroad alumni says she is "grateful for the experience" that was provided for an

intercultural experience while she was a student at Kirkwood. This sentiment was expressed

often for both study abroad and IaH. Here are a few examples of excerpts:

> Lana, a low-income first-generation study abroad alumni, shares
>
> I was only able to study abroad because my scholarship was able to pay for it. If I didn't
>
> have my scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to experience any of us. I think as a first-
>
> generation I'm really really grateful for the opportunity. But it was also like even going
>
> on the trip and like having to afford food and anything like if I'm going to buy souvenirs
>
> or anything. That was really a difficult task because I didn't have the money for it.
>
> Outside of all that, I am still very grateful for the opportunity to meet everyone I did and
>
> experience what I did. I feel like it's kind of hard to explain.

Similarly, Tammi, a low-income first-generation IaH participant shares in her post IaH

experience,

> It wasn't an experience I thought I would ever get. I never thought it was like something
>
> that I was asked to do. I didn't even seek it out. It seeked me out. I feel like it was just
>
> really not something I expected. So, I thought maybe it's not such a big deal if they are
>
> asking ME to do it. Wow – I was asked to do this thing and it actually means something
>
> and is important
>
> The sense of the memory of the experience itself being valuable and treasured, the sense

of the importance of being able to reflect on the memory is strong came through clearly from

many LIFTRs. Wes, a study abroad alumni with low-income, first-generation, and rural

identities, shares that it was an "experience I wouldn't trade for anything" and that he typically "gets emotional because it is an important part of my life". Valentina, a study abroad alumni with a rural background, points out that the intercultural experience was a "highlight of my Kirkwood experience".

Reflecting on this sense of gratitude expressed by students and the heightened level of appreciation for the opportunity exhibited in so many excerpts from the surveys and interviews, it is critical to note that this gratitude was not expressed by LIFTRs in terms of students being "allowed" to participate, or in terms of deficit students thanking the powers of higher education for allowing them to join. On the contrary, the gratitude is genuine due to the students' ultimate desire and wishes to engage in interculturality as part of their higher education experience being realized and the candid gratitude for the impact they derived from it. In other words, they are thankful because they experienced interculturality, did the work to engage in it, experienced personal and professional impact, and reaped the rewards of intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes, not because of the experience being given to them by some higher power.

Conclusion

Listening to LIFTR community college students' voices in the research interviews and survey responses illuminates new themes and shines new light on the deficit label often ascribed to LIFTR identities. Findings provide a rare laser-focus opportunity to recognize LIFTR identities, explore their lived experiences, and project the voices of LIFTRs who seldom have a voice in the field of international educational exchange, particularly when they do engage in interculturality but also when they do not.

Themes presented in this chapter describe how community college LIFTR students face great life challenges and struggles that impact their educational experience as well as their

experience of interculturality. Their diverse and intersectional identities play a role in how they experience people who are different from them. Those who studied abroad and participated in IaH talk about their personal life struggles in terms of community college serving as their second chance and their struggles providing them with a stronger ability to empathize with others. Non-participants share about their life struggles in terms of standing in the way of their success.

LIFTR students share how they make purposeful choices related to participation in intercultural activities and when offered the opportunity, they maximize the opportunity and do not take it for granted. Resilience and perseverance are displayed. Those LIFTRs who engage in intercultural experiences see the relevance to their jobs, future careers, and long-term well-being. Interculturality is experienced as an impact on their personal lives through a greater recognition and appreciation of human diversity. Both IaH and study abroad participants express how interacting with people from different cultural identities expanded their own networks and friendships and allowed them to develop better skills for connecting to others who are different from them in the future. These impacts were expressed both from those engaged in the short-term as well as long-term reflections on experiences that occurred up to 10 years in the past.

LIFTRs related to empathy as a quality they possess. Empathy has long been considered a positive outcome of intercultural competence or participation in intercultural experiences. In this study's findings, empathy is presented not as an outcome of an intercultural experience but rather as an outcome of community college students' life struggles. The evidence shows that LIFTRs in this study possess or at least perceive that they possess empathy as a pre-condition to their participation in intercultural experiences. In their words this provides the opportunity of engaging in interculturality as opportunity that would be experienced with ease and great impact by LIFTRs.

The findings in this chapter conclude that LIFTR students at Kirkwood have more intercultural experience than has been assumed of the greater population of community college students by the deficit mentality. LIFTR students at Kirwkood also shared a genuine interest for other cultures and a desire to engage with other cultures as a part of their educational experience. More research is needed to identify whether LIFTR status among the larger population of community college students or students like them also defy expectations of the deficit mindset. In the next chapter, a more in-depth discussion will be presented related to debunking the deficit narrative and implications for social justice and greater equity of opportunity.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Exploring interculturality in community college LIFTR students over the course of this dissertation's journey has led to many striking discoveries, moments of deep reflection and a salient understanding of the empowerment and agency of community colleges and like-serving institutions to impact diverse students' lives and the greater good. Chapters 6-8 presented counter-intuitive findings indicating that Kirkwood LIFTR students are indeed engaging in study abroad and IaH activities and deriving profound impact through their engagement in interculturality. The findings spotlight how diverse identities, elsewhere perceived as deficit, function as assets in the realm of interculturality.

As an introduction to the discussion, it is important first to review the definition of interculturality utilized in this dissertation, which is initially derived from Jackson's definition that states "Interculturality translates a process and something in the making when two individuals from different backgrounds meet" (Jackson, 2018, p. 5) as well as the Council of Europe's definition which asserts that interculturality is based in mutual respect and equity (LeClercq, 2003). The resulting definition applied in this dissertation asserts that interculturality is a process, based in equity and mutual respect that involves making sense of intercultural experience through exploring individuals' similar or different intersectional identities.

Interculturality calls into question the very nature of what is intercultural and asserts that intercultural is not necessarily something between nations but rather something between diverse individuals (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Dervin & Jacobsson, 2016; Jackson, 2018). Interculturality as a process, involves individuals of diverse identities engaging in intercultural experiences and connecting those experiences to daily life in practical and authentic ways.

Similarities are important connectors in encounters between individuals. Similarities as connectors are often identified when navigating multiple identities, such as LIFTR identities. Community college students are likely to possess very diverse backgrounds and therefore provide a unique opportunity to explore interculturality among LIFTR students.

Higher education internationalization involves the provision of intercultural experiences within the educational process. Intercultural experiences integrated into the curriculum include study abroad as well as Internationalization at Home (IaH) activities. The understanding of the process of interculturality as a recognition of similarity is an important concept described by Dervin (2015), where he points out that effective educators must create intercultural practices that respect individuality. This individuality includes accepting that those who might look, sound, and behave differently actually share striking commonalities. Interculturality exhibits here as an opposition to much of Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) and to intercultural study because the former primarily focuses on cultural differences across nations rather than similarities that transcend national boundaries. Dervin (2015) states that

> Identifying similarities might be a more rewarding intellectual and relational exercise than identifying mere difference, as it requires spending quality time with people and in-depth discussions – which, in an increasingly busy world or even school contexts, often is lacking (p.37).

This understanding and application of interculturality broadens the scope of what intercultural experiences are as well as the types of individuals who are apt to be impacted by them. Community college students in this study gained insight into their own diverse LIFTR identities and similarities through interculturality. Although the experiences themselves are global in nature, students gain an understanding of how identity facilitates internal learning. That

understanding then impacts their local experiences and local community. Interculturality validates that local and global can co-exist grounded on similarities.

This chapter begins with a discussion about how this research's discoveries call for social justice relative to the provision and implementation of intercultural experiences in higher education. Social justice is framed as giving agency to all students of all backgrounds and study areas to engage in interculturality. As a result, providing intercultural experiences to LIFTRs has the potential within higher education to profoundly impact diverse students, specifically when housed within the germane and suitable setting of the U.S. community college. Social justice is a real and present requisite within higher education. Interculturality serves as a tool or lens through which higher education can promote diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as promote social justice (Berger, 2020; Contreras Jr. et al., 2020; Whatley & Raby, 2020).

The second section of the discussion chapter discusses the way that the findings from this research reveal a new perspective on the community college student profile and the propensity for intercultural experiences. The final section addresses implications for international education leaders and administrators based on this research.

In the literature review in Chapter 2, the context of the community college emphasized that community colleges are open-access institutions. Open-access means that community college admission is open to all regardless of their identity markers, income, prior education, background, level of social capital, and any other identifier. International educators are called upon to recognize how when interculturality is integrated into open-access educational institutions such as the one in this study, students with marginalized identities whose best choice educational option is open-access, have greater agency to partake in intercultural experiences. This study has informed the field of higher education internationalization with data derived from

student populations and contexts that have not been investigated (Wood & Whatley, 2020; Wood & Raby, 2022b). Community college leaders are called upon to reframe the field of internationalization of higher education, pointing the focus away from the elite university mindset and instead widening the focus to target the non-elite sector including open-access institutions such as community colleges and TVET institutions. In this way, this study puts forth many great contributions to the field of higher education internationalization as a whole.

Social Justice

The theme of social justice pervades this research study with its focus on the non-elite underrepresented low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural populations. Although the study's focus is not squarely on elements of power and privilege typical to the identity markers of race and ethnicity, it is evident that intersectionalities of income, family status, geography, and type of study play a role in social justice. In this section, discussion is presented about community colleges as vehicles for social justice, followed by a general discussion of international education and its relationship to social justice. Interculturality is discussed as a broader way to view impact, followed by a discussion about how the debunking of the deficit narrative allows a more mindful approach to access and equity, by applying a capabilities approach that fosters an improved society overall.

Community Colleges Serve Social Justice

Since the inception of the U.S. community college, writers have pointed out the significance of community colleges and their natural affinity to social justice work (Baber et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2015; Heelan & Mellow, 2017; Reece, 2022; Robertshaw, 1982). Now in 2023, U.S. community colleges with increased internationalization efforts are primed for serving as the setting for studying interculturality's impact on achieving social justice, social mobility,

and a better society for all. Reece (2022) authored a book, *Social Justice and Community College Education*, describing the relationship in the U.S. between community colleges and social justice and stresses the central role that community colleges, as a sector, play in social justice in the U.S.

The United States has long-standing social and cultural structures that perpetuate inequality along race, ethnicity, and income lines. The primary role of American community colleges is to disrupt these structures on behalf of the students we serve. In this sense, community colleges are called to play a subversive role in contemporary society, but it is a good kind of subversion (Reece, B., 2022, p. 1).

Community colleges and other like institutions globally are the ideal setting for this research, and for subsequent work linking interculturality and social justice. Interculturality is based on mutual respect and equity. Community colleges carry out social justice work by virtue of their as open-access mission and the student populations that they serve. Community college students are more likely to be diverse, non-elite, and to have experienced life struggles. This study shows that when diverse, non-elite, struggling students have the agency to participate in interculturality as part of their education, they derive great impact from the experience that propels them beyond their deficit labels prescribed by others. Their learning may in fact be deeper because of their LIFTR identities.

The target population in this study, LIFTR community college students, are significant to the overall vision and goals of international education, particularly with the emblazoned focus on social justice for marginalized groups in our society (Legusov et al., 2022). Many international education practitioners envision international education as a potential means for bettering society (Brandenburg et al., 2019). If LIFTR students are concentrated in community colleges enrolling in community college programs of study because it is the only, as opposed to the best,

opportunity, then this represents a great source of educational inequality. Yet, as this study

shows, it is likely that they will participate in intercultural experiences if given the same

opportunity availed at elite four-year universities. LIFTR students in this study engage in

internationalization as part of their education and understand in a broader sense how their work

and decisions impact their local world and also global society. This research amplifies

community college student voices revealing that exposure and collaboration with other cultures

enhance their understanding of a bigger world and how they fit in it. As a result, the local context

of the community college is maximized as students reflect on new global viewpoints.

Internationalization of Higher Education and Social Justice

In our current world there is a mixture of global issues we face including worldwide

injustices, public health concerns, persistent calls for equity, discriminatory climate change

policies, where social justice is central on the minds of educators and the greater population.

Leaders in the field of higher education internationalization should investigate how international

education can advance social justice. In NAFSA's book edited by LaNitra Berger (2020), Berger

highlights the potential for the future and current society that social justice ideals and

international education ideals go hand-in-hand. In the first chapter of this book, Wick and Willis

(2020) assert that international education's objectives of promoting cultural exchange and peace

are aligned to the social justice goals of addressing systemic oppression and inequality.

In a special journal issue of *Frontiers* on diversity, equity and inclusion within

international education, authors point out that international education has given woeful attention

to inclusion and equity when it is apparent that larger proportions of underrepresented students

are making up increasingly larger proportions of our student populations (Contreras Jr. et al.,

2020). This makes it more and more important that international education practitioners

understand the role of social justice, power, and privilege, in order to support present-day student populations.

Interculturality: Beyond Individual Intercultural Competence

Planned intercultural experiences within higher education have been shown to result in an individual gaining a trait known as intercultural competence. This study stretches past the gaining of a specific trait and instead analyzes the process of engaging in intercultural experiences and the subsequent impact of international education activities beyond individual intercultural competence.

Traditionally, international educators have been hyper-focused on the pursuit of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009) as the most significant outcome derived from interculturality and much effort has been made to define, describe and measure levels of individual intercultural competence. Studies have also concluded that intercultural competence is a personal attribute desirable by employers and the global economy and is generally perceived as positive for students to attain as a graduate attribute (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021b) for the sake of personal gain and/or employability.

Going beyond the acquisition of a trait, this study seeks to establish a broader outcome, indicating that a better and more equitable society can be possible through meaningful engagement in interculturality. The action of community college students from marginal groups engaging in interculturality in a meaningful way, reflecting on their identities and intersectionality of identities, results in a greater understanding of diversity and social justice. For example, the students who participated in intercultural activities stressed their identities as LIFTRs and how that identity was important to them throughout the process of interculturality. They were proud of how they served as a role model for others of LIFTR status. They also

revealed how they perceived a difference in their understanding of diversity and the benefits of a

diverse workplace through this self-reflection and engagement in their own awareness of

identity.

Debunking Deficit and Realizing Capabilities Approach

Society's inequity of social class, and consistently placing those who lack certain

attributes, such as LIFTRs, in a place of deficit leads to a stratification of higher educational

opportunities. This stratification impacts non-elite community college students when

opportunities for interculturality are not availed to them thus disallowing critical consciousness

about their identities in relation to the identities of those from other cultural backgrounds.

International educators are called upon here to provide this access to community college students

in broader way to advance social justice.

Applying this study's theoretical framework of capabilities theory (Sen, 2009) and an

asset-based approach, community colleges who by their nature serve non-elite populations can

apply a theoretical lens to international education, designing international education programs

and activities specifically for groups of students who recognize and critique systems of inequity

in all its forms: racial, economic status, geography, etc. The capabilities approach is a valuable

tool for understanding and evaluating international education policies and practices from the

perspectives of individuals as well as the greater society. It calls for expanding the framework for

understanding the rationale for interculturality beyond economic reasons, broadening the

rationale of interculturality to include the betterment of society as a whole.

There have been other studies focused on the capabilities theory and study abroad or

interculturality. Fakunle (2021) finds that Sen's capability approach is important to reframe

internationalization to reach its full potential in an increasingly multicultural and global context.

She finds that the range of students' rationales and thus impacts of study abroad are broad and that individual identities play a role (Fakunle, 2021).

This dissertation expands upon that research drawing conclusions related to community college students' marginalized identities. It calls for an expansion of access to students from non-elite identities, who are often viewed as "lesser than", facilitating their individual agency to make change and to promote social justice. By honoring their knowledge base and their capability to participate in a meaningful way, social justice is served.

International education practitioners and decision-makers at community colleges particularly are called upon to re-imagine international education activities like study abroad and IaH as opportunities to advance social justice for all students, not just the elite, and take up this opportunity to improve internationalization of higher education for all.

Revealing a New Perspective on the Profile of Community College Students

With this social justice lens that has been described in the previous section, the findings of this study reveal a new perspective on the profile of community college students, and how intercultural experiences are optimally designed for community college students of diverse and marginalized identities. International educators are called to shift focus of international activities to serve the purpose of social justice and increased access. A comprehensive review of the community college enrollment identities at Kirkwood in the findings presented in Chapter 6 and their participation in international activities reveals a picture that does not match the typical picture assumed to be the profile of the U.S. community college student population. Community college students are diverse and come from identities that are often marginalized. However, when asked about their affiliation to such ascribed identities, they do not portray themselves as deficit or lacking interest. Instead, results indicate that this diverse profile of student has

intercultural experience and may likely have already engaged in interculturality. They are shown to possess a strong interest in learning about people who are different than them. Results indicate that the community college students in this study have the capability to engage in interculturality in a meaningful way, despite their non-elite backgrounds and identities and despite their struggles and obstacles.

This study reveals a new perspective and a comprehensive picture of LIFTR students at Kirkwood and how they actually participate in internationalization activities and frequently at a higher rate than non-LIFTRs. Past deficit-based literature has painted a picture of how underrepresented groups, who do not mimic the profile of the typical 4-year undergraduate study abroad student, simply do not participate and/or engage in interculturality due to their lack of identity markers and/or social capital (Brux & Fry, 2010; Doyle, 2009; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014; Salisbury et al., 2009; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012) . This deficit narrative is debunked by this research's illustration of how it is not necessarily the characteristics of the students who influence participation propensity but rather the opportunities and offerings of the institutions that influence participation. Institutions that align opportunities and offerings for interculturality with the schedules and desires of LIFTRs are able to involve this diverse population in international education participation. Hence, this study changes the field of study abroad and the field of internationalization of higher education as a whole from one that focuses on individual characteristics as motivators versus institutional offerings as motivators. This study confirms that students at community colleges, like the one in this study, acknowledge their existing intercultural background as a basis to enhance their interculturality as part of their educational experiences. The conclusion here for this new understanding of the profile is that the

monumental task for international educators is not to motivate underrepresented students, but rather to offer relevant opportunities that match their context.

The finding that CTE, rural and low-income students were more likely to study abroad than non-CTE, non-rural and non-low-income students, may be surprising, particularly to readers who are not as familiar with Kirkwood's institutional context. Kirkwood's overall global culture, both broadly and specifically among its faculty and curriculum, does have an impact on this high level of student participation in intercultural experiences. Likewise, there are indeed many community colleges in the U.S. and like institutions globally who are also engaged in intercultural learning and whose student populations may have similarities to this study. Research has been conducted on other marginalized populations at the community college and more research is needed to support multiple diverse groups in gaining access to intercultural experiences and understanding the impact. Several other studies and dissertations have been written about parallel populations at community colleges around the country (Barone, 2021; Fischer, 2021; Willis, 2012), but more is needed so that this type of research is the norm in the understanding of the impact of intercultural experiences rather than the exception.

Previous research involving community college students (Amani & Kim, 2018; Barone, 2021; Raby, 2008; Tillman, 2005) indicates that community college CTE students are searching for concrete intercultural experiences that will aid them in obtaining employment. This study goes one step further, supporting these findings, and further producing evidence about how Kirkwood CTE students are actualizing this search by participating in interculturality in high proportions. This study illustrates that developing study abroad opportunities directly related to technical program curricula is a successful strategy for providing abroad opportunities to all students, rather than just the elite. The non-elite do participate in interculturality and it is of

profound importance to their futures. Tying global experiences to workforce needs is a key

strategy for developing relevant global programming and has important implications for equity in

access as well as equity in participation in intercultural experiences. This study's finding that

technical/CTE trumps non-technical/CTE, that rural trumps urban, and that low-income trumps

non-low-income in participation debunks the idea that low-income, rural, and CTE participation

is unusual in education abroad internationalization. It is not unusual at the case study institution

where the opportunities are relevant, plentiful, and common.

Implications for International Education Leaders and Administrators

This research breaks new ground and has significant implications for all international

education leaders and administrators. This study explores interculturality among community

college students with marginalized identities, a group that is typically excluded from the

international education conversation. Based on these findings, international education leaders

and administrators are called upon to recognize the inequities of opportunities that currently exist

when comparing participation in education abroad at elite four-year institutions and two-year

community colleges. Given the results of this study exploring interculturality among LIFTR

populations, the disquieting dissonance in total enrollment in U.S. community college (nearly

50%) versus study abroad participation in U.S. community colleges (2%) is not acceptable and

not equitable.

Education leaders must strive to ensure equitable access to intercultural experiences

including study abroad, IaH and other means of acknowledging the interculturality already

present among students of diverse identities. The findings about LIFTR students and the

similarities and differences among participants and non-participants leaves me reflecting on how

leaders in the field of international education can influence the overall higher education

leadership agenda by ensuring that interculturality is part of the general curriculum of all students. Perhaps we can do a better job supporting non-participants in identifying and debunking their own deficit images by illustrating success stories of LIFTRs who have successfully engaged in interculturality.

International education leaders as well as the higher level administrators leading community college strategies and agendas should increase access to intercultural experiences to support student success. This study's finding indicating that participation in intercultural experiences at community colleges contributes to student success is building upon other research in the field (e.g. Raby et al., 2014; Whatley & González Canché, 2021). Community college students in this study shared how they achieved growth toward their academic and career success. Students shared how intercultural experiences affirm their academic goals and academic directions. Students indicated that study abroad impacted their ability to achieve social mobility, improved their employability skills, enhanced their job search skills, and increased their overall sense of self and confidence. Improvement in communication skills was one of the most cited outcomes by students contributing to better jobs and overall better lives. Students who participated in the long-term study abroad impact survey and interviews clearly derived profound impact in their lives from the experience, in their ability to interact with others, find employment, achieve social mobility, and understand opportunities that lie ahead of them. They overwhelmingly support the assertion that study abroad was the most meaningful experience in their education.

More research is needed to support this connection and link these attributes attained through intercultural experience participation to metrics such as degree completion, social mobility, transfer and academic success – all of which were stories told by LIFTR community

college student voices in this study. Students attribute study abroad to be a critical component of their higher education experience at community college.

Educating LIFTRs in our local communities who hold jobs as technicians, nurses, manufacturing operators, farmers and local support staff means offering them the opportunity to engage in interculturality, a desired opportunity. The outcomes of such experiences have been evidenced in the literature to provide students the transversal skills that are needed in today's digitized and globalized economy. Skills such as the need to work in diverse teams and/or know how to deal with adversity are those skills that are needed to cope in today's world. Understanding cultural differences and similarities in a hands-on way complements the education of our low-income, first-generation, technical, and rural students in society. This understanding serves the local community and promotes social justice. For social mobility to be possible, we must empower all students to experience crossing borders, interacting with other cultures, and understanding more about the world in which we live.

As advocates for global experiences, we must critically reflect on our practices to understand the underlying mission and values of international education activities. This critical reflection must then lead to intentional design of intercultural activities that contribute to social justice. We must hone our work to dismantle systemic forms of inequity, apply an equitable lens to where and when interculturality can be availed to all students, and identify what supports should be put in place for students of marginalized identities. The survey and interviews presented in this study provide evidence that LIFTR students are ready and willing for the opportunity. Global experiences and interculturality impact students in profound ways that result in transversal skills needed to create a better society.

LIFTR identities represent identities that have been labelled as "unable" or "deficit" to participate and this blinder must be lifted if the overall impact of interculturality and international education is to be realized. It is important for community college leaders to invest in providing intercultural experiences to diverse student populations that are served in this sector of higher education. This investment can serve to democratize access to intercultural experiences for all students.

Far too much focus has been placed on providing interculturality for those that can afford it and/or for those institutions that can afford it rather than placing international education and thus interculturality as a principal tenet of education at its core. The U.S. is one of the most diverse countries in the world and the U.S. community college higher education model provides educational opportunities for the most diverse U.S. populations. Diverse and marginalized groups do engage in interculturality at the community college. Rather than focusing international education research efforts on who does not participate and why, let us take an assets-based approach. By placing the focus on who is participating and who is engaging, the research gains perspective on the impact of interculturality and the impact it is having on our local communities.

As this study supports, when people of diverse and intersecting identities have an opportunity to truly engage with one another in an authentic and meaningful way within an educational setting, profound impact occurs not only on what is gained by the individual but on what is gained for society as a whole: peace and well-being for all.

This research study emboldens international educators and administrators to critically question deep-rooted stereotypes, broaden their lens, and expand their perspective on who participates in interculturality, how it occurs, and what impact is derived. Rather than limiting

scope to cultural differences between nations, international educators must look to the assets of diverse students who bring diverse identities and learned experiences of value with them to their educational experience. This diverse set of students is easily found at the community college. Educators must recognize that interculturality can and does exist among the non-elite students in our society particularly those attending community colleges. Valuing the intersectionality of diverse identities and the array of diverse knowledge bases, interculturality provides a new and provocative method of navigating untold contexts. By investing in and becoming inclusive to community colleges, higher education internationalization will serve as the means by which greater good and more just societies will rise.

Conclusion

U.S. community colleges educate nearly half of the U.S. college-going population. This fact inspired me to pursue the reasons why study abroad participation at U.S. community colleges is so low in proportion to the size of the population. Working at a community college and engaging in day-to-day interaction with students, I wondered if community college students were that intrinsically different than the students at the four-year university. I wanted to explore this more both from a data point of view and from a personal conversation point of view. The mixed method design allowed me to pursue that goal. I learned so much since starting at this point of dissonance between U.S. community college enrollment and study abroad participation. I learned about interculturality, about the impact of study abroad on those who do study abroad at U.S. community colleges, about the impact of IaH on those who are given the opportunity to engage with culturally different individuals as part of their community college education, and also about the community college student population as whole. Community college students are diverse. Community college students are engaging in interculturality by virtue of their

intersecting identities and differences as well as similarities and this research brings that to the forefront.

The purpose of this research has been to explore interculturality in US community college students, specifically focusing on often over-looked students who identify as low-income, first-generation, technical, and/or rural (LIFTR) students. I chose these identities for my research focus because I myself identified as a low-income, first-generation, and rural college student when I went to college. In my past intercultural experiences, I experienced unique impact from my own experiences with interculturality and these same LIFTR identities and wanted to explore other experiences among these identity groups. I chose to include the technical or CTE component out of a recognition of the volume of CTE students that Kirkwood serves through intercultural experiences and what appeared to me to be a lack of understanding about their need for intercultural experiences. My professional experience working with CTE students and faculty has yielded some of my greatest job intrinsic satisfaction through an overwhelming sense of impact when intercultural experiences were availed and partaken in by CTE students. I wanted to explore this part of my community college practitioner life that seemed to be creating the most impact on individual students.

The journey has taken me through some very powerful moments as I analyzed the enrollment data, read the survey responses, and engaged in meaningful work interviewing so many extraordinary Kirkwood students. It has been an emotional experience from the interaction with the research itself notwithstanding the turmoil in our world between 2019 and 2022, the time period of COVID, social justice movements, increased violence in the world and more.

Kirkwood Community College is a typical community college geographically located in the center of the U.S. Kirkwood provides a natural setting for this study due to its plentiful

internationalization activities and typical community college enrollment ratios including a good proportion of LIFTR students. Community colleges as a whole are a natural setting for interculturality study as well due to social justice being embedded in the mission of community colleges. Interculturality itself is based on equity and mutual respect. Similarly, community colleges are based on open-access and equity in opportunity for higher education. Interculturality is about the exchange between two people of different background and community colleges enroll a substantially more diverse group of students than any other sector of higher education.

I began this research journey with the aspirations of understanding community college students with marginalized identities and how we could encourage more of them to participate in more intercultural experiences. Through the research, I learned that the experiences LIFTR students already have as part of their life experiences are already an engagement in interculturality. The call to action for us, as educators, is to acknowledge the value of LIFTR and other marginalized groups' life experiences first and foremost, and learn from them. Yes, we must learn and listen, and at the same time offer new interculturality opportunities that will enhance and impact their personal and professional lives. Their backgrounds, knowledge, and struggles are key elements of intercultural understanding that have been discounted by me and others. Although I myself possessed these identities as a student, I had not registered the significance that someone of these identities brings to the intercultural experience.

Higher education administrators, especially those at community colleges, must consider educational reform that values and uplifts experiences and knowledge bases that are unambiguously and distinctly different than that of the higher education elite. As the value of others' experiences and knowledge bases are integrated into the fabric of our educational system,

the deficit perspective is debunked and educators are able to see students through a strengths-based lens rather than a deficit.

Earlier I indicated my wonder about whether community college students are intrinsically different from four-year university students. In this study, I found out that yes, they are different in diversity, resources, and motivations, but more importantly I found the infinite ways they are similar. Interculturality points the focus of analysis to similarities rather than differences. Both sets of students are human beings with capabilities and agency to create their own futures. LIFTR students themselves then have agency to steer their own course and not be limited by a lack of access to educational opportunities. Community college international education leaders should not be limited to only one certain type of interculturality engagement among their population but rather have agency to create new and innovative opportunities through listening to the needs and expectations of those we serve, including LIFTRs and other marginalized groups, drawing a new canvas for interculturality.

In conclusion, this dissertation's mixed methods approach to analyzing community college data has provided a holistic in-depth view of LIFTR identities among the community college population and LIFTR stories of identity and impact. The dissertation began with a question about how students engage in interculturality and went on to compare different populations as well as different types of international education experiences both short-term and long-term providing a panoramic multi-faceted perspective of what LIFTR community college student interculturality looks like. Remarkably and unexpectedly LIFTR identities debunked the deficit narrative surrounding non-existent participation data of technical rural and low-income students and proved that assumptions about LIFTR identities of students can be contradicted.

Reflecting on the findings of this dissertation, it is boldly apparent that there is immense opportunity for educators at the community colleges to step up and provide opportunities for engagement in interculturality for their students. Interculturality's very definition matches with the community college mission of producing a more socially just and equitable society.

I have always believed that when two people who are different from one another meet and genuinely engage in a purposeful and reflective manner, there is magic. This mantra has been part of my career since day one when I stepped in to work my first day in an international education environment over 25 years ago. This dissertation research has revealed to me that this proposed magic is called interculturality and higher education is capable of sparking it intentionally through planned intercultural experiences that create positive outcomes for all students, regardless of income, background, or field of study and ultimately construct a more peaceful and just world.

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Appendix A

Study Abroad Retrospective Survey Screen Shots

What were your motivations/reasons for studying abroad?

Had you traveled abroad prior to your Kirkwood Study Abroad program (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Yes, with family on trips or vacations
- ☐ Yes, for work
- ☐ Yes, for military service
- ☐ Yes, with a school group
- ☐ Yes, during a gap year after high school
- ☐ Yes, while in college (short-term study abroad)
- ☐ Yes, while in college (semester or longer study abroad)
- ☐ Yes, other (please elaborate) _____
- ☐ No

- ☐ No

Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

"My desire to study abroad influenced my selection of Kirkwood for my college choice."

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
○	○	○	○	○

"Since studying abroad, I have..." (select all that apply)

- ☐ Traveled abroad for work
- ☐ Traveled abroad for pleasure
- ☐ Worked abroad on a cultural exchange program (such as BUNAC, USIT, au pair, teaching English, etc.)
- ☐ Worked abroad for an American or foreign company or organization
- ☐ Worked in the US for a foreign company or organization
- ☐ Volunteered abroad on a short-term basis (1 month or less)
- ☐ Volunteered abroad on a long-term basis (more than one month)
- ☐ Not traveled outside the US

0% ▬▬▬ 100%

What is the highest level of education you currently hold?

○ Some college
○ Associate's degree
○ Bachelor's degree
○ Master's degree
○ Doctorate

What is your current job?

Does your current career require you to interact across cultures?

○ Not at all
○ Very little
○ To some degree

Does your current career require you to interact across cultures?

○ Not at all
○ Very little
○ To some degree
○ To a large degree

Please elaborate on your answer to the previous question.

To what degree did your study abroad experience help your career and/or your career direction?

○ Not at all
○ Very little
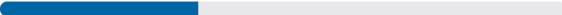○ To some degree
○ To a large degree

Kirkwood
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

"My participation in Kirkwood Study Abroad contributed to..."

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
My knowledge about another culture	O	O	O	O	O
Developing my awareness of political, economic or social events around the world	O	O	O	O	O
My desire for more diverse friendships and social networks	O	O	O	O	O
My desire to further my education	O	O	O	O	O
A better understanding of myself and my values	O	O	O	O	O
My sense of confidence in new situations or when meeting new people	O	O	O	O	O
My ability to accept	O	O	O	O	O

My ability to accept differences in other people	O	O	O	O	O
My ability to be more flexible and open-minded	O	O	O	O	O
My tolerance of ambiguity in a variety of situations	O	O	O	O	O
My ability to be independent	O	O	O	O	O
My desire to be active in my local community	O	O	O	O	O
My choice of college major	O	O	O	O	O
My choice of field of employment	O	O	O	O	O
My ability to formulate my career goals and clarify my professional aspirations	O	O	O	O	O
Developing skills and intercultural competencies which contributed to obtaining my first job after graduation	O	O	O	O	O
The importance I place on working in a field that I find interesting	O	O	O	O	O
My ability to adapt in diverse workplace environments	O	O	O	O	O

Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

"Overall, Kirkwood Study Abroad was the most meaningful experience of my community college education."

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

Please use this space to write about any reflections and/or comments you have about your Kirkwood Study Abroad experience and its impact on you.

Final Submission

Warning: Selecting the answer below and clicking "Next" will close the survey. You will not be able to navigate backward or change any answers.

○ Submit My Responses

Appendix B

Email to Study Abroad Alumni Inviting them to Retrospective Survey

Email Subject: Study Abroad Alumni Input Needed

Text of Email Body:

Dear Kirkwood Study Abroad Alumni:

At Kirkwood, we know that Study Abroad makes a difference, changes lives, and provides the experience of a lifetime for many students. We need your help gathering input from Study Abroad Alumni at Kirkwood as we try to understand the broader impact your study abroad experience had on you over time. Please take the next 5-10 minutes to reflect on your past experience with Study Abroad at Kirkwood and complete the quick survey at this link. The survey will be available through March 1, 2020.

Thank you for your time and for your help ensuring Kirkwood can continue to offer more and more global experiences to students in the future!

Best Wishes,

All of us at Kirkwood Community College

Appendix C

Source of Survey Questions

Survey Questions in Order	Response Type	RQ	Source of Question
When you were a student at Kirkwood, did you consider yourself (check all that apply)	Low Income, First Generation, From a Rural or Small Town Community	2	Researcher
Did you study abroad at Kirkwood?	Yes No	1	Researcher
What were your motivations/reasons for studying abroad?	Open text	3	Researcher
Had you traveled abroad prior to your Kirkwood study abroad program? (If no, skip to next section)	YesNo and then elaborate: With a family on trips or vacationas, with a school group, gap year after high school, while in college (Short-term study abroad, semester (or longer) study abroad program, other (open text)	2	AIFS
My desire to study abroad influenced my selection of undergraduate college	1-5 (Not at all, slightly, moderately, very much, extremely)	1	AIFS
Since studying abroad, I have (check all that apply)	traveled abroad for work, traveled abroad for pleasure, worked abroad on a cultural exchange program (such as BUNAC, USIT, au pair, teaching English, etc.), worked abroad for an American or foreign company or organization, worked in the US for a foreign company or organization, volunteered abroad	1	AIFS

Highest level of education you currently hold	Some college, associate, bachelor, master, doctorate	1	AIFS
What is your current career?	Open text	1	J. Robertson
Does your current career require you to interact across cultures?	Not at all, very little, to some degree, to a large degree	1	J. Robertson
Please Elaborate	Open text	1	Researcher
To what degree did your study abroad experience help your career?	Not at all, very little, to some degree, to a large degree	1	CCC Soar
Please Elaborate	Open text	1	Researcher
Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact on you personally?	Open text	1	Researcher
Reflecting on your study abroad experience, what was the experience's impact on you professionally in your every day work?	Open text	1	Researcher
Do you recommend study abroad to others?	Yes No	1	Researcher
My participation in an Kirkwood Study Abroad contributed to:	Multiple Likert Scales (see below list)	1	AIFS
My knowledge about another culture	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
Developing my awareness of political, economic or social events around the world	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
Defining my political views	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor		

	disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My desire for more diverse friendships and social networks	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
A better understanding of myself and my values	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My sense of confidence in new situations or when meeting new people	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My ability to accept differences in other people	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My ability to be more flexible and open-minded	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My tolerance of ambiguity in a variety of situations	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My ability to be independent	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
Strengthened relationships with my family members and/or friends	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)
My choice of college major	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor

	disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
My choice of field of employment	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
My ability to formulate my career goals and clarify my professional aspirations	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
Developing skills and intercultural competencies which contributed to obtaining my first job after graduation	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
The importance I place on working in a field that I find interesting	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
My ability to adapt in diverse workplace environments	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)		
Overall, Kirkwood Study Abroad was the most meaningful experience of my undergraduate education	1-5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)	AIFS	
Please use this space to write about add any reflections and/or comments you have about your Kirkwood Study Abroad experience and its impact on you.	Open text	1	Researcher

Appendix D

Study Abroad Alumni Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. My research study is focused on community college intercultural experiences. The purpose of this conversation is to hear more about your study abroad experience. I am specifically interested in how students from community college backgrounds with certain characteristics (technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college) experience study abroad.

Review consent form.

If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, please tell me to skip it – no problem. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. Tell me a bit about yourself and your background. Where are you from and how did you come to be a student at Kirkwood Community College? Tell me about your path.
2. Talk about your choice to attend community college. Why did you choose community college?
3. When did you graduate from Kirkwood and what did you do next?
4. Where are you living now and what kind of job / work are you doing?
5. **Tell me your story about Kirkwood study abroad . . . when did you study abroad and where did you go? Tell me about the program you participated in.**

DEMOGRAPHICS / GROUP IDENTIFICATION (CTE, RURAL, LOW INCOME, FIRST GEN)

1. According to my notes, you are *(technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college*). I am interested in hearing more about how you do or do not identify with one or more of these groups (at the time of your study abroad). How do you relate to these groups?
2. Can you talk a little about what it was like to be from one of these groups at community college and how it impacted your study abroad experience?
3. Do you think intercultural experiences should be part of college education? Why or why not?

MOTIVATIONS

1. **Why did you choose to participate in study abroad?**
2. Do you think your motivations had anything to do with you being part of the (CTE,rural,low income, first gen) group? Tell me about that.

CHALLENGES / OBSTACLES

1. Describe an example of an experience you had during the study abroad experience that was a particular challenge for you? How did you adapt?
2. Describe an example during your study abroad experience where you believe your values were questioned or you were forced to think about something very differently when you were abroad than you would normally.

INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE IMPACT

1. How did you **change** as a result of the intercultural experience?
2. Reflecting on your Kirkwood intercultural experience, tell me about how it impacted you **personally** and who you have become?

3. What about **professionally** and who you have become?

4. In your current work, tell me about how you do or do not work with people from other cultures.
5. Empathy is the ability to see/feel things from another person's perspective or "live in their shoes". Tell me about your level of empathy- do you think that experience may have impacted your level of empathy? Why or why not?

6. Intercultural competence is a term that applies to people who are comfortable moving across borders and working within different cultural settings... do you think your experience increased your level of intercultural competence? Why? Do you have examples?

7. What additional comments do you have about your study abroad experience?

Thank you so much for your time and insightful responses. I will send you a transcript of this interview for checking over if you like, and I encourage you to keep in touch and provide any additional insights via email if you would like. Thanks so much!!

Appendix E

IaH Pre- and Post- Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. My research study is focused on community college intercultural experiences. An intercultural experience a situation or context in which you have the opportunity to engage with students from another culture. The purpose of this conversation is to hear more about your experience being part of an intercultural experience on Kirkwood's campus (i.e. Global Sustainability Challenge, K-Ace, etc.) I am specifically interested in how students from community college backgrounds with certain characteristics (technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college) experiences are.

Review consent form.

If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, please tell me to skip it – no problem. Do you have any questions before we get started?

PRE	POST
Tell me a bit about yourself and your background. Where are you from and how did you come to be a student at Kirkwood Community College? Tell me about your path.	It is great to see you again. Thanks for agreeing to meet again. How is your semester finishing off for you overall? Going well?
Are you working outside of your classes and what kind of job / work are you doing?	
What are your career goals after you complete being a student at Kirkwood?	
Tell me your story about choosing to participate in this Kirkwood experience . . . What is the experience you are about to undertake and what do you think about it?	Tell me your story about your IaH experience (i.e. French virtual exchange, Global Sustainability Challenge, etc.) . . . when did you participate and how did it go? Tell me about how you experienced the program.
DEMOGRAPHICS / GROUP IDENTIFICATION (CTE, RURAL, LOW INCOME, FIRST GEN	
My study is about students who are *technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college*. I am interested in hearing more about how you identify with one or more of these groups (at the time of your experience). How do you relate to these groups? Please talk about what it is like to be from one of these groups at community college…	Given this is a CTE course and you had this intercultural experience, how was that important to your career and technical learning? What were the 2-3 most important learnings? How was it different than other class projects you have done in college?
MOTIVATIONS	
How did you get involved in this intercultural experience at Kirkwood? What motivated you to be part of it?	How did you get involved in this intercultural experience at Kirkwood? What motivated you to be part of it?

Do you think your motivations around the experience had anything to do with you being part of the (CTE,rural,low income, first gen) group? Tell me about that.	Do you think your motivations in the experience had anything to do with you being part of the (CTE,rural,low income, first gen) group? Tell me about that.
Do you think intercultural experiences like this should be part of college education? Why or why not?	Do you think intercultural experiences like this should be part of college education? Why or why not?
CHALLENGES / OBSTACLES	
Describe an example of an experience you have had that was a particular challenge for you? Talk about how you handled it or had to adapt to face this challenge?	Describe an example of an experience you had during this intercultural experience that was a particular challenge for you? How did you adapt?
Talk about any challenges you have had participating in this intercultural experience so far. Talk about any challenges you foresee.	Describe an example during your experience where you believe your values were questioned or you were forced to think about something very differently when you were abroad than you would normally.
INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE IMPACT	
Talk about what you think the impact of this experience may be on you? How will it impact you personally and/or professionally?	How did you **change** as a result of the intercultural experience?
What are your expectations on how this experience will impact you?	Reflecting on your Kirkwood intercultural experience, tell me about how it impacted you **personally** and who you have become?
	What about **professionally** and who you have become?
In your current work, tell me about how you do or do not work with people from other cultures. Examples..	In your current work, tell me about how you do or do not work with people from other cultures. Examples…
	Talk about how this experience in relation to your work with people from other cultures…
Empathy is the ability to see/feel things from another person's perspective or "live in their shoes". Tell me about your level of empathy… examples?	Empathy is the ability to see/feel things from another person's perspective or "live in their shoes". Tell me about your level of empathy- do you think that experience may have impacted your level of empathy? Why or why not? Examples…
Intercultural competence is a term that applies to people who are comfortable moving across borders and working within different cultural settings… Talk about your level of intercultural competence… examples?	Intercultural competence is a term that applies to people who are comfortable moving across borders and working within different cultural settings… do you think your experience increased your level of intercultural competence? Why? Do you have examples?
What additional comments do you have about your experience?	What additional comments do you have about your experience?

Thank you so much for your time and insightful responses. I will send you a transcript of this interview for checking over if you like, and I encourage you to keep in touch and provide any additional insights via email if you would like. Thanks so much!!

Appendix F

Pre- and Post- Non-Participant Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. My research study is focused on community college intercultural experiences. An intercultural experience a situation or context in which you have the opportunity to engage with students from another culture. The purpose of this conversation is to hear more about your experience studying at Kirkwood this semester. I am specifically interested in how students from community college backgrounds with certain characteristics (technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college) experience learning at Kirkwood.

Review consent form.

If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, please tell me to skip it – no problem. Do you have any questions before we get started?

PRE	POST
Tell me a bit about yourself and your background. Where are you from and how did you come to be a student at Kirkwood Community College? Tell me about your path.	It is great to see you again. Thanks for agreeing to meet again. How is your semester finishing off for you overall? Going well?
Are you working outside of your classes and what kind of job / work are you doing?	
What are your career goals after you complete being a student at Kirkwood?	
Tell me your story about choosing to study at Kirkwood this semester . . . What is the experience you are about to undertake and what do you think about it?	Tell me your story about this past semester and how it went. . .
DEMOGRAPHICS / GROUP IDENTIFICATION (CTE, RURAL, LOW INCOME, FIRST GEN	
My study is about students who are *technical applied degree students, rural or small town background, low income or Pell eligible, first generation or first in your family to attend college*. I am interested in hearing more about how you identify with one or more of these groups (at the time of your experience). How do you relate to these groups? Please talk about what it is like to be from one of these groups at community college…	What were the 2-3 most important learnings for you this semester? Tell me about anything you learned this semester that might be intercultural.. was that important to your career and technical learning?
MOTIVATIONS	
What motivated you to study at Kirkwood this semester?	What motivated you to continue to study at Kirkwood this semester?
Do you think your motivations around studying at Kirkwood had anything to do with you being part	Do you think your motivations around studying at Kirkwood had anything to do with you being part

of the (CTE,rural,low income, first gen) group? Tell me about that.	of the (CTE,rural,low income, first gen) group? Tell me about that.
Talk about your motivations to have an intercultural experience… to interact with other cultures or be around people from other countries/places? Are you motivated to have intercultural experiences as part of your education at Kirkwood? Is it important to you?	In any of your classes this semester, did you learn about intercultural experiences or experiences that might be considered global or intercultural? Tell me about that.
CHALLENGES / OBSTACLES	
Describe an example of an experience you have had that was a particular challenge for you? Talk about how you handled it or had to adapt to face this challenge?	Describe an example of an experience you had during this semester that was a particular challenge for you? How did you adapt?
Talk about any other challenges you have had participating in college thus far.	Describe an example during your semester where you were learning something that may have made you believe your values were questioned or maybe you were forced to think about something very differently.
INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE IMPACT	
Talk about what you think the impact of this semester may be on you? How will it impact you personally and/or professionally?	How did you **change** as a result of this semester?
What are your expectations on how this semester will impact you?	Reflecting on your Kirkwood semester of class experience, tell me about how it impacted you **personally** and who you have become?
	What about **professionally** and who you have become?
In your current work, tell me about how you do or do not work with people from other cultures. Examples..	In your current work, tell me about how you do or do not work with people from other cultures. Examples..
	Talk about how this semester may have given you new strategies in your work or communication with people from other cultures…
Empathy is the ability to see/feel things from another person's perspective or "live in their shoes". Tell me about your level of empathy… examples?	Empathy is the ability to see/feel things from another person's perspective or "live in their shoes". Tell me about your level of empathy- do you think that something you learned this semester may have impacted your level of empathy? Why or why not? Examples…
Intercultural competence is a term that applies to people who are comfortable moving across borders and working within different cultural settings… Talk about your level of intercultural competence… examples?	Intercultural competence is a term that applies to people who are comfortable moving across borders and working within different cultural settings… do you think something you learned this semester in class increased your level of

	intercultural competence? Why? Do you have examples?
What additional comments do you have about your semester?	What additional comments do you have about your semester?

Thank you so much for your time and insightful responses. I will send you a transcript of this interview for checking over if you like, and I encourage you to keep in touch and provide any additional insights via email if you would like. Thanks so much!!

Appendix G

Student Profile Chi-Squared Results and Tests

Participation Tables and Chi-Squared Tables

Low-income Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total Enrollment

	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
Low Income Student	**38.55%**	**43.10%**	**55.08%**
Not Low-income Student	**61.50%**	**56.90%**	**44.92%**

Note: Low income is derived from Pell Grant eligibility

Chi-squared Crosstab for Low-income and Study Abroad Participation

Crosstab			PELL		
			No	Yes	Total
Study_Abroad_Participation	No	Count	37637	23494	61131
		Expected Count	37596.0	23535.0	61131.0
		% within PELL	98.7%	98.4%	98.6%
		% of Total	60.7%	37.9%	98.6%
	Yes	Count	507	384	891
		Expected Count	548.0	343.0	891.0
		% within PELL	1.3%	1.6%	1.4%
		% of Total	0.8%	0.6%	1.4%
Total		Count	38144	23878	62022
		Expected Count	38144.0	23878.0	62022.0
		% within PELL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.073[a]	1	.004		
Continuity Correction[b]	7.877	1	.005		
Likelihood Ratio	7.969	1	.005		
Fisher's Exact Test				.005	.003
N of Valid Cases	62022				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 343.03.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Note. Study Abroad participation: Pell Eligible participation rate (1.6% observed, 1.4% expected) was significantly different ($\chi^2 = 8.073$, $p = .004$) than Non-Pell Eligible participation rate (1.3% observed, 1.4% expected).

First-generation Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total Enrollment

	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
First-generation Student	**25.16%**	**20.99%**	**30.47%**
Non-first-generation Student	**74.74%**	**79.01%**	**69.53%**

Chi-squared Crosstab for First-generation and Study Abroad Participation

Crosstab			First-Gen		
			No	Yes	Total
Study_Abroad_Participation	No	Count	17311	15417	32728
		Expected Count	17419.2	15308.8	32728.0
		% within First-Gen	97.5%	98.8%	98.1%
		% of Total	51.9%	46.2%	98.1%
	Yes	Count	444	187	631
		Expected Count	335.8	295.2	631.0
		% within First-Gen	2.5%	1.2%	1.9%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.6%	1.9%
Total		Count	17755	15604	33359
		Expected Count	17755.0	15604.0	33359.0

	% within First-Gen	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	53.2%	46.8%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	75.899[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	75.199	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	78.654	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	33359				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 295.16.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Note. Study Abroad participation: First-generation participation rate (1.2% observed, 1.9% expected) was significantly different ($\chi 2 = 75.899$, p = .000) than Non-first-generation participation rate (2.5% observed, 1.9% expected).

CTE Study Abroad and IaH Participation Comparison

	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
CTE Student	**31.35%**	**45.01%**	**52.73%**
Arts Sciences and Humanities Student	**68.64%**	**54.99%**	**47.27%**

To further confirm the significance of this finding, a Chi-squared analysis illustrates how the expected count of CTE and ASH student participation compares to the observed count. Table 2 shows that CTE students studied abroad at 2.1%, .07% higher than the general student population. The expected study abroad participation rate for all students is 1.4%, shown in the Table 3 Total column. This is calculated by dividing 891 total students indicated in the "Yes" column by the 62,022 total student count to arrive at 1.4%. For CTE participation, divide the observed number who studied abroad (401) by the CTE total number (19,462) to arrive at 2.1%, .07% higher than the expected 1.4%. This CTE participation rate is significantly higher ($\chi 2 = 77.952$, p = .000) than expected while the ASH participation is significantly lower than expected (1.2% observed, 1.4% expected). See Table 3 below for Chi-squared crosstab results and Chi-squared test results.

Table 3

Chi-squared Crosstab for Field of Study (ASH and CTE) and Study Abroad Participation

Crosstab			Field of Study		
			ASH	CTE	Total
Study_Abroad_Participation	No	Count	42070	19061	61131
		Expected Count	41948.6	19182.4	61131.0
		% within Study_Abroad_Participation	68.8%	31.2%	100.0%
		% of Total	67.8%	30.7%	98.6%
	Yes	Count	490	401	891
		Expected Count	611.4	279.6	891.0
		% within Study_Abroad_Participation	55.0%	45.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.8%	0.6%	1.4%
Total		Count	42560	19462	62022
		Expected Count	42560.0	19462.0	62022.0
		% within Study_Abroad_Participation	68.6%	31.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	68.6%	31.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.952[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	77.311	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	73.419	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	62022				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 279.59.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Note. Study Abroad participation: CTE participation rate (2.1% observed, 1.4% expected) was significantly higher ($\chi2 = 77.952$, p = .000) than LA participation rate (1.2% observed, 1.4% expected).

Rural Study Abroad and IaH Participation Compared to Total Enrollment

	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Students who Study Abroad	Percentage of Total Students Participating in IaH
Rural Student	**21.20%**	**31.43%**	**41.02%**

| **Non-Rural Student** | 78.80% | 68.57% | 58.98% |

Note: Rural is classified by location of high school attended

Chi-squared Crosstab for Rurality and Study Abroad Participation

Crosstab					
			Rural		
			0	1	Total
Study_Abroad_Participation	No	Count	44981	1035	46016
		Expected Count	44962.9	1053.1	46016.0
		% within Rural	98.4%	96.6%	98.3%
		% of Total	96.1%	2.2%	98.3%
	Yes	Count	744	36	780
		Expected Count	762.1	17.9	780.0
		% within Rural	1.6%	3.4%	1.7%
		% of Total	1.6%	0.1%	1.7%
Total		Count	45725	1071	46796
		Expected Count	45725.0	1071.0	46796.0
		% within Rural	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	97.7%	2.3%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.203[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	18.159	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	14.964	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	46796				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.85.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Note. Study Abroad participation: Rural participation rate (3.4% observed, 1.7% expected) was significantly different ($\chi2 = 19.203$, p = .000) than Non-Rural participation rate (1.6% observed, 1.7% expected).

Table 10.

Chi-squared Crosstab for Target Group Status (students fitting all target variables vs those that did not fit any target variables) and Study Abroad Participation

Crosstab					
			Group_Comparison		
			Target Group	Alternate Group	Total
Study_Abroad_Participation	No	Count	144	3866	4010
		Expected Count	148.0	3862.0	4010.0
		% within Group_Comparison	94.7%	97.5%	97.4%
		% of Total	3.5%	93.9%	97.4%
	Yes	Count	8	101	109
		Expected Count	4.0	105.0	109.0
		% within Group_Comparison	5.3%	2.5%	2.6%
		% of Total	0.2%	2.5%	2.6%
Total		Count	152	3967	4119
		Expected Count	152.0	3967.0	4119.0
		% within Group_Comparison	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	3.7%	96.3%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.195[a]	1	.041		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.207	1	.073		
Likelihood Ratio	3.311	1	.069		
Fisher's Exact Test				.062	.047
N of Valid Cases	4119				
a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.02.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Note. Study Abroad participation: Target Group participation rate (5.3% observed, 2.6% expected) was significantly different ($\chi2 = 4.195$, p = .041) than Alternate Group participation rate (2.5% observed, 2.6% expected).

Appendix H

Interviewees by Pseudonym, Major, Interview Type, and LIFTR Identity

	Pseudonym	Major	Interview type	Low Income	First Generation	Technical/ CTE	Rural
1	Juana	Culinary Arts	non-participant	yes	yes	yes	no
2	Stacy	Liberal Arts	non-participant	yes	yes	no	no
3	Valerie	Liberal Arts	non-participant	yes	yes	no	yes
4	Scott	Crop Production	non-participant	no	no	yes	yes
5	Theo	Ag Production	non-participant	no	yes	yes	yes
6	Ella	Parks and Natural Resources	non-participant	yes	yes	yes	no
7	Anna	Digital Media	non-participant	no	no	yes	no
8	Tracy	Accounting	non-participant	yes	yes	yes	yes
9	Sheryl	Nursing	non-participant	yes	yes	yes	no
10	Larry	Paramedic	non-participant	yes	yes	yes	yes
11	Jess	Liberal Arts	IaH	yes	yes	no	no
12	Marissa	Business	IaH	yes	yes	yes	no
13	Josiah	Liberal Arts	IaH	yes	yes	no	no
14	Tammi	Liberal Arts	IaH	yes	yes	no	no
15	Luis	Liberal Arts	IaH	yes	yes	no	yes
16	Deb	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	no
17	Shawn	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	no
18	Vern	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	no
19	Ken	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	yes
20	Sally	Management	IaH	yes	yes	yes	yes
21	Julio	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	yes	yes	yes
22	Denzel	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	no
23	Carlos	Electronics Engineering	IaH	yes	no	yes	no
24	Jenn	Management	IaH	yes	yes	yes	yes
25	Moe	Management	IaH	yes	yes	yes	no
26	Nolan	Nursing	Study Abroad	yes	no	yes	no
27	Marci	Business	Study Abroad	yes	yes	yes	no
28	Nell	Marketing	Study Abroad	yes	no	yes	yes
29	Max	Business	Study Abroad	yes	no	yes	yes
30	Iris	Business	Study Abroad	yes	yes	yes	yes
31	Darla	Business	Study Abroad	no	no	yes	no

32	Dante	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	yes	no	no	no
33	Paul	Information Technology	Study Abroad	yes	yes	yes	no
34	Wes	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	yes	yes	no	yes
35	Valentina	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	no	no	no	yes
36	Penny	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	yes	yes	no	no
37	Faith	Culinary Arts	Study Abroad	yes	yes	yes	yes
38	Fatma	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	yes	yes	no	no
39	Cyrus	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	no	yes	no	no
40	Lana	Liberal Arts	Study Abroad	yes	yes	no	no
41	Lucy	Dental Hygiene	Study Abroad	yes	no	yes	yes
42	Lara	Nursing	Study Abroad	yes	yes	yes	yes
43	Brett	Accounting	Study Abroad	yes	no	yes	yes

*Note: 36 Low Income, 27 First Generation, 30 Technical/CTE, 19 Rural